



# School Counselor Appreciation Week

**The United States celebrates National School Counselor Week in early February, but school counselors deserve our recognition and support throughout the year. This flyer offers resources for school counselors working with Indigenous youth.**

"Every student deserves a school counselor to help with academic achievement strategies, managing emotions and applying interpersonal skills, and planning for postsecondary options. School counselors are #HelpingStudentsDreamBig. National School Counseling Week 2023 (Feb. 6-10), sponsored by the American School Counselor Association (ASCA), highlights the essential contribution of school counselors within U.S. school systems and the tremendous impact they have in helping students achieve school success and plan for a career. Take a moment to thank your local school counselor(s)."<sup>1</sup>

## School Counselors and Native Students

**"I have seen that in any great undertaking, it is not enough for a man to depend simply upon himself."**

**-Teton Sioux Tribe<sup>2</sup>**

The American School Counselor Association (ASCA) expects school counselors to understand and respect their students' different cultural backgrounds, including AI & AN students.<sup>3</sup> A school counselor's work depends on their understanding of how cultural traditions, values, and customs impact students' social, emotional, academic, and career development. Research shows that best practices for school counselors serving Native students include trauma-informed and strengths-based counseling, mindfulness interventions, motivational interviewing, medicine wheels, and an understanding of Native history and culture.<sup>4</sup>

## School Counselor Self-Care

The role of a school counselor is to help students be successful both in their academic career and in their social/emotional development.<sup>5</sup> In their role, school counselors often learn of the trauma and hardships their students have endured. The stress that results from helping these students is known as compassion fatigue.<sup>5</sup> To minimize or eliminate the effects of compassion fatigue, it is important that school counselors engage in self-care. Below are some examples of self-care:<sup>6, 7</sup>

- Reduce workload
- Meditation
- Journaling
- Regular exercise
- Personal therapy to process work
- Healthy diet
- Adequate sleep
- Taking regular vacations
- Plant medicine
- Blessed water
- Traditional dance and ceremonies
- Traditional art and/or music

# Additional Resources

Many resources are available for Native and non-Native school counselors working with AI & AN students. It is important that school counselors have many tools at their disposal when working with diverse student populations. Below are some resources that can be used when working with Native students.

[StrongHearts Native Helpline](#) is a 24/7 safe, confidential and anonymous domestic, dating, and sexual violence helpline for Native Americans and Alaska Natives, offering culturally appropriate support and advocacy.

[Healthy Native Youth](#) is a one-stop-shop for health promotion resources for American Indian and Alaska Native youth. Their curricula and stand-alone lessons promote positive youth development, embrace cultural teachings, are trauma-informed, and demonstrate evidence of effectiveness.

[Talking to Children About Violence: Tips for Parents and Teachers](#) is an article written by the National Association of School Psychologists. The article gives recommendations on how to work with youth who have experienced and/or witnessed violence.

## [Trauma and Suicide Among AI/AN Youth](#)

This document describes the disproportionate effect of suicide in Native populations and gives resources for help.

## [We R Native: Mental Health Challenges](#)

We R Native is a multimedia health resource for Native teens and young adults. The service includes an interactive website, a text messaging service, multiple social media outlets, and print marketing materials. We R Native also features an “Ask Your Relatives” Q&A service as well as medically accurate information reviewed by experts in public health, mental health, community engagement, and activism.

## [Addressing Race and Trauma in the Classroom: A Resource for Educators](#)

is a resource for educators to better understand how they can address the interplay of race and trauma and how this affects students in the classroom.

# References

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4. Burger, K. (2019). Counseling interventions for Native American adolescents. *Counselor Education Capstones, 100*. <https://openriver.winona.edu/counseloreducationcapstones/100>.
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6. Good Therapy (n.d.). *Compassion Fatigue*. <https://www.goodtherapy.org/blog/psychpedia/compassion-fatigue>
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National American Indian and Alaska Native

**MHTTC**

Mental Health Technology Transfer Center Network  
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Childhood Trauma TSA, Category II

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