

(Re-)Connecting with your Roots to Bravely Face the Future

LOST & FOUND



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INTRODUCTION

At the beginning of our grant cycle, Great Plains Tribal Leader's Health Board and evaluation partner Lost&Found collected primary data for a community needs assessment. Our goal was to **measure the readiness and preferences for STI and teen pregnancy prevention (STITPP) programming among 17 Northern Great Plains Tribes.** Throughout the grant period we hope to partner with all 17 Tribes to bring customized programming to their communities. We believe that by involving community members in program planning we will increase their participation during implementation, resulting in **better program outcomes, satisfaction, and sustainability.**

Another achievement of the needs assessment are lists we gather of community members interested in becoming **"cultural champions."** These volunteers will help infuse our programming with the wisdom and traditions of local Native cultures. We share these lists of names and contact information along with **suggestions of ways to incorporate culture** (Figure 1) with the health facilitators in each tribal community so they can get the champions involved throughout programming.

METHODS

To collect primary data, we created a survey in **two versions** – one for adults 18+ and one for youth 12-18 with minor differences in wording and question types. Our project coordinator and health facilitator invited and **incentivized participation at event booths** (e.g., at the Lakota Nation Invitational). The survey was available **online** or on **paper.** Moreover, as we form partnerships with Great Plains Tribes, we encourage community participation in the survey during the program planning phase (local contacts recruit participants).

Beyond questions related to **awareness of existing health infrastructure and preferred program delivery format** (e.g., online vs. in-person, at school or different location/time), we also ask what additional **adult preparation subjects and other topics** they are interested in (See Figure 2) and **how to honor their culture** in programming (Figure 1). Further, we specifically ask adults **"Would you be willing to be a champion for cultural integration?"** If so, we collect their contact information for health facilitators to contact them for future program support.

Once local needs assessment surveys are completed, we share a **brief summary of the results** with the tribes and let it guide program implementation planning.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

We compiled a report for responses received from June 2022 to November 2022. 15 Great Plains tribal communities responded to the survey initially, with **148 adult responses and 120 youth.** We learnt that, overall, youth and adults agreed with what additional topics STITPP programming should include (Figure 2).

We also found agreement between youth and adults on the preferred delivery format of programming and the importance of **cultural integration**, such as including coming-of-age ceremonies and wisdom from elders (Figure 3). Moreover, many Native adult respondents (36%) are open to playing an active role in supporting cultural integration and shared their contact information for future support. These cultural champions will be instrumental in integrating the desired cultural components into programming.

CONCLUSION

The primary data collected for this needs assessment allows for tribal communities to **actively shape STITPP programming**, as well as empowers adults to be **cultural champions** for their communities. We will continue to encourage communities to share their insights on how they want programming to look as we start new partnerships with Great Plains Tribes in the region we serve.

Figure 2: Adults and youth had similar priorities for additional programming topics.

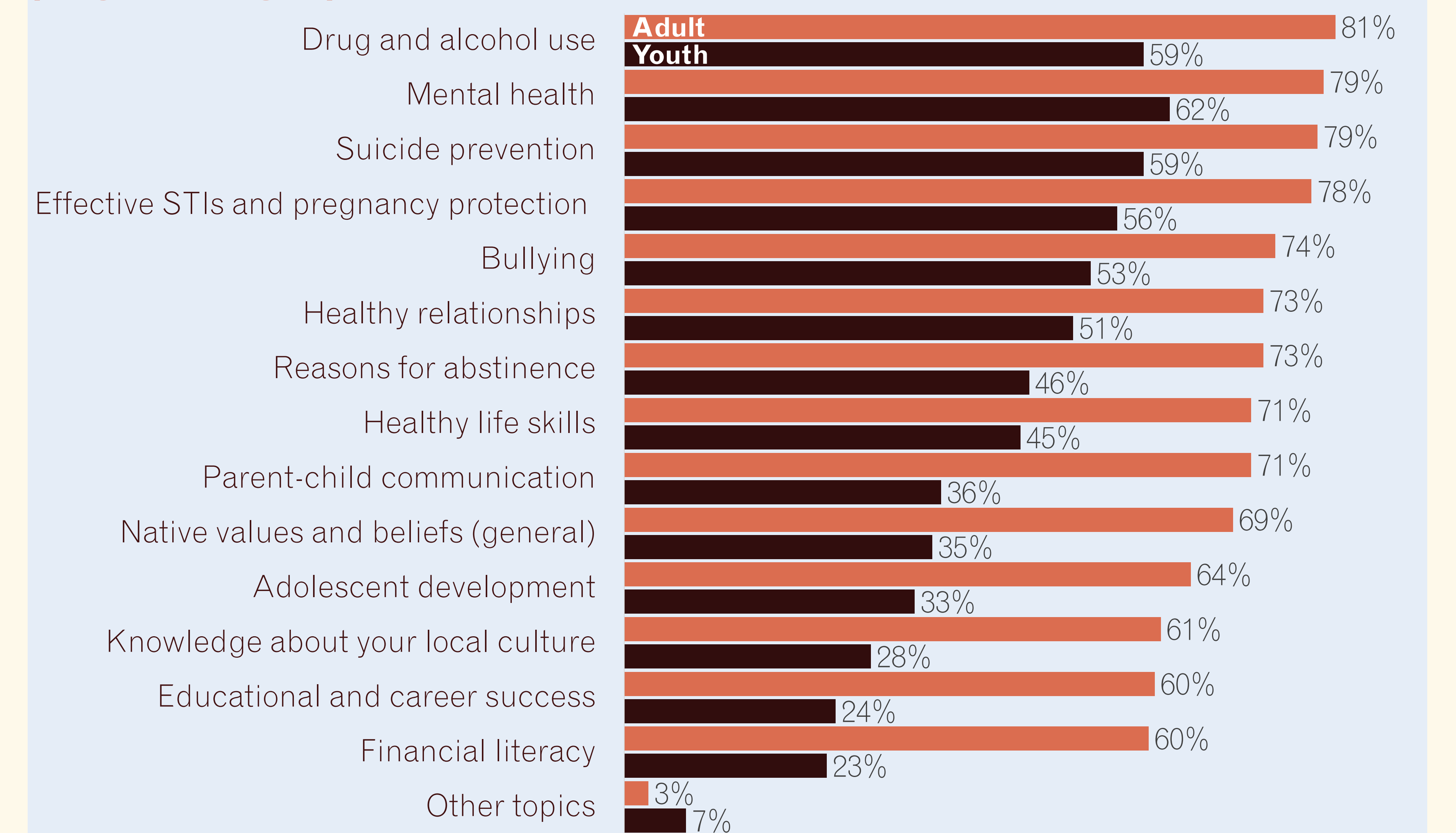


Figure 1: Suggested Ways to Integrate Local Culture

- Land acknowledgement and/or blessing** before lessons
- Using native language** when possible (talking about certain concepts etc.)
- Talking circles** to discuss certain topics in person (esp. if using online program)
- Healing circles** to process topics that can bring up trauma
- Inviting elders** to talk about relevant topics, like what it means to be an adult in the community
- Coming of age ceremony** (could be combined with 'program graduation')

Figure 3: Community Voices on Incorporating Their Culture

Native Adult Quotes

"A lot of our youth don't understand our culture and language. The coming-of-age ceremony would be beneficial for this type of program."

"Having Elders come in maybe once a month to share stories and wisdom. I think it benefits all including youth, parents, and elders."

"Having classes that talk about the importance and showing ways we prepare for certain ceremonies."

Native Youth Quotes

"You can attend the Sundances, Sweats, Ceremonies, etc.... That on its own is enough to honor our community."

"Tell about the old ways...Respect your elders."

"Our culture is important to us."

Poster presented at the Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention Conference *Reunited, Reignite, Re-energize: Innovating for the Future*, May 23-25, 2023, hosted by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Children, Health and Families (ACYF), Family and Youth Services Bureau (FYSB). Funding provided by FYSB (Grant Award # 90AT0027).

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