

Suicide Prevention with American Indian and Alaska Native Youth



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School as a Critical Context for Prevention



Zuni Life Skills: Community-Driven Intervention



Culture as Prevention



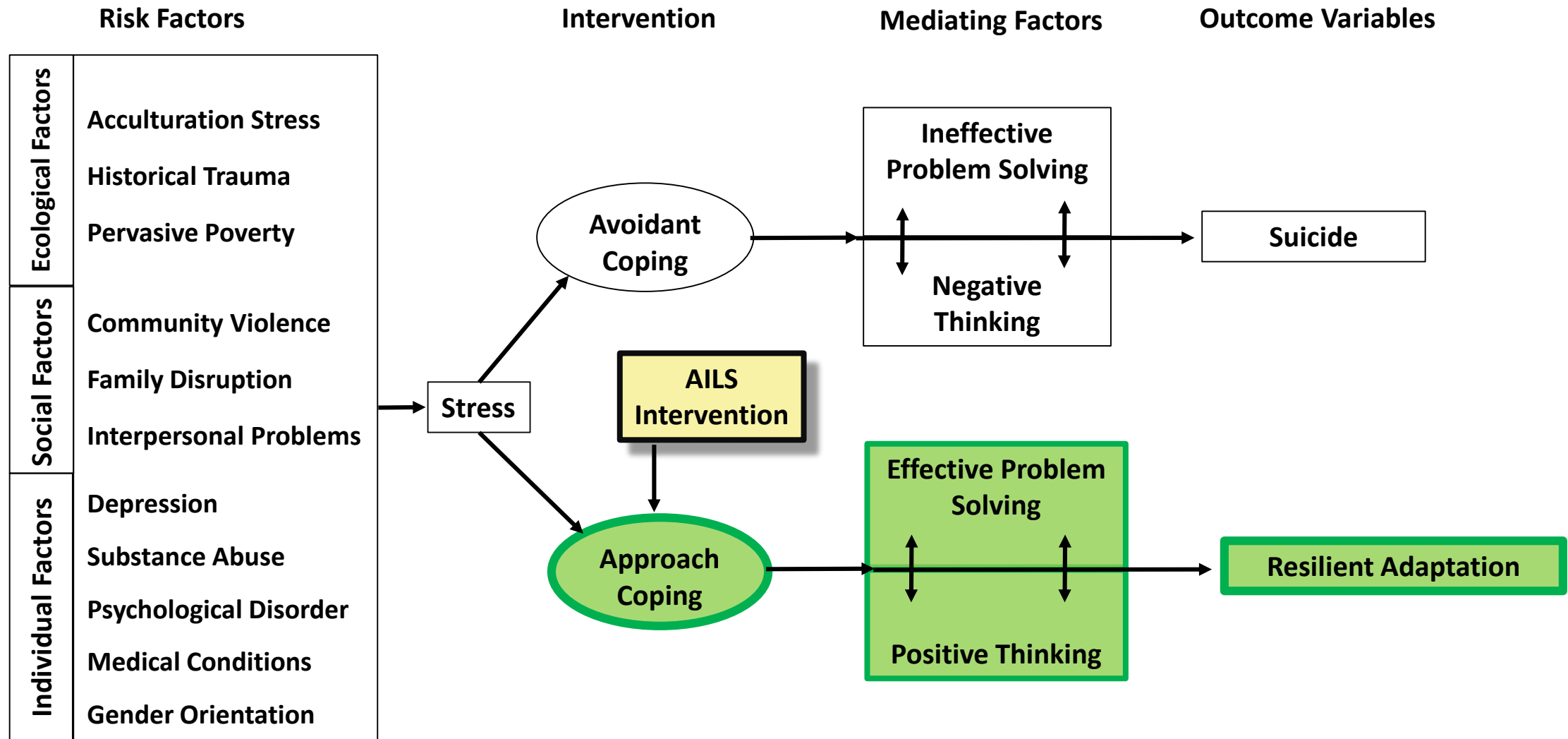
DEEP CULTURE:

- **Indigenous knowledge** conveyed in stories, instructions and activities in the curriculum
- AILS emphasizes **positive cultural teachings** (e.g., community-specific beliefs about grief, community nominations of preferred ways of coping, ways students support one another in times of anger)

SURFACE CULTURE:

- local idioms, place names. Native art.

Zuni/American Indian Life Skills Stress-Coping Model



7 Sections of the Zuni/American Indian Life Skills Intervention

1. Who am I? Building self-esteem
2. What am I feeling? Emotions and stress
3. How can I communicate with others and solve problems effectively?
4. How can I recognize self-destructive behavior and find ways to eliminate it?
5. Why do people attempt suicide?
6. How can I help my friends who are thinking about suicide?
7. How can I plan ahead for a great future?

Interventionists can select from 44 lessons based upon the needs of students.

www.youtube.com/watch?v=IBfyJG5jwW0&feature=youtu.be&list=PLBXgZMI_zqfQEgcN674q4nVvdPqdrWdQP

Examples of Target Skills from Zuni/American Indian Life Skills Intervention

Mediating Factors: Positive Thinking/Effective Problem Solving



Lessons Build Core Skills to Address:

- ❖ Depression recognition/management
- ❖ Stress management
- ❖ Anger regulation
- ❖ Suicide prevention
- ❖ Individual/community goal setting

Effectiveness of Zuni Life Skills from Zuni High School Evaluation

Intervention vs. Comparison Group

Self-Report Survey

- ❖ Less hopelessness
- ❖ More confidence in ability to manage anger

Behavioral Role Play Study

- ❖ Better peer suicide intervention skills
- ❖ Better peer problem solving skills



LaFromboise & Howard-Pitney, 1995; Posttest Immediately Following Intervention

Effectiveness of AILS in Schools in a Northern New Mexico Reservation

Pretest vs. Posttest Intervention Group Only Design

Decreased:

Hopelessness

Suicide Risk

Increased:

Public Collective Esteem

Self-Efficacy

Self-Awareness



Effectiveness of AILS-Middle School Version with Early Adolescents

Pretest vs. Posttest Intervention Group Only Design

Increased self-efficacy to:

Manage depression

Cope with stress

Enlist community support

Enlist social resources



LaFromboise & Malik, 2016.; Daily intervention conducted over 6 weeks.

AILS Facilitator

Desired Qualities

- ❖ Creative
- ❖ Outgoing
- ❖ Approachable
- ❖ Patient
- ❖ Flexible
- ❖ Collaborative
- ❖ Native humor
- ❖ Youth advocate

Skills:

- ❖ Positive teaching strategies
- ❖ Social problem solving
- ❖ Conflict resolution
- ❖ Social skills training
- ❖ Small group work
- ❖ Community development
- ❖ “Walks the Talk”



AILS Implementation--Resources & Support

- ❖ **Credible interventionist**
- ❖ **Experience and success working with youth**
- ❖ **Community involvement**
- ❖ **Support of tribal/educational administration**
- ❖ **Evidence-based evaluation results**
- ❖ **Permission to participate**
- ❖ **Guest speaker buy in**
- ❖ **Elder involvement**
- ❖ **Enough trained staff**
- ❖ **Support staff**
- ❖ **Good partnership with the school/program**
- ❖ **Space to conduct the intervention**

Takeaways

- 1. Schools are often overlooked as sites for suicide prevention**
- 2. School-based suicide prevention interventions have shown positive outcomes**
 - Across an array of settings
- 3. Many AI/AN youth have benefitted from school-based suicide prevention interventions**
- 4. Approaches to family-involvement and community-wide change in suicide prevention with AI/ANs are increasing, but understudied**

