Introduction

This literature review on Programmes for Indigenous Youth has three major indigenous youth categories which are:

1. A range of education and cultural identity programmes
2. Resilience in Indigenous programmes
3. Wellness in indigenous programmes

An underlying theme for all three categories is the use of pre-European indigenous cultural knowledge for contemporary indigenous youth best illustrated in *An Exploration of Taiohi Māori and The spirit of Indigenous youth*. (Balzer, Levy, Thompson, & McClintock, 2013; Freeman, 2017). Digital technologies, sport and recreation are offered as programme areas exemplars, where Indigenous youth can see themselves as agents of change with digital technologies, sport and recreation as the means by which indigenous youth gain purpose and meaning in their lives (Kral, 2010; Tatz, 2012; Ware & Meredith 2013). The products of research into education and cultural identity programmes are resistance training to drug offers, strategies for taiohi (Māori young people) rites of passage, ecologically based assessment approach for Indigenous youth populations and a culturally grounded primary prevention intervention which places the culture of the participant at the centre of the intervention. (Allen et al., 2014; Balzer et al., 2013; Okamoto et al., 2006; Okamoto et al., 2014).

Resilience is a belief in oneself through the relationships and sense of belonging offered by the collective (Allen et al., 2014; Balzer et al., 2013; MacDonald & Willow, 2013). Wellbeing is the positive benefits from feeling a sense of belonging (Balzer et al., 2013; Clark et al., 2011, Kral, 2010; Freeman, 2017). The ecological understanding of resilience in the context of indigenous young people’s lives and protective factors identified as positively creating and impacting one’s social environment (Allen et al., Balzer et al., 2013; 2014; MacDonald & Willow, 2013). This ecological understanding of resilience helps to describe how ideological commitment to the indigenous culture is a protective factor promoting resilience (Okamoto et al., 2006; Okamoto et al., 2014; Wexler, DiFluvio & Burke, 2009).

The wellbeing of indigenous youth uses pre-European contact indigenous cultural knowledge, specifically indigenous conceptualisations of mental health for the treatment of excessive anxiety in indigenous young people. Relevant health practice considers the wellbeing of indigenous youth through the promotion of indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing (Adermann & Campbell, 2007; White, 2007).
Indigenous Youth in a Range of Education and Cultural Identity Programmes

Participation of cohorts of indigenous youth in a range of education and cultural identity programmes reveal a strong connection between these programmes and suicide prevention and therefore wellbeing (Adermann & Campbell, 2007; Klinck, Cardinal, & Edwards, 2005; Kral, 2010; Okamoto et al., 2014; Tatz, 2012).

Taiohi Māori Rites of Passage
The rites of passage of taiohi in contemporary Māori society focuses on the transition and transformation from adolescence to adulthood. Rites of passage of taiohi identify “culturally specific strategies from Māori knowledge, resources and people” to support this transition (Balzer et al, 2013, p. 24). The transition stage encompasses periods of uncertainty, where neither old or new identity is available and social status is unclear. The uncertainty may leave “the person vulnerable to stress, anxiety, fear, helplessness, depression and inner crisis” (Balzer et al., 2013, p. 29). The period of uncertainty within effective rites of passage for taiohi is considered “temporary and followed by the reintegration into the community” (Balzer et al., 2013). The person returns to the community having “learnt the lessons of the transition stage”, ready to embrace the adult role (Balzer et al., 2013).

The process of rites of passage can strengthen taiohi Māori cultural identity through “transmission of cultural norms, knowledge, values, ethics, expectations and obligations considered of benefit” for the collective wellbeing (Balzer et al, 2013, p. 124). The practise of “culturally structured taiohi Māori rites of passage is slow journeys of accumulated experiences, cumulative impacts and the interrelationships between different elements” which contribute to successful transitions for taiohi” (Balzer et al., 2013, p. 125). Boundaries between adolescence and adults are becoming difficult to define however acquiring of responsibility and making “decisions reflective of that increased responsibility” is a critical element of rites of passage (Balzer et al., 2013, p. 126). Barriers to enable taiohi opportunities to engage in decision making, such as “limited educational achievement and limited financial resources”, constrain taiohi opportunity to increase decision making responsibilities (Balzer et al., 2013, p. 127).

Whānau (family) support is an integral element to taiohi achieving positive milestones. Whānau is a key place where security, connection and belonging nurture “intergenerational instruction and exposure” to future possibilities can occur (Balzer et al., 2013, p. 127). Intergenerational communication can carry markers of resilience through:

- Pūkengatanga - mentoring by elders of a particular child for a specific task
- Urunatanga - young people achieve new levels of responsibility via continual exposure to particular practices and responsibilities
- Kotahitanga - exploration and establishment of mutually beneficial relationships that can contribute to overall wellbeing for taiohi (Balzer et al., 2013).

The study identified the importance of taiohi being supported to make cultural connections within their environments “such as tribal locations, physical markers and spiritual connections with natural resources” to create a sense of place and belonging (Balzer et al., 2013, p. 130). Another central element of rites of passage for taiohi is meaningful learning opportunities through “culturally based activities and experiences” (Balzer et al., 2013, p. 131).
Balzar et al. (2013, p. 131) recommend, based on the diversity of whānau and taiohi pathways, “collective community-wide approach” to creating meaningful learning opportunities is required (Balzer et al., 2013, p. 131). Celebrating taiohi learning achievements enhance whānau connections, create wider community connections and facilitate community responsibility for successful taiohi outcomes (Balzer et al., 2013).

**Youth Mentors**

Klinck, Cardinal, & Edwards, (2005) identify factors that could influence the development of a First Nation youth mentoring programme. Kin terms describe people who take the role of mentors (Klinck et al. 2005). The Cree word for an aunt on the mother’s side of the family, ‘nikawiys’ translates to “little mother” defining this non-immediate family member in terms of her mother-like role toward her niece or nephew (Klinck et al., 2005, p. 114). The use of kin terms such as “big brother,” “big sister,” and “uncles at large” as references to non-kin mentors indicates the kin-like role they play in mentees’ lives (Klinck et al., 2005, p. 115). The circle of kinship can be made of one circle or a number of concentric circles, and these can be “interconnected by other circles” such as religious and social communities (Klinck et al., 2005). First Nations people customary tribal practices regarded children as a gift from the Creator, the whole tribe (or community) contributed to raising children, and everyone had a role to play in teaching the young (Klinck et al., 2005). The use of oral tradition (stories, games, and role modelling) and hands-on interactive learning were often used to set examples for the young (Klinck et al., 2005). From a First Nation perspective, “informal mentoring has also had a long history”, developing around shared societal values (Klinck et al., 2005, p. 112). First Nation views on education are “more holistic, rather than individualistic, and inclusive of immediate family, extended family, and the community” (Klinck et al., 2005, p. 113).

Mentoring has had a long history in traditional First Nation society developed around shared societal values and incorporating knowledge of Indigenous history and culture is very important for strengthening the relationship between mentor and mentee. Two major themes emerged from the data (1) there needs to be a relationship between the mentor, the mentee and the mentee’s family to ensure success and (2) challenges and solutions for mentoring programs. One challenge is having First Nation mentors matched with First nation youth to encourage cultural values. Two, solutions are to “use mentees as potential resources to help in group mentoring” (Klinck et al., 2005, p. 116) and “not to filter out potential First Nation mentors who may have had a troubled past but who have important experience to contribute” (Klinck et al., 2005, p. 125). A concern from participants is that the mentoring programmes try to “integrate into community structure and closely link with existing programmes” (Klinck et al., 2005, p. 124). A successful mentoring program connects to other programmes in the community with similar objectives. Community involvement encompasses following “proper protocol of the First Nation community which conveys respect and trust” (Klinck et al., 2005, p. 118) and, ownership of the programme means the First Nation community are “more likely to respect and feel connected to the programme” (Klinck et al., 2005, p. 119).

**Digital Technologies in Remote Regions**

Kral (2010) reported on Australian Aboriginal youth who are participating in non-formal community-based media and music production and digital community archiving projects in remote regions. Unusually “young Australian Aboriginals in bush communities have greater access in the non-school hours to media and computer-based resources” than in town (Kral, 2010, p. 6).
Aboriginal youth are engaging in this work because “culture, arts, country, new technologies and positive self-representation are the domains of knowledge that they can control” (Kral, 2010, p. 10). These activities positively affirm their “contemporary indigenous identity as well as their belongingness to globalised youth culture” (Kral, 2010, p. 15). Most significantly, however, these outcomes are demanding a “reassessment of preconceptions about indigenous youth literacy in this domain” (Kral, 2010, p. 15).

Digital technologies have enabled “new forms of media production and the composition of multimodal texts” that incorporate visual, oral, gestural and written modes of representation and communication (Kral, 2010, p. 2). What counts as literacy is now in historical transition, and Aboriginal young people in remote regions are at the vanguard of the creation of new cultural forms, “voluntarily engaging in self-initiated, self-directed activities that increasingly incorporate a multimedia aspect” (Kral, 2010, p. 2). Even Australian Aboriginal with “low levels of literacy is quickly able to grasp the intuitive problem-solving logic of digital cameras, MP3 players and computers” (Kral, 2010, p. 8). Australian Aboriginal youth participation is not contingent upon prior literacy or technological competence, but on “desperation to read the symbols on the computer screen in order to record their own songs” (Kral, 2010, p. 8). Films and songs produced by remote Australian Aboriginal youth forming a “repertoire of strikingly persistent and predictable localised themes and discourses” that bridge tradition and modernity (Kral, 2010, p. 11). The explosion in remote Australian Aboriginal youth digital media practice can be attributed to:

- The common use of digital media in youth-oriented programs in out-of-school hours
- The increased ownership of affordable, small, mobile digital media technologies such as MP3 players, iPods, mobile phones and digital cameras (Kral, 2010).

A consequence of the recent explosion in “digital media practice is innovations remote Indigenous youth are engaging in that support language and culture maintenance activities” (Kral, 2010, p. 10). Such media work is “validated by elders who need young people to mediate between old knowledge and new technologies” (Kral, 2010, p. 10). Young people are in control of their own self-representation and independent or peer developed productions by youth (writing, images, films, songs), tend to express a “humorous, joyful, love of life and validate their contemporary indigenous identity” (Kral, 2010, p. 11).

**Unity Rides and Runs**

Native youth sought an understanding of their First Nations identity through the experiential means, the Unity Rides and Runs, “learning their cultural history, values and principles”, as well as participating in cultural practices and ceremonies (Freeman, B., 2017. p. 69).
The Unity Rides and Runs are spiritual journeys which Native American youth travel on either by horseback or foot through America and Canada. This occurs during the summer months “reconnecting and unifying Native American communities with the land and natural environment, language, cultural practices”, and connecting to displaced relatives (Freeman, 2017, p. 63).

First Nations youth did not like “being framed in a negative light”—focusing on the problems and statistics of drug and alcohol use, suicides, high levels of poverty and unemployment, poor health, to name a few (Freeman, 2017, p. 63). The “Native American youth saw themselves as agents of change” and possess resiliency (Freeman, 2017, p. 63). The Native American youth are “longing to acquire and understand: their cultural knowledge; to participate in traditional ceremonies and practices”; to learn and understand their Native language; as well as having a sense of connection to their identity and belonging within their communities (Freeman, 2017, p. 64).

Table 1: Journeys of the Spirit of Youth Unity Rides and Runs from 2005 to 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Spirit of Youth Unity Rides and Runs</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Travelled from Grand River Pow Wow at Chiefswood Park, Six Nations, Ontario Canada and ran to the central fire of the Haudenosaunee—the Onondaga Nation (near Syracuse, New York)</td>
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<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Travelled from Onondaga nation and headed north and slightly eastward to the Mohawk Territories of Tyendinaga (Bay of Quinte, Ontario), Kahnawake (Montreal, Quebec), and Akwesasne (Cornwall, Ontario)</td>
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<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Travelled south from Akwesasne through New York State’s Adirondack Mountains and along the Hudson River to arrive at the United Nations in New York City on August 9, 2007, the International Day of the World’s Indigenous Peoples. Spirit of Youth continued to complete the journey for that year in the territory of the Pamunkey Nation in the state of Virginia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Travelled to the Native communities of the Tuscarora and the Cherokee Nations, and then westward to the state of Oklahoma in hopes of completing their journey in reconnecting with the Seneca and Cayuga people who were relocated to Indian Territory (Oklahoma) in 1831. Unfortunately, the Spirit of Youth faced many challenges during the 2008 Unity Run from limited financial resources to support themselves (food, fuel, camping, etc.) and little to no communal support (youth, parents or elders) from their home communities. The lack of resources and support contributed to the burnout and illness of five youth participants attempting to complete this final commitment and journey of the Unity Run. At the arrival of a waterway referred to as Indian Creek, near the town of Olivehill, Tennessee, the group decided they would complete their journey at this creek</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>The Spirit of the Youth group decided they would complete their Unity Run commitment, travelling from Indian Creek Tennessee May 22, 2011, to St. Paul, Minnesota for the 2011 World Peace and Prayer Day on June 21st</td>
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Five themes to understand how agency and resiliency developed through the Spirit of Youth Unity Rides and Runs are: 1) culture based activism; 2) the motivation and intent of participation; 3) the journey; 4) identity; and 5) well-being (Freeman, 2017).
Culture-based activism – Activism is the power of choice and the power to act for Native American youth, guided by cultural principles and spirituality. The Unity Runs allowed the “youth to look at their lives from the outside in” (Freeman, 2017, p. 67). The Unity Runs experience encompassed a spirituality of action/activism providing the opportunity “to become secure in their Native American identity, feel a sense of belonging and attain cultural knowledge and skills” which they could use in their contemporary life (Freeman, 2017, p. 67).

The motivation and intent of participation - Haudenosaunee youth or youth with Native American ancestry “sought out a cultural association through this experience” to find support, cultural strength, friendship and pride in who they were as Haudenosaunee (Freeman, 2017, p. 68).

The journey - The Unity Rides and Runs brought a hands-on, minds-on, as well a day to day bustle of movement and “come so close with the ones you’ve been on the Run; they become your family” (Freeman, 2017, p. 68).

Identity – the Native youth sought an understanding of “their First Nations identity through their relationship to land as a direct connection to their ancestors” (Freeman, 2017, p. 69). Those Native American youth who did not have a First Nation identity became “connected more to the spirit and everything living and, learnt to be humble and thankful”, learning a lot about themselves (Freeman, 2017, p. 70). Those youth who had a First Nation identity “opened their minds to asking questions” as to what it meant to be a Haudenosaunee or an Onkwehonwe person (Freeman, 2017, p. 70).

Some Native American youth felt “wellbeing is a song that resonates within you creating balance and peace” (Freeman, 2017, p. 70). Other Native Americans felt “wellbeing is a deep hole within feeling empty, lost or categorised” because of their meagre living conditions, lack of a cultural connection or because of the poor choices they had made (Freeman, 2017, p. 70). The Native American youth were clear about the physical and mental challenges of the Unity Run journey but “unaware of the emotional impact that such a journey would have on their well-being as an individual because it was so highly spiritual” and at the same time physically demanding (Freeman, 2017, p. 70). The youth began to understand “their well-being in relation to the living tenets of Kaianeren:kowa or the Great Law of Peace and The Good-Mind” (Freeman, 2017, p. 71).

Kaianew:ne is not just a “footpath,” it’s the energy it takes to make those two-foot prints. Each set you get loyanre, which means “it is good.” That’s why we have the energy to make those foot prints. We used that root word to make the word loyanre – “good” and kowa at the end just means... it’s extravagant like an exclamation mark... In English, they have a term, “common sense” (Freeman, 2017, p. 71).

The healing process is initiated by choice of First Nation young people to take part in the Spirit of Youth Rides and Runs and, First Nation communities to support the Rides and Runs. Haudenosaunee (First Nation) language, ceremonies and cultural knowledge are privileged in the Spirit of Youth Rides and Runs the result being youth able to find support, cultural strength, friendship and pride in who they were as Haudenosaunee. The healing model is for First Nation youth to gain a sense of hope and well-being of purpose as Native people through the foundation of First Nation culture, it mobilises youth into action which comes from an Indigenous perspective and “supports First Nation values, beliefs and epistemologies” (Freeman, 2017, p. 72).
Native American Ecological Assessment

An ecologically based assessment approach for at-risk behaviours of Indigenous youth populations has implications for the “development of culturally grounded primary prevention interventions” (Okamoto, LeCroy, Tann, Rayle, Kulis, Dustman, & Berceli, 2006, p. 3). Ecological theory is that the behaviour of an individual is dictated by their relationship to their environment hence the “ecological assessment for drug prevention of American Indian youth requires knowledge of the person, the habitat, and how these systems interact” (Okamoto et al., 2006). A sense of belonging to school has been shown to provide protection from drug use, family support was associated with less alcohol use, and a more intense sense of ethnic pride adhered more strongly to antidrug norms for American Indian youth (Okamoto et al., 2006).

The five-stage approach for conducting an ecologically based assessment of American Indian youth is as follows:

1. **Survey data** collected on drug attitudes and drug use among urban American Indian middle school students with the finding that American Indian students who had a more intense sense of ethnic pride adhered more strongly to antidrug norms than those who did not (Okamoto et al., 2006, p. 4).

2. **Focus groups** with American Indian middle school students, youth were asked to elaborate on drug situations considered problematic, and how they coped with the situation(s). The finding is a preference for resistance strategies to use “redirecting or avoiding/leaving” drug offers, while directly refusing drug offers is used as a last resort (Okamoto et al., 2006, p. 5).

3. **Drug-related problem situations** were developed from stage 2 focus group data and tested for social validity with another sample of American Indian youth. The findings are youth who reported exposure to more drug use opportunities through their parents, reported the more frequent use of alcohol and cigarettes, while exposure to drugs through cousins predicted more frequent use of marijuana. Exposure to drugs through parents predicted a higher frequency of recent substance use for girls and girls, “also received more drug offers and found it more difficult to refuse these offers than boys” (Okamoto et al., 2006, p. 6).

4. **Focus group** with American Indian middle school students to obtain a sample of likely responses to each drug-related problem situation. “The goal in this stage is to elicit the full range of potentially effective responses” (Okamoto et al., 2006, p. 6).

5. **Evaluation** of the degree of effectiveness of each of the potential courses of action regarding their likely effects or consequences obtained in Stage 4. Judgments of competence of each response must be made by a selection of community leaders, teachers, and helping professionals (Okamoto et al., 2006).

The outcomes of each stage of the Pilot built upon each other, and unique to this approach is the emphasis individuals within situations rather than on their personal attributes. Ecological assessment as evaluation of existing programmes can “lend insight into shortcomings found in generic drug prevention intervention programmes” (Okamoto et al., 2006, p. 9). The ecological assessment is “good at gauging the receptivity of the community to prevention efforts with a specific Indigenous youth population” (Okamoto et al., 2006, p. 9).
Culturally Grounded Drug Prevention Programme

(Okamoto et al., 2014) developed a culturally grounded drug prevention programme for rural Native Hawaiian youth. The culturally grounded approach places the culture of the participant at the centre of the intervention. Culturally grounded programs take much longer to develop and are quite expensive, e.g. the “pre-prevention phase in the development of a culturally grounded drug prevention program for rural Hawaiian youth spanned over four years” (Okamoto et al., 2014, p. 4).

The importance of the culturally grounded approach are:

1. The “cultural uniqueness of the indigenous youth populations”, e.g. colonisation and perceived discrimination (Okamoto et al., 2014, p. 5)
2. The “community investment and engagement with indigenous communities”, e.g. implementation and adoption of the future program have been promoted throughout various stages of the pre-prevention process (Okamoto et al., 2014).

Resistance skills training which provides strategies to refuse the offer of drugs has been found to be one of the more effective approaches toward youth drug prevention (Okamoto et al., 2014, p. 8). Wexler et al., (2009) support resistance against a non-indigenous culture can serve to legitimise and reinforce the positive aspects of one’s indigenous culture.

Sport

(Tatz, 2012) criticises Australia’s ignorance of the role of sports in alleviating Australian Aborigine youth suicide. In 1989 he began a five-year study which resulted in “a report on Australian Aborigines’ Sport, Violence and Survival” (Tatz, 2012, p. 924). ‘Kanyirinpa’ (a term from the Australian Aboriginal desert society) which is a manner “of holding, of looking after and nurturing young people is also a part of sport” (Tatz, 2012’ p. 928). Sport, especially the football codes, offer all young men in all cultures a mechanism for finding social meaning, ‘a space of enjoyment and sociality’, of not only being held or cradled but also of “being held together in the process of protection and of well-being” (Tatz, 2012, p. 929). The following conclusions on Australian Aboriginal youth suicide escalation regarding sport deflecting delinquent behaviour also apply to the way sport deflects, postpones or even deters suicidal thoughts through sports:

- Playing a more significant role in the lives of Aborigines;
- Providing a centrality, a sense of loyalty and cohesion that has replaced some of the ‘lost’ structures in communities;
- A vital force in the very survival of several communities now in danger of social disintegration;
- Reducing considerable internalised violence;
- Keeping youth out of serious (and mischievous) trouble during football and basketball seasons;
- Has given autonomy and sovereignty when they organise sport and culture carnivals – such as at Yuendumu and Barunga in the Northern Territory;
- Takes place despite the absence of facilities, equipment, money for travel, discrimination against teams and access to regular competition;
- Takes place in circumstances and environments that resemble Somalia in drought time;
- Is essential to counter the morale and moral despair of many Aborigines (Tatz, 2012, p. 926).

Sport is alleviating suicidal actions in Aborigine and Torres Strait Islanders through providing meaning and purpose in life by “(1) creating a work or doing a deed and (2) experiencing something positive or encountering someone” (Tatz, 2012, p. 930).
Ware & Meredith (2013) have identified broad principles for effectively implementing sports or recreation programs and a range of successful practices in sport and recreation programmes for Aborigine and Torres Strait Islanders. Further research promotes continuing to build a body of evaluation as causal links between sports or recreation programs, and specific outcomes are almost impossible to demonstrate. Sport and recreation programs research needs “to provide additional evidence around the nature of the benefits and the mechanisms to produce benefits” (Ware and Meredith, 2013, p. 16).

Resilience in Indigenous Youth Programmes

It is clear from the research any education programme offered for indigenous youth must address the factors that promote resilience for combating mental health challenges among indigenous youth (Allen, James, Hopper, Kim, Wexler, Lisa, Kral, Michael, Rasmus, Stacy and Nystad, Kristine, 2014).

Ecological Model of Human Resilience

Indigenous young people resilience in five Circumpolar communities (Alaska Inupiat and Yup’ik youth, Canada Inuit youth, Norwegian Sami youth and Siberian youth), is a “dynamic process encompassing positive adaptation within the context of significant adversity” (Allen, Hopper, Wexler, Kral, Rasmus, & Nystad, 2014, p. 5). This led to an ecological model of human resilience, which views the human context (culture, community, kinship, and family) as nested levels of influence that shape resilience processes (Allen et al., 2014, p. 6). The following describes four principles implicit in ecological understandings of indigenous youth resilience – decentrality, complexity, atypicity, and cultural relativity:

- Decentrality - resilience’ as broader social-ecological levels of understanding through which environments provide resources for strategic use.
- Complexity – complexity underscores what it takes to make resources useable— available, accessible, and meaningful within the tight, kinship-based organisational structures of the many Indigenous communities in question.
- Atypicality - unusual behaviour patterns may be locally functional in a distinctively configured cultural ecology. For example, Indigenous young people in these Circumpolar communities engage in activities that to the majority would appear risky and adverse, activities like drug-dealing and defence-training however in these communities there are few other paths to the protection of self, family and community.
- Cultural relativity – Cultural relativity, along with the principle of complexity, means resilience in specific cultural groups involves a choice to resist dominant cultural norms in favour of Indigenous coping strategies, as Indigenous communities invoke acts of opposition in response to colonial domination (Allen et al., 2014, p. 6).

This ecological study of indigenous youth resilience involved the context first and the child second, the reason being positive outcomes are mostly the result of facilitative environments that provide children with the potential to do well (Allen et al., 2014). Central to data gathering is “the young people’s stories” which offer a distinct lens on unsettled ways of life that require resilience and successful pathways to adulthood (Allen et al., 2014, p. 12).
The stories are written as separate papers with locally salient themes from each of the five circumpolar communities. The young people growing up in the five communities identify the stressors that make for difficult passages to adulthood and the resilience processes that safeguard transition into adulthood. The researchers interest are in the local capacity for accommodating departures from the standard version of making the passage to adulthood—variations in pathways that are either “valued as alternatives, or provided for in ways that amount to compensatory assistance” (Allen et al., 2014, p. 16)

**Māori Youth Risk and Protective Factors for Suicide**

“Māori youth, risk and protective factors associated with suicide attempts and whether family connection diminishes the relationship between depressive symptoms and suicide attempts” are analysed in this study (Clark et al., 2011, p. 16). “1702 Māori young people aged 12–18 years participated in an anonymous representative national school-based survey of New Zealand youth in 2001” (Clark et al., 2011, p. 16).

Resilience was defined based on the theory that “an individual bounces back when faced with adversity if certain protective factors and resources are present” ((Clark et al., 2011, p. 25). The protective factors associated with suicide attempts by Māori students are:

- Have a friend that they could talk to if they had a serious problem,
- Being proud to be Māori,
- Learning from parents, relatives, Marae, and Kohanga Reo about the Māori culture
- Know people in the neighbourhood, and
- Spiritual beliefs are important to me (Clark et al., 2011, p. 24).

The risk factors associated with suicide attempts by Māori students were identified as family violence, sexual abuse, exposure to a friend or family member who had committed suicide, depressive symptoms and feeling uncomfortable in Pākehā social surroundings (Clark et al., 2011, p. 15). The last risk factor, ‘feeling uncomfortable in Pākehā social surroundings’ and the analysis that ‘school connection’ is not protective for suicide attempts led researchers to suggest “students’ perceptions reflect racism in the school environment” (Clark et al., 2011, p. 25).

*Family connection* works to “reduce suicide attempts” rather than being a protective factor for suicide attempts (Clark et al., 2011, p. 26). Evidence suggests that programs that help parents to develop “positive parenting skills can help reduce mental health problems in their children” (Clark et al., 2011, p. 26). Suicide prevention programmes for Māori youth that “prioritise indigenous youth mental health and support indigenous philosophies of family well-being and connection” reduces the risk for suicide attempt for Māori youth across all levels of risk (Clark et al., 2011, p. 26).

**Protective Factors that Support Resilience**

More than 40 protective factors of mental health are identified to promote resilience for Circumpolar Indigenous youth which is categorised as community level, family level and individual level (MacDonald, Joanna, Ford, James, Willow, Ashlee and Ross, Nancy, 2013). Identification of “protective factors for the resilience of mental health of indigenous circumpolar youth” is only the beginning (MacDonald et al., 2013, p. 17). Future studies need to understand “the pathways and processes through which protective factors create and enhance individual and community resilience” (MacDonald et al., 2013, p. 17).
Protective factors at the family and community levels were identified as positively creating and impacting one’s social environment, which interacts with factors at the individual level to enhance resilience (MacDonald et al., 2013, p. 1). Table 1 below shows the alignment of protective factors found in the literature catalogued against community, family and individual levels.

**Table 1: Community-level, Family-level and Individual-level protective factors identified in the literature review**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community Level</th>
<th>Family Level</th>
<th>Individual Level</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Positive role models</td>
<td>A close relationship with parents</td>
<td>Belief in self</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The sense of collective responsibility and community connectedness</td>
<td>Affection and praise</td>
<td>A sense of purpose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The sense of belonging to the community</td>
<td>Models of sobriety and safe/protective family environment</td>
<td>Physically being in home community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meaningful opportunities to be involved in community or school community</td>
<td>Transmission of expectations and values</td>
<td>Wanting to contribute, be useful to others, take care of others and give back to the community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community-wide limits/standards/expectations</td>
<td>The family history of having received treatment for a psychiatric problem</td>
<td>Mindfulness and awareness of the consequences of one’s individual actions upon the community</td>
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<tr>
<td>Safe places</td>
<td>Parental approval of friends</td>
<td>Reflection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supportive, caring, encouraging, cohesive communities that show concern and reach out to youth</td>
<td>The sense of being treated as special/being valued</td>
<td>The sense of responsibility to oneself, family, and/or community</td>
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<tr>
<td>Strong relationships with community members (peers or other adults)</td>
<td>Kinship structure (i.e. family connectedness and importance of extended family and adopted kin)</td>
<td>Learning values of harmony and co-operation as well as autonomy and hardiness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentorship from older generations</td>
<td>Native language learned at home and competence in the native language</td>
<td>High level of academic achievement</td>
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<tr>
<td>Continuous communication, talking, and interaction</td>
<td>Ethnic socialisation at home</td>
<td>Cultural/ethnic identity and/or affiliation and pride</td>
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<tr>
<td>Regular church attendance</td>
<td></td>
<td>Traditional knowledge, cultural values, and practice (e.g. being out on the land, doing subsistence activities, attending tribal events, listening to traditional stories)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community control</td>
<td></td>
<td>Systems of reciprocity and reciprocal bonds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural revitalisation</td>
<td></td>
<td>Physical activity and active lifestyle and staying busy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community recognition, respect, and appreciation</td>
<td></td>
<td>Self-reliance (e.g. seeking support from a friend, keeping a journal, creatively handling problems)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community-wide limits/standards/expectations</td>
<td></td>
<td>Being committed to community and culture</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Protective factors are conditions or attributes (skills, strengths, resources, supports or coping strategies) in individuals, families, communities or the larger society that help indigenous youth deal more effectively with stressful events and mitigate or eliminate risk in families and communities.

**Protection Offered by Ideological Commitment**

(Wexler, Lisa, DiFluvio, Gloria and Burke, Tracey, 2009) argue resilience research tends to neglect the heart of the matter: the value native people and their communities place on risk and protective factors, especially when they do not fit within society’s dominant paradigms. Native (Native American and Native Alaskan) and sexual minority youth though dissimilar in many ways are “remarkably similar processes related to marginalisation, identity and resilience” (Wexler et al., 2009, p. 566). The proposition is the potential protection offered by an ideological commitment to the indigenous culture or sexual minority culture and, resistance against a non-indigenous culture or heteronormative culture can serve to “legitimise and reinforce the positive aspects of native cultural identity or sexual minority identity” (Wexler et al., 2009, p. 568). Instead of internalising subtle forms of oppression through society’s dominant paradigms, a “strong cultural identity, for example, distinguishes a Native young person from the dominant society and offers him or her a way to positively understand this difference” (Wexler et al., 200, p. 567). Group affiliation can help a young person reconceptualise personal difficulty as a collective struggle, and in so doing, “ideological commitment and resistance against oppression may foster positive health outcomes” (Wexler et al., 2009:566)

Making a personal contribution toward a larger purpose can take the following forms:

- Participating in subsistence instead of the wage-based economy
- Getting an education to fight for sovereignty rights effectively
- Speaking one’s indigenous language (Wexler et al., 2009, p. 567)

The value of the larger purpose seems to lie at the intersection between personal and collective well-being (Wexler et al., 2009, p. 567).

Resilience is underscored by collective sense-making since “to acknowledge a group’s collective experience of discrimination ensures individual members of that group do not blame themselves for their hardship” (Wexler et al., 2009, p. 568). Group awareness can create a foundation for collective mobilisation because it elevates personal pain into a shared arena that can encompass a transcendent purpose or sustaining commitment, both of which have been found to promote healthy youth development. Resilience is seen as a dynamic process where individuals are better able to understand themselves and their experiences within a larger context.

**Wellness in Indigenous People**

Wellness is addressed using indigenous peoples constructs of mental health and the individual’s spirit. Critical reflection and reflexivity helps First Nation youth rediscover untapped resources and capacities, with the effect of strengthening bonds with extended family members and community (Adermann & Campbell, 2007; White, 2007).
Anxiety Research Programme

The Australian Aboriginal conceptualisation of mental health was described as “wellness” of physical, mental, cultural and spiritual aspects of a person for example time spent away from homelands weakened the spirit, which was detrimental to mental health (Adermann & Campbell, 2007, p. 75). Australian Aboriginal thinking is that self, community, and the universe, or the mind, body, and spirit are not separated (Adermann & Campbell, 2007, p. 75). Assessing anxiety in Australian Aboriginal children and adolescents needs to consider the differing Australian Aboriginal constructs of mental health (Adermann & Campbell, 2007, p. 76). Children with anxiety often experience difficulties in responding appropriately to normal developmental challenges and addressing these issues as early as possible can have a positive impact upon learning and on life outcomes (Adermann & Campbell, 2007, p. 78).

The approach for researching excessive anxiety in Australian Aboriginal young people research programme is as follows:

- Use the question of ‘Australian Aboriginal community benefit’ to inform the design, conduct and evaluation of the research programme
- Build quality relationships with Australian Aboriginal participants through reflective listening and qualitative research methods
- Advisory group to advise on the research process and validate representations
- Focus groups to enable Australian Aboriginal young people, parents and teachers to ascertain Indigenous constructs of mental health and excessive anxiety and, to sample a range of appropriate anxiety assessments.
- Cultural consultant with cultural knowledge and the language to assist researcher validation, appropriateness of assessment and access to communities.
- Time to learn the culture and protocols and, to build trust (Adermann & Campbell, 2007).

Counselling

White’s (2007) curiosity was captured by one young man’s elaborate description of how, to him, suicide represented a breach of the contract with the Creator (2007:223). Curiosity contextualises the counsellor’s perspective and introduces a level of subjectivity that enables others to see the counsellor’s questions and claims as one perspective among possible others. (White, Jennifer, 2007) demonstrates the relevance and value of critically reflecting when counselling First Nation youth and communities for suicide prevention using curiosity, critical reflection and reflexivity.

The therapeutic process enabled him to rediscover untapped resources and capacities, with the effect of strengthening his bonds with extended family members and his community. Critical reflection on the counsellor’s practice in open dialogue with the clients and communities the counsellor serves “develops a new form of accountability” (White, Jennifer, 2007).

First Nation communities respond to the loss of one of their community members by organising gatherings based on their traditions, beliefs, mourning rituals, and spiritual practices as a way to facilitate healing and honour the person who has died (p. 217). Community-based practice dictates against any large-scale, emotionally charged communal gathering when tragedy occurs (White, 2007, p.217). Critical reflection in this context asks the questions:
Who has initiated this healing process?
What does it mean to be an insider or outsider in this situation?
Which/whose knowledge should be privileged?
Whose protocols should prevail?
What might compromise or integration look like?
What are the risks and opportunities?
Does the approach divide and isolate people or give them a sense of community and collaboration (White, 2007, p. 217)?

Reflexivity is a process of destabilising taken-for-granted ideas and being conscientious of, and transparent about, the impact of one’s history, biases, and assumptions on what and how I as the counsellor knows, thinks and writes (White, Jennifer, 2007). For example, instead of using language like “non-Aboriginal” when describing myself (the counsellor), it is more fruitful for me to “give a more detailed account of myself” (White, Jennifer, 2007). This detailed account from the counsellor serves to hint at the power of language in shaping social meanings and qualifies my counsellor knowledge as local and giving up my expert position for more collaborative practice (White, Jennifer, 2007).

Conclusion

Taiohi (Māori young) rites of passage the transition stage from adolescence to adulthood serves to strengthen taiohi cultural identity. Acquiring of responsibility and making decisions reflective of that increased responsibility is a critical element of rites of passage requiring both the support of whānau and cultural connections within taiohi environments.

Due to the diversity of whānau and taiohi pathways, a collective community-wide approach to creating meaningful learning opportunities is required. The suggestion is to consider learning opportunities such as mentoring, digital technologies, the Spirit of Youth Unity Rides and Runs, ecological assessment, culturally grounded drug prevention, sport and recreation programmes practised with indigenous youth in other countries.

Mentoring has had a long history in traditional First Nation society developed around shared societal values and incorporating knowledge of Indigenous history and culture to strengthen the relationship between mentor and mentee. A key concern from participants in mentoring programmes is for the mentoring programmes to “integrate into community structure and closely link with existing programmes.”

Digital technologies have enabled Aboriginal youth in bush communities the creation of new multimedia cultural forms through voluntarily engaging in self-initiated, self-directed activities. Low literacy levels of some Australian Aboriginals do not affect them grasping the intuitive problem-solving logic of digital cameras”, MP3 players and computers.

The digital practice Australian Aboriginal youth are engaging in support language and culture maintenance activities validated by elders who need young people to mediate between old knowledge and new technologies.
First Nations youth saw themselves as agents of change and in possession of resilience but longing to acquire and understand: their cultural knowledge; to participate in traditional ceremonies and practices; to learn and understand their Native language; as well as having a sense of connection to their identity and belonging within their communities. The Native American youth were clear about the physical and mental challenges of the Unity Run journey but unaware of the emotional impact that such a journey would have on their well-being as an individual because it was so highly spiritual and at the same time physically demanding.

Ecological assessment gauges the receptivity of the community to prevention efforts with a specific Indigenous youth population and provides suggestions for culturally grounded primary prevention interventions. Sport provides Aborigine and Torres Strait Islanders with meaning and purpose in life by “(1) creating a work or doing a deed and (2) experiencing something or encountering someone. Recreation programmes also provide meaning and purpose in life for indigenous youth. The challenge is to provide additional evidence on the nature of the benefits and the mechanisms to produce benefits for sports and recreation programmes.

The resilience of indigenous young people in Circumpolar communities marks the capacity of indigenous youth to accommodate departures from the standard version of making the passage to adulthood. Māori youth have developed protective factors and risk factors to improve resilience and prevent suicide. A considerable number of protective factors have likewise been identified for indigenous young people in Circumpolar communities that help indigenous youth deal with stressful events and mitigate or eliminate risk in families and communities. Finally, resilience is supported through the protection offered by ideological commitment. Wellness and wellbeing are synonymous in this literature review. The wellbeing of indigenous youth today is best served by indigenous knowledge from the time before contact with colonising influences.


