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TRAUMA INFORMED CARE SEMINAR CONNECTS TRAUMA WITH HEALTH ISSUES



Vice President Jonathan Nez said he was thankful for the new approaches that were presented during the seminar.

WINDOW ROCK, ARIZ-The Office of the President and Vice President (OPVP) along with the Navajo Nation Judicial Branch and Casey Family Programs presented a seminar on Trauma Informed Care at the Navajo Nation Museum on Nov. 30 and Dec. 1. The purpose was to educate attendees on how trauma can affect mental and physical wellness.

When individuals have been severely impacted by trauma but neglect to address the trauma, it can impact their mental health and short-and-long term wellness. Trauma informed care aims to engage people with histories of trauma, recognize the presence of trauma symptoms and acknowledge the role that trauma has played in their lives.

Vice President Jonathan Nez said he was thankful for the new approaches that were presented to understanding “the monsters that trouble our people”.

“This new research shows what we Navajos have understood for years. Through the strength of Navajo families and traditions, we are able to build and reinforce resilience,” he said.

Yvonne Kee-Billison, Executive Staff Assistant with OPVP, helped organize the seminar and said she felt it was successful in educating and providing instruction on how to deal with trauma.

“It was awesome that everyone received education about this subject,” she said. “We were able to have discussions about trauma

and not only in a negative sense. We talked about positive, proactive measures and using resiliency factors.”

Billison said it's important to come together in large groups to address the issues surrounding trauma and how it affects the health of individuals and communities.

Dr. Michael Yellowbird presented on diseases like diabetes and heart disease and how they are related to trauma. When addressing these diseases in a Trauma Informed Care approach, he said it's important for people to change their behaviors while also realizing how diet affect overall health.

“He stressed the importance of not worrying about the past and future but being grounded in the here and now,” Billison said. “The brain is the important part of our body. It's critical in regulating all other parts of the body. That's powerful when you put it into perspective with trauma.”

OPVP extends gratitude to all participants who attended and those partners who assisted in organizing and facilitating the event. The work that the attendees engaged in during the seminar impacts individual lives, the health of the community and the Navajo Nation.

“Living healthy is one of the keys to helping our Navajo Nation,” Vice President Nez said. “We embrace the approach of Trauma Informed Care and ask all communities to join us.”

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