23rd Navajo Nation Council
Office of the Speaker

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Delegate Nathaniel Brown encourages Native youth to help end teen dating violence

Photo: Council Delegate Nathaniel Brown addresses Native American youth regarding youth dating violence at the Urban Indian Center of Salt Lake on May 26, 2018 in Salt Lake City, Utah.

SALT LAKE CITY, Utah – Council Delegate Nathaniel Brown (Chilchinbeto, Dennehotso, Kayenta) was invited to be a guest speaker at the "Native Youth Conference: Educating and Preventing Dating Violence" to several Native American youth at the Urban Indian Center of Salt Lake.

The focus of the conference was to educate Native youth ages 14-24 regarding dating violence, skills to develop healthy dating relationships, provide resources to youth for positive communication, conflict resolution, and skills to manage a more holistic view of "the self."

According to a report from the Coalition to Stop Violence Against Native Women, Native youth experience violent crimes up to 10-times the national average, and dating violence accounts for nearly 75-percent of Native youth deaths such as fatal physical injuries, homicide, and suicide. One-in-three Native youth will be the victim of dating violence and sexual assault in their lifetime.

Delegate Brown provided a presentation on dating violence statistics and stressed that native cultural values and language are the forefront of understanding and developing healthy relationships.

“I feel it is important that our Native youth are provided traditional and cultural guidance from their parents, medicine people, and mentors in order for them to not only understand themselves at an individual level, but to foster healthy relationship by reflecting on their Native identity and their indigenous values from the home areas they come from,” said Delegate Brown.

Delegate Brown asked the Native youth to reflect on their Native identities for healthy dating goals and questioned, “What is appropriate in relationships? How can you encourage respect with your partner, and how can we utilize our indigenous identities to aid in preventing dating violence?”

In response, students were able to participate in a drawing contest to illustrate what healthy dating could look like when Native identity is encouraged. Many of the youth drew pictures and messages that conveyed the importance of traditional protocol such as respecting the clanship system, traditional male and female gender roles through coming of age ceremonies, and promoting respectful dialogue.

The CSVANW report states that teen dating violence is a type of violence that happens between two young people in a relationship. The nature of the harmful and aggressive behavior can be physical, emotional, sexual, or technological abuse.

Delegate Brown utilized traditional Navajo examples for Native youth such as clanship and respecting familial boundaries, guidance from Diné elders, and the teaching of respect and discipline through the male and female kinaałda ceremony, or coming of age ceremony. He added that it was important for parents and adults to be role models to the youth in their own family and marriage relationships.

“It is everyone’s job, not just the parents and guardians, but we as uncles, aunties, friends, and peers to raise our young Native children and to work collectively to protect them to make sure that we keep an eye on them. The most important thing is that we guide them and we supply them with all the information about dating violence,” said Delegate Brown.

He added that the youth, parents, Native relatives, elders, and mentors have the power to help end dating violence, and stressed that youth who may be in an unhealthy relationship seek help from a counselor, mentor, parent(s), and peers. When it is appropriate, youth should also

consider healing through traditional means such as prayer, medicine, and ceremonies to strengthen themselves mentally and spiritually.

For more information regarding Native youth dating violence, please visit the Coalition to Stop Violence Against Native Women website: https://www.csvanw.org/. Attached is a fact sheet regarding the impacts of youth dating violence compiled by the coalition.

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IMPACT OF DATING & OTHER VIOLENCE ON NATIVE YOUTH

Teen dating violence is physical, sexual, psychological or emotional violence within a dating relationship, including stalking, as defined by the Centers for Disease Control.

Dating violence occurs among all genders and types of relationships.

PHYSICAL
When one person uses physical violence, such as hitting, shoving, kicking, pinching or strangling

EMOTIONAL
When one person harms the other person's self-worth, such name calling, blaming, shaming, controlling, and gas lighting.

SEXUAL
Any sex act where there is no consent, or forcing one's partner to engage in sex, send nudes or request sexts that are unwanted

STALKING
Pattern of unwanted harassment or threatening tactics to cause fear. Also includes cyber-stalking and physical stalking.

DATING VIOLENCE & ABUSE

RELATIONSHIP VIOLENCE & ABUSE

INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE

CONSENT

PATRIARCHY

BULLYING

CYBER BULLYING

RAPE CULTURE

THE IMPACTS ARE SIGNIFICANT
(www.LoveisRespect.Org)

Everyone deserves relationships grounded in mutual respect.

Let's work to teach our youth healthy relationships.

1 in 3
teens are victims of dating violence

ONLY
33%
of teens say they told someone after experiencing dating violence

82%
of parents feel confident they could recognize teen dating violence but more than half of these parents could not correctly identity signs of abuse

LGBTQ IMPACT

New Mexico LBGTQ youth and youth who were unsure about their sexuality were three times more likely to be forced to have sex (18.3%), or experienced physical dating violence (21.3%). These teens were also twice as likely to be bullied at school compared with straight youth.

(Tomedi, 2017)

Violence between peers is also high among youth who self-identify their sexual orientation, especially among Native youth. More than 50% of Native LGBTQ students reported experiencing physical violence at school because of their sexual orientation more than 1 in 3 reported missing class at least once a month for fear of being bullied or harassed.

(Tomedi, 2017)

CONSEQUENCES

Youth experiencing intimate partner violence may have increased risk of:

- Substance abuse
- Self- Harm
- Violence towards others
- Suicide

CSVANW RECOMMENDATIONS

- Support community education and outreach to increase knowledge about healthy relationships, healthy sexual relationships, healthy communication and healthy boundaries.
- Support age-appropriate education in schools and communities that use peer-to-peer based models.

RESOURCES

LoveIsRespect
24/7/365
Helpline: 1-866-331-9474
Text "loveis" to 22522
Services including empowering youth to prevent and end dating abuse.

NM Domestic Violence Resource Center
Helpline: 505-248-3165
Services include helping individuals and families experiencing domestic violence.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Department of Health and Human Services. (2016). *Understanding Teen Dating Violence: Fact Sheet.*

Green D., et al. 2016. *New Mexico Youth Risk and Resiliency Survey: High School Survey Results 2015, McKinley County*. Epidemiology and Response Division, NMDOH, NMPED and UNM Prevention Research Center.

Preston Mitchum and Aisha C. Moodie-Mills. 2014. *Beyond Bullying: How Hostile School Climate Perpetuates the School-to-Prison Pipeline for LGBT Youth*. Center for American Progress.

Tomedi L, et al., 2017. *The Health and Well-Being of Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Youth in New Mexico: Data from the 2015 New Mexico Youth Risk & Resiliency Survey*. NMDOH, NMPED and UNM Prevention Research Center.

COALITION to STOP VIOLENCE AGAINST NATIVE WOMEN

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