

**STRONGHEARTS**  
Native Helpline

# Who We Are



The story of the **StrongHearts Native Helpline** began in 2012 when the National Indigenous Women's Resource Center (NIWRC) and the National Domestic Violence Hotline (The Hotline) began discussing the need for a domestic violence hotline to support tribal communities across the United States. With input from tribal leaders, a Native women's council, domestic violence experts, and the Family Violence Prevention and Services Program, the two organizations began laying the groundwork to develop a Native-centered hotline staffed by advocates with a strong understanding of American Indian cultures, as well as issues of tribal sovereignty and law.

Their vision became a reality with the creation of the **StrongHearts Native Helpline (StrongHearts)** in January 2017, made possible by support from the Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Family and Youth Services Bureau, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. StrongHearts is a culturally-appropriate, anonymous, confidential service dedicated to serving Native American survivors of domestic violence and concerned family members and friends. By dialing 1-844-7NATIVE (1-844-762-8483) Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. CST, callers can connect one-on-one at no cost with knowledgeable StrongHearts advocates who can provide lifesaving tools and immediate support to enable survivors to find safety and live lives free of abuse.

StrongHearts is a partnered effort, combining the technology and infrastructure of The Hotline with NIWRC's expertise and community connections, as well as the trust of Native advocacy groups.

***[strongheartshelpline.org](http://strongheartshelpline.org)***



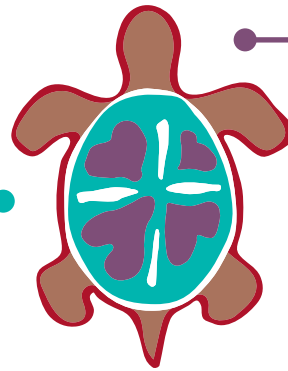
# Our Logo

**Purple** connects back to the mission to end domestic violence.

**Teal** represents the recharging of spirits, calmness and rejuvenation. It is a sacred color representing life and spirituality.

**Red** reflects both feminine and masculine energy. It is a sacred color with ties to strength, determination and bravery for many tribes.

**Brown** is related to the earth and connects to security, safety and protection for many tribes.



For many tribal communities, the **turtle** symbolizes our Turtle Island, or Mother Earth — the provider of protection and the spiritual embodiment of calmness, patience and resilience. As the logo for the StrongHearts Native Helpline, it personifies the strength of Native survivors, as well as the wisdom, support and safety StrongHearts advocates can provide through the helpline.

## STRONGHEARTS Native Helpline



# What We Do

**Every caller has a story.** At the StrongHearts Native Helpline, advocates are trained to take a Native-centered, empowerment-based and trauma-informed approach to every call. We take calls from Native American victims of domestic violence or dating violence, people who identify as abusive, concerned family members or friends, or from anyone seeking help for someone else. By sharing our stories of domestic violence and dating violence, we believe we can begin a path toward healing together.



StrongHearts advocates treat every caller with dignity and respect. By dialing 1-844-7NATIVE (1-844-762-8483) Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. CST, callers can speak with an advocate with a strong understanding of American Indian and Alaska Native cultures as well as issues of tribal sovereignty and law that can provide:

- **Immediate support**
- **Crisis intervention**
- **Personalized, practical safety planning**
- **Referrals to culturally-appropriate services**
- **Education and information**

In the situation where a caller reaches the StrongHearts Native Helpline outside normal business hours, they will have the option to connect with an advocate at the National Domestic Violence Hotline or to call back the next business day.



# Spokespeople



**Lucy Rain Simpson**

*Executive Director  
National Indigenous Women's Resource Center*

An attorney in Indian country for nearly 20 years, **Lucy Rain Simpson** harnesses a wealth of legal and public policy experience working with Indian nations to promote tribal sovereignty and tribal code development, and protect Native women and their families. As the Executive Director of the National Indigenous Women's Resource Center (NIWRC), she oversees the organization's policy development and grassroots advocacy efforts aimed at enhancing tribal communities' response to domestic violence. Prior to joining the NIWRC team, Simpson served as Senior Staff Attorney for the Indian Law Resource Center, where she helped create the "Safe Women, Strong Nations" project to address the U.S. epidemic of violence against Native women. A citizen of Navajo Nation, she lives on the Northern Cheyenne Indian Reservation near Lame Deer, Montana.



**Katie Ray-Jones**

*Chief Executive Officer  
National Domestic Violence Hotline*

**Katie Ray-Jones** is the chief executive officer of the National Domestic Violence Hotline and loveisrespect, a hotline service and support system for young people in abusive relationships. She is a recognized leader in the domestic violence movement and has extensive experience working with victims and survivors. Ray-Jones has managed emergency shelter and housing programs, as well as nonresidential services for survivors and their children. Prior to her appointment as CEO of The Hotline, she served as operations director and then president of the organization. Currently, Ray-Jones also serves as treasurer of the board of directors for the National Resource Center on Domestic Violence, and is a member of the National Task Force to End Domestic and Sexual Violence.



# Spokespeople



**Lori Jump**

*Assistant Director  
StrongHearts Native Helpline*

**Lori Jump**, a member of the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians, is the Assistant Director of the StrongHearts Native Helpline. Previously, Lori served as Executive Director of Uniting Three Fires Against Violence, a coalition that provides training, technical assistance and resources to improve the capacity of tribal communities in Michigan to respond to domestic and sexual violence. She brings a wealth of tribal advocacy and criminal justice experience to StrongHearts having held several positions within the Sault Tribe criminal justice system before officially taking over as Program Manager of the Advocacy Resource Center. Under her leadership, the center expanded from one staff member to a staff of 14, including shelter and advocacy staff and an attorney to provide civil legal representation to victims of domestic and sexual violence. Lori is also an Appellate Court Judge for the Sault Ste. Marie Chippewa Tribal Court and previously served as a member of the Section 904 Task Force, appointed by Attorney General Eric Holder.



**Cherrah Giles**

*Chairwoman, Board of Directors  
National Indigenous Women's Resource Center*

A citizen of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation and of Cherokee descent, **Cherrah Giles** is a nationally recognized leader and advocate on domestic violence awareness in tribal communities. Among her many accomplishments, she served on the Muscogee (Creek) Nation National Council as the youngest female elected to-date and as Cabinet Secretary of the Department of Community & Human Services, where she oversaw 12 of the Nation's direct service programs. Named an "Unsung Hero" by The Mary Kay Foundation in 2014, Giles also co-founded the Mvskoke Women's Leadership and is an active member in the community – previously serving on the Board of Directors for Tulsa Day Center for the Homeless and Iron Gate Soup Kitchen and Food Pantry, among other Native advocacy organizations. Giles is Fuswvlke (Bird Clan) from Rekackv (Broken Arrow) Tribal Town, and she received her Master of Social Work degree from the University of Oklahoma.



# Domestic Violence in Tribal Communities



For American Indians and Alaska Natives, the rates of violence are alarming.



**Most Native American men and women have experienced violence:<sup>1</sup>**

**More than 4 in 5 (84%)**

**More than 1.5 million women | More than 1.4 million men**

More than half (56%) of Native American women were **assaulted or raped and/or experienced physical violence** by an intimate partner in their lifetimes.<sup>1</sup>

Native American women are victims of violent crimes at **3.5x the rate of the national average**. In the past year alone, an estimated 730,000 Native American women were victims of violent crimes.<sup>1</sup>

Compared to all other races in the U.S., Native American women and men are 2x more likely to experience rape or sexual assault, 2.5x more likely to experience violent crimes and **5x more likely to be victims of homicide** in their lifetimes.<sup>1</sup>

Homicide is the third leading cause of death for Native American women. Of homicides against Native American women, more than **three out of four (76%) were killed by an intimate partner**.<sup>1</sup>



Native victims of domestic violence and dating violence on reservations can also face unique barriers in seeking safety and support services, including:

**Geographic isolation** (ex. living in a rural tribal community far from town and appropriate services)

**Lack of law enforcement** (ex. in remote areas)

**Fear of being identified** when seeking help or services in one's own small, tight-knit community

**Fear of retaliation** from the abusive partner or their family, or of being shunned by their tribal community

**Lack of trust** between victims of abuse and local law enforcement authorities

*NOTE: All data is relative to the United States and does not factor in international figures.*

<sup>1</sup> 2016 National Institute of Justice (NIJ) Research Report: *Violence Against American Indian and Alaska Native Women and Men*



# Non-Native Violence

**As Native American people, we know that violence is unnatural, and prior to colonization, domestic violence, dating violence, rape and child abuse were almost unheard of.** Colonization tactics directly targeted Native women — by attacking Native women, both physically and in their social status, colonizing forces knew that tribal values would begin to erode and thereby tribal sovereignty would diminish. Because women form the backbone of our tribal communities, they aimed to destroy the foundation of our Native nations by attacking women, their identity and their sacred role within their communities.

The legacy of colonization lives on in the current epidemic of violence against Native women, and in the growing intimate partner violence against men, LGBTQ and two spirited people.

**Ending domestic violence is about reclaiming our traditional, non-violent, respect-based belief systems** and understanding the important and different roles that men, women, children, two spirit, LGBTQ and elders play in our societies.



**Interracial violence is more prevalent in tribal communities than violence between tribal members, with non-Native perpetrators committing most of the violent crimes against Native people.**

Compared to their white counterparts, Native American women are **5x as likely to experience physical violence** by an interracial partner. Similarly, Native American men are 5x as likely to experience physical violence by an interracial partner.<sup>1</sup>

Non-Native perpetrators commit domestic violence and/or sexual assault on reservations at **significantly higher rates** than Native Americans.<sup>1</sup>

In 2014, the Justice Department reported that in 86% of the reported cases of rape or sexual assault against Native American women (both on and off reservations), the **victims identified their attackers as non-Native men.**<sup>2</sup>

*NOTE: Studies consistently indicate that women are disproportionately the victims of domestic violence, and most of those crimes are committed by men against women.<sup>3</sup> Nonetheless, it is important to recognize that domestic violence can and does occur in two spirit and LGBTQ relationships and against men perpetrated by women. As such, it is important to stress that culturally based, confidential support and services should apply equally to all domestic violence survivors, whether female, male, LGBTQ or two spirited.<sup>4</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/249736.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.amnestyusa.org/pdfs/mazeofinjustice.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Bureau of Justice Statistics, NCJ 187635 (Oct. 2001)

<sup>4</sup> Family Violence and Prevention Services Act (FVPSA) or other federally funded tribal programs may not discriminate based on age, disability, race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or gender identity and all services must be comparable for everyone seeking services. FVPSA § 10406(c)(2) and 45 CFR §1370.5.





# Jurisdictional Issues

**Today, tribes face unparalleled obstacles in addressing the issues of domestic violence, dating violence, and sexual assault on their land,** and Native victims often experience jurisdictional hurdles when they attempt to report violent crimes. Crimes committed on tribal lands fall under the jurisdiction of federal, state or tribal authorities depending on a combination of factors, such as a) whether the offender and victim identify as Native or non-Native, b) the nature of the alleged crime, c) the state in which the alleged crime took place, and d) whether the crime was committed on tribal lands as defined by federal statute. Attempting to navigate these legal systems and statutes can be extremely difficult and often leaves Native victims of domestic violence, dating violence or sexual assault without a clear path to justice.



For decades, jurisdictional loopholes have left Native Americans with little to no legal protection from non-Native perpetrators of domestic violence, dating violence, and sexual assault.

More than 75% of residents on tribal lands in the U.S. **do not identify as American Indian or Alaska Native**, per the U.S. Census Bureau.<sup>1</sup>

In 1978, the Supreme Court held that **tribes had no legal jurisdiction to arrest or prosecute non-Natives** who commit crimes on reservations.<sup>2</sup> As a result, this has meant that tribes could not prosecute a non-Native person for committing a violent crime against his Native partner or family member on tribal lands.

From 2005 through 2009, the U.S. Department of Justice **declined to prosecute 67% of cases of sexual abuse** and related offenses in Indian country.<sup>3</sup>

In 2013, Congress **reauthorized the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA)**, which restored tribal court jurisdiction over a limited number of domestic violence and dating violence crimes as well as violations of protection orders by non-Natives on tribal lands, where the tribes meet particular requirements in accordance with the Indian Civil Rights Act per the U.S. Bill of Rights, the Tribal Law and Order Act, and where the tribe's criminal justice system fully protects defendants' rights under applicable federal law.<sup>4</sup>

The reauthorized VAWA went into effect in 2015 and **applies to Natives who experience domestic violence or dating violence committed by their non-Native partners or spouses**. It does not, however, cover sexual assault or rape committed by non-Natives who are strangers to their victims, nor does it protect Native American children who are victims of abuse or assault.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.census.gov/prod/cen2010/briefs/c2010br-10.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.justice.gov/usam/criminal-resource-manual-687-tribal-court-jurisdiction>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d11167r.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.justice.gov/sites/default/files/tribal/legacy/2014/02/06/vawa-2013-tribal-jurisdiction-over-non-indian-perpetrators-domesticviolence.pdf>

