Sharing Our Stories

2019

Our Mission

We exist to restore power to Native Americans impacted by domestic violence and dating violence by weaving together a braid of safety, sovereignty and support.

Based on StrongHearts calls and referral database.
3,367
Calls Answered in 2019

As the only national crisis helpline for Native Americans, the need for our services is great. In 2019, StrongHearts Native Helpline expanded its business hours and advocate staffing, yet limited resources continue to be a barrier to serving all our relatives who need help.

We know Native callers prefer to speak with a Native

Only 5
Callers chose to transfer to The Hotline rather than wait for a StrongHearts Native advocate, during business hours.

Victim/Survivor: a contact who is a victim of abuse and is looking for support
Helper: someone reaching out on behalf of or to help, a person who has perpetrated or been the victim of abuse
Administrative: a contact seeking basic information, rather than advocacy.
Other Issues: any contact who is not currently experiencing violence and is looking for services.

StrongHearts Calls Over Time
In 2019 StrongHearts experienced a 555% increase in calls answered from 2018.

StrongHearts Native Helpline was created by and for Native Americans, a population with some of the highest rates of domestic violence in the United States. Tribes, as sovereign nations, face significant jurisdictional hurdles when addressing violent crimes in their communities. Gaps in Native-centered supportive services create unique barriers for Native victims seeking help.

StrongHearts Native Helpline was funded by HHS to be the first ever national domestic violence service for Native Americans. And since its launch in 2017, the StrongHearts Native Helpline answered 4,177 calls from across the United States. StrongHearts is the first culturally appropriate domestic violence and dating violence helpline for American Indians and Alaska Natives, offering peer support, crisis intervention, personalized safety planning, and referrals to Tribal and Native-centered supportive services to callers.

In 2019, StrongHearts was awarded two Office of Victims of Crimes grants to expand our services to more effectively meet the needs of our callers. With this funding, in 2020, StrongHearts will expand our hours of operation to 24/7/365. We will also begin to offer digital chat services to better serve our callers. And StrongHearts will expand our advocacy services to include sexual violence advocacy.

What do Native IPV victims need?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Need</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5 in 11</td>
<td>peer support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 in 10</td>
<td>shelter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 in 4</td>
<td>legal advocacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 in 5</td>
<td>transportation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 in 6</td>
<td>emergency financial aid</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What are Native IPV victims facing?

- 40% disclose children are involved in their abusive situation
- 14% disclose being stalked
- 13% of native victims have been strangled by their abusive partner
- 7% disclose experiencing cultural abuse
- 56% experienced abuse at the hands of a non-native partner
- 5% Native victims say their abuser has access to a firearm
Types of Abuse Disclosed by IPV Victims

- **90%** Emotional Abuse
- **75%** Physical Abuse
- **30%** Financial Abuse
- **18%** Digital Abuse
- **14%** Sexual Abuse

### Violence is not Traditional

**IPV, Colonization, and Historical Trauma**

At StrongHearts Native Helpline we understand that the disparate rates of violence against Native people can be attributed to the historical and intergenerational trauma caused by colonization.

StrongHearts advocates are able to connect with callers as peers to help them understand the dynamics of intimate partner violence (IPV) and understand how colonization continues to play an integral role in that violence.

“I feel like you’re reading my mind, I’ve never had someone explain this to me in this way.”

“Thanks for reminding me I am a strong woman because I forgot.”

“Thank you so much for the work you do, it really does help… I was feeling hopeless before talking to you.”

**Website Pageviews**

![Website Pageviews Graph](image-url)

- **Pageviews by Month**
- **Total Pageviews**
Takeaways and Recommendations

2019 highlighted the need for StrongHearts Native Helpline to operate 24/7. This is evident in our missed call rate, the number of calls received during out of business hours, and the lack of callers interested in connecting with a non-Native helpline.

22% of the victims helpers call StrongHearts on behalf of are under 25 years old, whereas only 14% of the victims calling StrongHearts for themselves are under 25 years old. This shows a hesitancy of younger victims to call us directly. Implementing chat services will help us better reach young callers (according to Pew Research Center 57% of teens claim text or chat as their first method of communication).

We know American Indians and Alaska Natives face the highest rate of sexual violence in the country, yet currently, there is no national helpline or direct service provider for Native victims of sexual violence. As advocates we also know that sexual violence and intimate partner violence are intricately linked. This is why StrongHearts worked to secure funding to expand our advocacy to serve victims of sexual violence.

StrongHearts top caller needs recorded from Native IPV victims in 2019 were peer support, shelter, and legal advocacy. To adequately address these needs in tribal communities, the full restoration of inherent tribal authority and sovereignty is required. To continue restoring inherent tribal sovereignty, StrongHearts recommends expanding tribal jurisdiction to address legal loopholes that result in disparate rates of violence against native victims and increasing funding to direct tribal services to enable tribal programs to provide adequate and culturally appropriate victim services.


We envision a return to our traditional lifeways where our relatives are safe, violence is eradicated, and sacredness is restored.