

PC CARES Bulletin

September 7, 2021

Greetings Local Steering Committee and supportive partners,

After a busy summer offering suicide prevention trainings, reviewing our progress, and writing about our learning, we wanted to update you about our work and successes. Two recent good news items are:

- Advisory Education Committee members in the Bering Strait School District (BSSD) villages may use school internet and computers to attend the PC CARES learning circles, as long as they follow COVID protocol for the building. This permission enables community members to access virtual PC CARES, which is essential for building collaborations between the school and community.
- PC CARES was approved by the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development for mandatory suicide prevention trainings teachers and other school staff need every other year. This approval is one more way that our training offers practical incentives for participating. Now, PC CARES can be used for Alaska Community Health Aid, Social Worker, and certified school staff's continuing education requirements! Find out more: www.pc-cares.org/education-credits.

Virtual PC CARES Recruitment

The first learning circles will begin in the upcoming months. We shifted from calling our online 7-session series of trainings "PC CARES at School" to "Virtual PC CARES." Our recruitment goal aims to engage more community members and health workers (like community health aides, village-based counselors, pastors, and others), which is why we changed the name.

Our goal is to sign up 100 people to participate. As of the writing of this newsletter, we are about halfway there. Primarily we've been reaching out to supervisors to see if a) they will allow their employees to use work time to attend our two-hour monthly session for 7 months, and b) if they will distribute the signup form and details. So far, details have been distributed at the following workplaces:

- Norton Sound Health Corporation Behavioral Health Services
- Bering Strait School District
- Nome Public Schools
- Northwest Arctic Borough

We are also busy offering short suicide prevention training to recruit more people to participate in our training and/or our survey. The next sessions are:

- Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium (ANTHC) Tell Your Heart Story Virtual Resource Fair – September 8th 10am -1pm AKST. Register for the resource fair here: https://whova.com/web/resou1_202105/.
- Maniilaq Association Staff - Sept 10th, 9am-11am
- Statewide Prevention Council Suicide Prevention Week - Sept 10th, 12-1pm
- Norton Sound Health Corporation - Sept 20th, 9-10am

PC CARES At Home: Care packages

The “Healthy Living” care package was sent in mid-August to 75 recipients in 28 Alaskan villages (see table). The informational card talked about the benefits of regular exercise and encouraged recipients to help young people get out on the land, exercise, and take good care of themselves: “It’s never too early, or too late, to work towards wellness.” The package included goodies to remind the recipients about the importance of healthy living, including: a deck of cards, healthy snacks to fuel our bodies, a fitness tracker to stay on track, buckets to pick fresh berries, fishing lure, bug repellent, and more. We also included some tools and tips to help recipients and the young people in their lives to live healthy, including a water intake tracker and CDC exercise recommendations.

After each care package mailing, we follow up via phone interviews with 5 randomly-selected recipients to hear what they thought of the care package and how the care packages could be improved. Below is an overview of their responses:



What did you or the young people in your life like about the most recent PC CARES care package?

- ▶ Berry bucket and the snacks and the playing cards, the stress ball, the items that were in the care package I liked them all. I gave the ball to my kids. I tried to share the items I received. I shared with my coworker, my son, and my neighbor. I gave the bucket to my neighbor, I shared the coffee with my coworker. I kept the cards for myself.
- ▶ My kids enjoyed the snacks and the little electrolyte packets. We took a look at the magnets together, they are hanging in our kitchen on the fridge. The little mosquito dope wipes and small berry picking bucket are useful this time of year.
- ▶ The stickers about how much kids sleep that is very helpful.
- ▶ The berry bucket and the little bug dope picaridin and the tea and coffee. I prefer caffeinated coffee. Some days the decaffeinated is better for stress and anxiety though. I liked the lavender lotion from the Sleep care package and the You Matter cards. The electrolyte packets I liked a lot.

What would make the most recent PC CARES care package better or more useful to you or to the young people in your life?

- ▶ Maybe if I were to give the package to youth maybe some more youth friendly things. Plastic bracelets, where if a kid likes to snap their wrist to help them snap out of it, helpful with self-harm.
- ▶ What did you or the young people in your life learn from the most recent PC CARES care package?
- ▶ About the exercise recommendations from the CDC and the importance of exercise. I already knew about that but it's a good reminder to share which is helpful.
- ▶ I think we all sort of got the idea that we've got to take care of ourselves physically. So we are just adding a few more things to our daily routines. I've been trying to keep up with exercise and encourage my kids to have less screen time and more outdoor time.
- ▶ The pamphlets are very helpful and I was able to share them. The stickies on the fridge are helpful.

What was surprising about the most recent PC CARES care package?

- ▶ It is always surprising--you never know what you are going to get. It's always a mystery but other than that there is nothing that comes out at me as too surprising.
- ▶ The bug dope, but it was kind of a self care package so that makes sense. They are hoping we can get out and do self care activities. Same with the fishing lures.

How did you or the young people in your life use the most recent PC CARES care package contents?

- ▶ We used the berry bucket to get berries, we haven't used the pixee spoon yet but we have it available when you need it. They took the ball so I'm guessing they use it at home. The playing cards haven't been used yet but they're looking forward to it. We haven't used the bug repellent lotion or the snacks yet.
- ▶ I gave the electrolyte packets to my youngest son. I hung the magnet on my work door for people to read.
- ▶ I put the small bucket and the mosquito repellent in one of my backpacks I take when I go berry picking.
- ▶ The tea and the little coffee was good. The snacks were excellent that was the first time we had the dried healthy fruit.
- ▶ I ate some of the snacks and really enjoyed those. I saw the stress ball and thought of somebody I see that could probably benefit from that. I know that I am going camping this weekend when I could use the bug dope and berry picking bucket.
- ▶ I gave the lure and deck of cards to one of my sons. I was not able to use the stressball but I will probably give that to one of my kids too.

What do you think about the FB group?

- ▶ It is a good group for sharing information and seeing what people are getting out of it and sharing their experiences. It's a good way to know when the next package is coming in the mail which is helpful.
- ▶ There's some good conversations going on there and some good posts.

Care Package Recipients	
8	Kotzebue
7	Teller
5	Gambell
5	Nome
5	Unalakleet
4	Akiak
4	Shungnak
3	Ambler
3	Bethel
3	Brevig Mission
3	Golovin
3	Noatak
3	Shishmaref
3	St. Michael
2	Akiachack
2	Savoonga
1	Buckland
1	Deering
1	Elim
1	Kiana
1	King Cove
1	Kivalina
1	Koyuk
1	Noorvik
1	Shaktoolik
1	Stebbins
1	Wales
1	White Mountain

- ▶ It is very informative and very helpful and has a lot of information for healthy choices for kids.
- ▶ It's pretty good. I haven't been able to navigate that page extensively but it seems like the response rate is pretty quick.

If not, why have you not joined the group yet?

- ▶ I don't have many FB friends. I keep them to a minimum and also my group pages. Most of FB there is too much drama. I don't want any kind of negativity on my FB. I am only on FB not any other socials.

What, if anything, could we do to make the Facebook group better?

- ▶ I know suicide prevention week is coming up, maybe you guys could post a little about that. I think it is the week of Sept. 8.

What kinds of topics would you want to see future care packages focused on?

- ▶ Whatever would be recommended by the organization that is like the CDC or the American psychiatric guidelines for suicide prevention.
- ▶ Expressing feelings, how adults can talk with young people, or any person that is having a hard time. How adults can open up/learn how to start up a conversation with young people.
- ▶ It's late fall, the weather is getting sort of bad, like a lot of rain. Ways to keep active during the winter. Like, I know each clinic should have a treadmill that's for the diabetes program but I think other people could use it. Remind people to ask the clinic if their exercise equipment is available.
- ▶ Probably just healthy choices and things that are healthy for them.
- ▶ Mostly PC CARES is focused on suicide prevention. But I think it could be helpful for alcohol and drugs, people like myself I am in recovery, relapse prevention materials could be helpful. Also maybe some self-harm prevention resources and coping tools. Maybe more broadly coping with mental health, etc.

What sort of activity or snack items would you want to see in future care packages?

- ▶ I was thinking playing cards and then you sent the playing cards so that is great. Obviously, you are limited by funding but whatever you think. I don't drink coffee or tea but people enjoy that so it's a nice thing to do.
- ▶ Small craft kits to remind people to keep busy during the winter. A lot of the stuff you guys were sending were pretty healthy and just stick with that route.
- ▶ The dried fruit is good, very good and the teas.
- ▶ Helpful things to do with family. Maybe we need to let people know how they can slow down when they are too busy. Having a family night ideas sheet. Like, having dinner, when you have a meal to actually sit down at the table, no electronics on. Just sit around and talk about your day and week or whatever. Playing games together, card games that you could play as a family.
- ▶ Finally, what else do you think we should know that might help us make PC CARES packages, Facebook content, or our work in general better?
- ▶ I was wondering about maybe bracelets because I know that kids like to wear those. Or pens and pencils with PC Cares on there.

Publications in the works

We are working with some of you on sharing the good work that has transpired recently! Below are status updates on the current journal articles in progress:

Journal	Article Title	Authors	Update
The Journal for Social Action in Counseling and Psychology	Collaboratively Adapting Culturally-Respectful, Locally-Relevant Suicide Prevention for Newly Participating Alaska Native Communities	Lisa Wexler, Tara Schmidt, Lauren White, Caroline Bec, Suzanne Rataj, Roberta Moto, Tanya Kirk, Diane McEachern	This article talks about the process of taking the lessons learned during the PC CARES pilot and revising the curriculum for the Bering Strait region. The manuscript was returned again with minor revisions needed, and will be resubmitted Sept. 15th
<i>American Indian and Alaska Native Mental Health Research: Call for impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on AI/AN health research</i>	Adapting PC CARES to continue suicide prevention in rural Alaska during the COVID-19 pandemic: narrative overview of an in-person community-based suicide prevention program moving online	Caroline Bec, Lauren White, Tara Schmidt, Suzanne Rataj, Diane McEachern, Diane Wisnieski, Roberta Moto, Tanya Kirk, Josie Garnie, Lisa Wexler	First submission complete
<i>American Journal of Community Psychology</i>	Implementation Beyond the Clinic: Community Driven Utilization of Research Evidence from PC CARES, a Suicide Prevention Program	Lauren White, Lisa Wexler, Addie Weaver, Roberta Moto, Tanya Kirk, Suzanne Rataj, Lucas Trout, Diane McEachern,	First submission complete

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