

Chugachmiut

Community and Family Services

A Behavioral Health
Handbook for our
Tribal Communities



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A Behavioral Health Handbook for Our Tribal Communities

We are there for you when you need us



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Wild Columbine

We Are Chugachmiut



Our Mission

Chugachmiut is the Tribal consortium created to promote self-determination in the seven Native communities of the Chugach Region. We provide health and social services, education and training, and technical assistance to the Chugach Native people in a culturally appropriate way acceptable to Native values and tradition in order to enhance the well-being of our people by continuing to strengthen the tribes and increase self-determination opportunities for community-operated tribal programs.

Our Vision

Building on the inherent strength from our cultural values, Chugachmiut shall work to help member tribes achieve their chosen destiny.



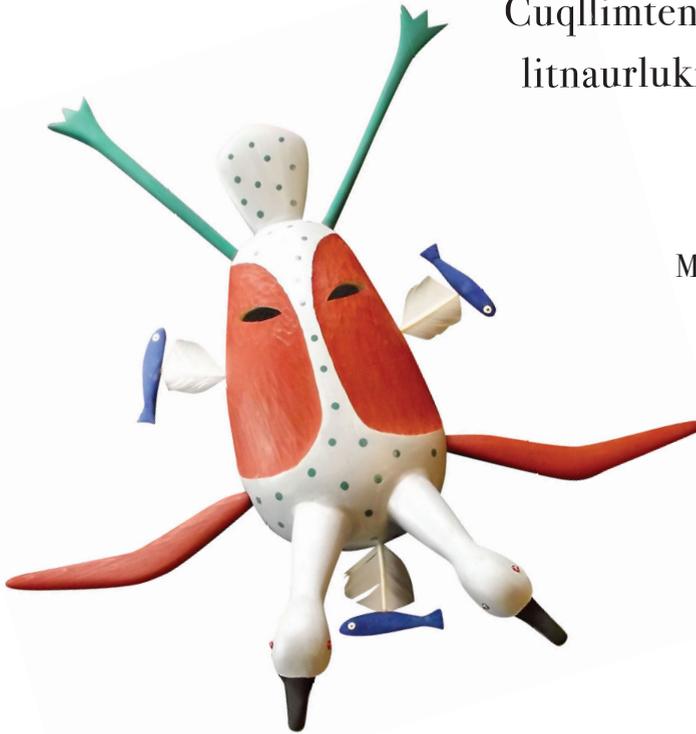
A Place Come to Life

With guidance and support from elders
we teach our children these Alutiig Values.



Spirituality
Respect for Elders
Growing Sobriety
Honesty
Respect and wise use of natural resources
Love for Children
Forgiveness
Openness
Trusting
Sharing
Loyalty
Unconditional Love
Caring
Tenderness
Humility
Strength
Courage
Helpfulness
In living our Traditional and Spiritual values
with our family and Community, we practice
Knowledge of Language
Unity
Heritage
Subsistence
Family Roles
Survival Skills, Life Skills, Medicinal Herbs
Artistic Expression
Knowledge of Family Tree
Community Uniqueness
And this makes us who we are.

UNGUIRNAQ



Cuqllimtenek tawatan uyguillrapet

litnaurluki asirqamek luumacinek

Aga'cimek

Ling' aklluki Cuqllipet

Taaganirluta

Iqllungainermek

Makut cacat Itklluki Nunamtehni

Pica' Aklluki Uyguillrapet

Akirtuinernek

Cacaqiinaq tangerlluku

Uk' Ertatluten

Asirluten

Asikiluten

Picakilluten

Anguarkunak

Tuknigluten

Alingtilluten

Iliuluten

Elluta picimcestun taumi ag' ucimcestun mani

Ilamtehni taumi nunamtehni

Nupugnerpet nallugkunaku

All' Ingulutaw

Cuqllimcestun ell'uta

Pisurlaucimcestun

Ilamcestun ell' uta

Qaillun unguiqamani nunami taumi sungcautnek

Qaillun nunagpet enguarlarta

Tawatenum quiruutakut kalikam kinaukaceta



Northern Lights by Tobias Björkli from Pexels

Riding the Waves in Difficult Times

There are many paths toward your best self and tools to pick up along the way. There are practices that will keep you strong. Much of this happens automatically as we learn from the ups and downs of our lives. This booklet provides information on a variety of programs, services, special grants and topics. For example, regulation of emotions, personal growth, relationship issues, parenting, substance use, suicide prevention, and domestic violence are discussed. A small booklet cannot cover every topic, but the information offered here is written for the Chugachmiut Region with our culture, and values in mind.



Board and Executive Leadership

A seven-member Board of Directors governs Chugachmiut; each board member selected by their tribal government. The Board of Directors appoints the Executive Director who manages the day-to-day operations of the organization.

Francis Norman, Chair
Port Graham

John Kvasnikoff, Treasurer
Nanwalek

Jim Ujioka, Secretary
Valdez

Larry Evanoff, Vice Chair
Chenega

Pamela Smith, Director
Eyak

Arne Hatch, Director
Qutekeak

Rami Paulsen, Director
Tatitlek

Angela Vanderpool,
Executive Director

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Sunset in Port Graham by A. Sawdel

Pathways to Services

There is no wrong path when you are seeking help from Chugachmiut. You may ask any staff member for help and they will make sure you're connected with the right person. Chugachmiut Community and Family Services staff includes clinicians, counselors, Behavioral Health Aides, advocates and specialists. Whether you have a question about scholarship deadlines or something more personal, our staff will connect you to the right service. The list below will give you an idea about qualifications of staff here to help you.

Clinicians have Masters Degrees, generally in Social Work, Psychology or a specialty such as Marriage and Family Counseling.

Counselors may have a Bachelor's Degree or other specialized training such as Regional Drug and Alcohol Counselor Training (RADACT).

Behavioral Health Aides (BHA) are trained through the University of Fairbanks, Rural Human Services Program or through training at Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium. With training, Behavioral Health Aides advance through Levels I, II, and III to Practitioner. At this time, the communities of Port Graham, Nanwalek, Chenega and Tatitlek each have a Behavioral Health Aide.

Other staff are hired to deliver special programs and services. The most recent list of programs and services is available upon request.

Every way to get help is the right way. The Crisis Line is one way to check in and get connected.

Crisis Line: **844-891-0444**



Mountains by Shelby Thompson



Sculpture by Jim Miller



“When I was young, I didn’t think culture was important. It was like baggage that I had to carry around, so I put it down, and kept walking down the road. Then, as I went along, I realized I was wrong. I said, ‘Wait a minute! I am going to need this!’ and I went back and picked it up again.”

—Oscar Active

Cultivating Culture

Being mindful that our tradition of health includes cultural norms that exist from generation to generation...

–Gail K. Evanoff Behavioral Health Practitioner, Chenega



Our services are based on a foundation of respect for the Sugpiaq culture and traditions of our region. We honor the leaders of the past and follow the counsel of today’s leaders, particularly those who serve on the Chugachmiut Board of Directors.

Sugpiaq—This is a traditional self-designator of many of the Native people of Prince William Sound, the outer Kenai Peninsula, the Kodiak Archipelago, and the Alaska Peninsula. It means “real person” and it is the way Native people described themselves prior to Western contact.

Just as Sugpiaq means “real people,” the first task of a counselor is to be real. We urge our staff to be themselves, and not to act distant and unapproachable, or be most concerned with acting “professional.” Our staff members are trained, certified and licensed professionals but the most important job is to connect honestly with people in our communities.

Cultivating Cultural Connection

When a person has been deeply hurt, especially in childhood, they may have emotional issues in their adult life. These can lead to emotions that easily overwhelm or get out of control. Some events can unexpectedly trigger emotions that are connected to the distant past. For some cultures, trauma from generations past has an impact today, bring an abiding sense of disconnect and loss.

There are many ways to work through trauma from the past. Participating in healthy community activities, food gathering, celebration and holidays can help heal past pain. But sometimes it is best to deal with past trauma by talking about it with a counselor. This is another case where processing the hurt and pain, talking it through, will lead to resolution. Sometimes, a person needs to be heard, believed and validated.

In our broad Chugachmiut region, what we, as providers, do is based on respect for the living Sugpiaq culture, traditions and the directions provided by elders and other leaders. It acknowledges the sometimes traumatic history of the region. A path forward may examine the hurts of the past while strengthening the connection to culture and identity.





My strength is from the fish; my blood is from the fish, from the roots and berries. The fish and game are the essence of my life. I was not brought from a foreign country and did not come here. I was put here by the Creator.

—Chief Weninock, 1915



Sugpiaq Mindfulness

We thank former Behavioral Health Aide, Nancy Radke, for this information about emotional growth and healing, following the traditions of the Sugpiaq culture.

Naswik: place for head or on the edge, “on the edge of” for example a cliff or hill according to the late Alex Moonin

Llaangcarwik: to become aware

The presence of mindfulness: Community members or elders often were seen sitting at the edge of a cliff or hill. When asked what they were doing, they would say that they: “watch the ocean,” “think about things,” “watch the weather.”

“Miklemni qapirnarlabranga nicuillga, Niitirkunakut Momankuut taumi Tatankuut taumi llangarta”

“When I was little, I didn’t listen. I didn’t listen to my mom or dad, then I became aware.”

“Niicullra Ellmaq llangallgua” “[Now] I am aware a little.” Irene Tanape, Sept. 2016.

Mindfulness Talking Circle—Sugpiaq style

For community or the family

-  Sit in a circle
-  Have a rock/feather/other object at hand; the person holding the object is the only one allowed to speak
-  Start by asking “How was your day yesterday?” and “How are you feeling today?”
-  Have one topic to discuss. For example, “How can we support one another?” or “What am I grateful for?”
-  Hold one-minute breathing exercise: breathe in goodness, breathe out poison.
-  To end the talking circle: take two large breaths and breathe out. Take two large breaths in and breathe out.

Chugachmiut Services

The Chugachmiut approach to care validates traditional culture by putting the person and their family at the center. Counselors and other staff will help you follow your own life path in the way you envision it. We also work with community leaders to increase autonomy and self-determination, bringing an attitude of respect, and warmth, creating bonds that continue through time.



Weekly Community Meetings

Each week, the Behavioral Health providers meet to discuss issues and to coordinate client care.

Tuesday at 10 am – Port Graham, and Nanwalek

Wednesday at 10 am – Tatitlek, Chenega, and Seward

Because it is important to work as partners with local leaders; leadership is invited to weekly meetings to talk with the providers, the counselors, clinicians, advocates and those who are working on special projects. While the situation is rare, we get written permission from the client when there is a need to talk about individual issues with leadership. Working from home, during COVID-19, we started our weekly staff meetings with a report and the virus and a few related jokes, like these:

What did the man do when his alarm went off?

He got up quickly so he wouldn't be late to the couch.

I've gained 20 pounds, I call it fattening the curve.

School starts soon. I wonder who the kids will be getting for teachers this year. **I hope it's not me again.**

Policeman:

If you go to a party, we will put you in jail because of coronavirus.

If you are in jail we will let you out because of coronavirus.

Reaching Out, Checking In

When asked by community leadership, our staff may make outreach calls to check on any who might be struggling with isolation or other issues. During the COVID-19 pandemic tribal leadership and Chugachmiut wanted to make sure people were doing all right with the stress and uncertainty caused by the virus. Outreach calls give providers a chance to make personal contact with people they may not have met, and it gives them a chance to talk about services. Positive feedback indicates that the calls are appreciated.

Laugh and Learn

A buzzard turns up at the airport with two dead animals. The staff member at check in says, "Sorry, only one carrion per passenger."

Recognizing that laughter helps a lot and with many purposes in mind, Chugachmiut started a series of 'Laugh and Learn' sessions in June, 2020. Staff rotates to present on various topics. During the summer of 2020, thirteen presentations were offered to the communities, beginning with a presentation on insomnia to a demonstration of how to cook salmon.

The result of these programs was seen first in the level of connections. While the COVID-19 pandemic had us working from home and being distant from staff and community, technology brought us closer. It wasn't the same as talking face-to-face, but we were connected. Not only that, as we watched presentations, we began to know our own staff members better.



The popularity of origami has increased... tenfold.

When September came and the Summer Series was done, we unanimously agreed to carry on. The program has continued for a full year with more than forty presentations.

Some of the subjects were quite sobering, like the prevention of child sexual abuse, but the addition of humor or playful aspects – like songs or puppets - kept the programs light and interesting.



Sometimes I wonder if this is all happening because I didn't forward that message to ten other people.



Community Paint Night



“At the deepest level, the creative process and the healing process arise from a single source. When you are an artist, you are a healer.”

—Rachel Naomi Remen, MD

Art Night With Teens

Each week, a small but enthusiastic group of teens meet on Zoom with Sharon Whytal to create art. They use many techniques. Because of Zoom, they can connect from different communities.

“I enjoy being able to talk to everyone, being able to just hang out, and just draw.”

The resulting artwork is amazing.



“We started Art Night in late June or July, it was over Zoom because travel was out of the picture....”

“The plan was that we would follow a prompt, or find a picture we can all draw or paint...”

“It’s a safe place where we can talk just about anything if we wanted to”

Summer Youth Employment

Chugachmiut hosts presentations to summer youth employment participants on various topics including:

-  Opening a checking account and other financial skills
-  Steps to get a license, starting with Driver's Permit Testing
-  Culinary Classes—how to make homemade salsa
-  Applying for scholarships and other resources from the Chugach Region
-  Keeping yourself and siblings safe on all the fun internet platforms
-  Career Pathways





Women's Tea

How much tea do they drink at the weekly Women's' Tea?

When checking in on the Zoom meeting last spring, women from Nanwalek and Port Graham were all busy creating fun projects with food, like the ones seen here around Easter Time. Sharon Whytal says, "Tea has long been an opportunity to share traditional knowledge like medicinal plants, to showcase each person's talents, and to enjoy supportive, healthy relationships."



Crisis Line

Who are You Going to Call?

When you call the crisis line, the person who answers will be a trained Behavioral Health clinician. They can help with an immediate problem. If your concern is not an emergency and can be better handled by a different type of provider, they will make the connection personally, introducing you to the person who can help.

The crisis line is always there when you need someone to listen and help.

Crisis Line 844-891-0444

Reasons to Call

This list of reasons to call starts with smaller things and grows toward the more serious.

-  I want some feedback about something I have been thinking about
Examples: I wonder if I should change jobs? Should I plan a trip with my kids or should my husband and I spend time alone together?
-  Could I work with Behavioral Health as a volunteer?
-  I have been having trouble sleeping, I need some help.
-  I have really been feeling down.
-  I am worried about my three-year-old. He is hitting and biting.
-  I think I need to talk to my kids about inappropriate touch and I am afraid I'll say the wrong thing.
-  My daughter is only 14 and she is interested in a boy. What should I do?
-  I am feeling scared all the time. I don't know why? Sometimes my heart beats fast and I don't know what's happening.
-  Any reason whatsoever.

The Crisis Line Number **844-891-0444**

“Umiglluku cilla asirgarkaq. Always think of good things to come.”

—Sally Ash



In the time of **COVID-19**, we can connect by email, text, messenger, Zoom and other telemedicine platforms. **Reach out. We are here.**

Sometimes it seems like people think a call would be bothering the one carrying the phone, as if a small problem is not a reason to make the call. Perhaps we should call it the **Connection Line**, so people know they don't have to be in crisis.



Social Services and Elder Nutrition

Higher Education/Vocational Education Scholarships Chugachmiut awards higher education and vocational scholarships to eligible full and part time undergraduate and graduate students regardless of where they live but the student must be either a shareholder or descendant of a shareholder of the Chugach Alaska Corporation (CAC) from Nanwalek, Port Graham, Seward, Tatitlek or Chenega. In addition, per BIA regulations, applicants can be no less than $\frac{1}{4}$ blood quantum Alaska Native/American Indian to be eligible for scholarships through BIA resources. Descendants of CAC from Cordova or Valdez must contact the Native Village of Eyak or the Valdez Native Tribe to inquire about higher education scholarships.

Employment Training offers additional skills training and support services to unemployed and underemployed residents in Nanwalek, Port Graham, Seward, Tatitlek or Chenega, who wish to advance within or change their careers. Residents of Cordova and Valdez must contact the Native Village of Eyak and the Valdez Native Tribe to inquire about employment and training services. This program also offers the Summer Youth Employment program to provide youth between the ages of 14 to 21 years of age exposure to a work environment; all participants earn wages.

Child Care Assistance This program assists low-income families to gain quality child care when parents work, are seeking employment, or participate in educational or job training programs. Participants must reside within one of the seven communities in the Chugach Region. In addition, the program informs parents of their childcare options, can assist in identifying childcare providers, and assists with any necessary paperwork.



Elder Food Tatitlek

Nanci Robart, Behavioral Health Aide, winner of the Rising Star Award, 2021.

Our last shipment was approximately 800# worth of food. It all comes separated in dry, chill and freeze boxes.

Everything comes to the council office where we empty each box on to a line of tables and re-use the boxes for delivery.

I usually have Kimber's, and sweet baby Raphael's help with sorting and I recruit my husband and son to come help as well. I print off a couple box lists to refer to as we sort, and we get to work refilling boxes with the appropriate items. Once they're all filled, we load it all back in to a council vehicle for my husband and son to help me deliver.

We get good reactions every time. The boxes seem to be very beneficial, as many of our elders don't travel much, so the fresh produce and even the frozen veggies and fruit are much appreciated.



General Assistance (GA) is temporary funding offered to provide financial assistance for the following essential needs: food, shelter, clothing, and basic necessary utilities. General Assistance is only available when no other resources are available to you. General Assistance is not an emergency assistance fund. Recipients must reside in Seward, Port Graham, Nanwalek, Tatitlek, or Chenega. Residents of Cordova and Valdez must contact the Native Village of Eyak and the Valdez Native Tribe to inquire about general assistance.

Burial Assistance

Chugachmiut provides a separate burial assistance pamphlet. The pamphlet describes eligibility and resources. The deceased must have lived in Chenega, Tatitlek, Seward, Nanwalek or Port Graham for the last six months of their life. Residents of Cordova and Valdez must contact the Native Village of Eyak and the Valdez Native Tribe to inquire about burial assistance.



*“When loved ones die, when we
experience grief, we lose our spirit.
It just leaves us for a while.”*

—Nick Tanapes

“Everything is medicine.”

—Rita Blumenstein







How to Cope with Fear

“I am afraid.”

What do we do with fear? Fear may come in the night when we feel defenseless. Fear can knot up your stomach, make you shiver, and feel sick. Your mind gets away from you and begins to give you thoughts of bad things happening to people you care about. Then, in a twisted way, it can make you feel guilty, as if you are the cause of bad things. Fear can make you cry out in the night.

What to do? A person needs to deal with fear, first, in the daytime, to get ready for feelings that can come in the night, as you are trying to get to sleep. You may be thinking “What’s wrong with me?” as your heart beats fast and your mind creates frightening thoughts.

Remember, this is how humans respond to pressure. Sometimes it will serve the purpose of practicing a response. For instance, you might have a vision of a plane crashing and capsizing in the water, and then, as you are lying in bed dealing with this scenario you might figure out the best way to save yourself – in case it really happens.

This is a sort of benefit but when fear reactions are interfering with sleep, they must be dealt with in the daytime, with preparation. Then when you are beset with anxiety you will remember what to do. When you are experiencing debilitating fear, it doesn’t mean something is wrong with you. It is a natural human reaction. But anxiety can get out of hand and become a disorder if it is too constant and too out of hand. This may be avoided by dealing with it assertively. Make a plan for dealing with a fear reaction and keep your remedies close at hand.

Consider These Options

Three ways to cope with fear

1. Deep slow breaths. Measured breathing is helpful in controlling many troubling emotions. 🌿
2. Substitute a new thought. Push out the “scary” thought by repeating the word “Relax” silently or out loud. Continue this for five or six slow measured breaths. Then, try a phrase like “You can manage this.” Repeat it as long as necessary. With luck, you will fall asleep. 🌿
3. If this does not help, get out of bed and write a quick list of the issues that are bothering you. Prepare ahead of time by having, pen and paper on hand. Sometimes the mind will let go when it knows you are paying attention and won’t forget to deal with the issues. The brain seems to be able to relax if the issues running through it are put down on paper. 🌿

If you are still troubled and cannot sleep, call the crisis line at **844-891-0444**. The person carrying the phone can talk with you about what’s going through your mind or assist in an exercise that can help you let go. You need relaxing sleep so you can deal with the events of the day ahead.



Help Me Make It Through the Night

Insomnia

Thoughts that keep us awake

-  Work concerns
-  Family worries
-  Things to be done the next day, week, etc.
-  Financial worries
-  Addictions
-  Grief
-  Replaying conversations
-  Random thoughts
-  Physical things that keep us awake –
Physical pain (arthritis, injury, back pain,
MS, fibromyalgia, cancer)
-  Pets/Children waking you up
-  Sleep apnea
-  Bladder issues

Simple stuff to help get to sleep

-  Take the time to wind down.
-  Pray, meditate, knit, crochet, read
-  Keep the room cool.
-  Wear comfortable clothing.
-  No caffeine after a certain time.
-  Try a weighted blanket.
-  Use white noise. (a fan, tv)
-  Turn off electronics (No tv by the bed)
-  Make the room dark. Night light if helpful.
-  Black out curtains.
-  Comfortable pillows.

What about medications and other remedies?

-  Melatonin
-  Warm milk
-  Herb tea
-  Turkey
-  Lavender essential oil on soles of feet or sprayed on pillow
-  CBD oil
-  Benadryl
-  As a last resort, you can try sleep aids under the direction of your medical provider.
Be careful, continued use can cause dependency.



Dark Thoughts that Don't Go Away

*“Sugpiaq people are known to be very spiritual in realizing llaam sua
—the greater being that hears and sees us.”*

—Translation – Llaam sua - person of the universe.

One step further into troubling emotions, is in the struggle with dark and dreary thoughts that don't even go away in the daytime. Depression can occur without any obvious reason. It sometimes runs in families. But it is also true that if you deal with enough difficulty for long enough without any success or relief you might find yourself stuck in depression.

So, what is depression like? When you are depressed your thoughts can go negative on any idea that comes into your mind. *Maybe I'll go to the beach. No, it's too cold. I don't feel like it. Besides the rocks are slippery. I'd rather go out in a boat. I wish I had a boat. I'll never get one.*”

Depression can have physical symptoms, too. You can feel tired, listless, deflated, and have no energy at all. You can find yourself overeating or never feeling hungry. *I have to force myself to eat anything. Nothing tastes good.*

Trouble sleeping or sleeping all the time can be issues with depression. Depression is a real illness and it can be helped by counseling and antidepressant medication. This is the best practice for depression. Your counselor can help build up your positive sense of self. Together you can take small steps toward goals that lead to the good feelings connected to progress, to achieving goals and getting somewhere. A counselor can cheer you on as you work together to fight depression and feel successful.



Anger, Resentment and Defensiveness

These emotions can arise when one is treated unfairly and there is no path to set things right. If they are not dealt with in a positive way, they can change a person into someone who is bitter and hostile toward others. Once stuck in a mindset like this, a person can imagine offences that do not really happen or are not intended. This can be dangerous. It can lead to lashing out at other people, sometimes at innocent people.

If you lash out in anger, you can find you have said terrible things. Things you can't take back. This is destructive in relationships.

A first step with anger is to make the decision not to act on it. Not to hit, hurt, attack, or humiliate another person when you get angry. This can be a commitment. No good arises from lashing out at others. But once a person decides to work on anger, it can be studied and controlled.

A person can notice the first signs of mounting anger in things like breathing changes, hands clench, face gets hot. When these indicators increase, there are options: 🌸 Leave the situation and cool down. 🌸 Take slow deep breaths to regain control. 🌸 Own the anger. Say "I am getting upset. This really bothers me. I need to take a break from talking about this." 🌸 Do something physical while you think about how to handle the situation.

This is another place where it is very useful to work with a counselor. A term for talk with a counselor is "processing." In this case, you can process, or talk about the situation with a counselor, and work out a way to resolve it. You can take the steam out of it by talking about it. You might begin to see the part you played in it.

Once you see the part you played, you are in a position to take some control. If all the bad things that happen are somebody else's fault, then you could say that they have the control. But when you can own the part you play, you can decide to do it differently. When you change, the situation may turn out differently.

Anger is not always bad. Sometimes anger provides the energy to face difficulty and to make right the wrongs of the world. But even with the focus on positive change, anger must be managed by keeping your thinking brain engaged.

I need a little therapy!

The day comes when you know you need someone to talk to. A therapist or what we call a "clinician" is a trained listener. When you sit with them for an hour, you can go over all the hurts and pain, all the problems you can't solve. You can sip some tea and talk about all your hopes and dreams, too. Once in a while carrying life alone, can get to be too much.



Family therapy is also an option. Here the focus can be on everyone feeling heard. The clinician can seem like a traffic director. “Not all at once, everybody. Who wants to talk first?” Plans for change can be set up. Work around the house can be shared by all. Problems with the children can be addressed and the kids can take part in problem-solving. That’s one way to get them to ‘buy in’ to the solutions.

Couples can be seen together, too. The clinician can help a couple renew a level of the love and support they might be missing. When time and trouble have created distance, time spent with a clinician focusing on the life you share can bring a couple to a point of renewal.

Behavioral Health Aides Working in the Schools

By Gail Evanoff

It is without question that kids, no matter what grade level, will work harder when they love and enjoy what they are doing!

In Chenega, the Behavioral Health Aide works at giving children opportunities to explore freely and widely through family gatherings, community gatherings, extracurricular activities such as clubs, meeting new people, listening to elders tell their stories, media and so much more, all contribute to helping them practice self-control. When given opportunities to be trusted and respected, children's belief in success comes easier from love and understanding no matter the outcome.

Teachers welcome intervention presentations on a wide range of topics such as: What is anxiety? How does sleep deprivation affect my performance in class? What does Choose Respect mean? What can I do if I feel bullied? And the list goes go.

It's an awesome experience going into the classroom and sharing experiences and exercises that boost self-esteem and self-worth. Using cultural traditions and practices helps to break down confusion and reinforces acceptance. We are ever mindful that our tradition of health includes cultural norms that exist from generation to generation, applying them and following through. Having an advocate decreases the stress on the child and allows for easier acceptance to services available to them. Sometimes it takes just sitting with a child or walking with them to make them feel they are heard and validated.

It's introducing the concept that good mental health is ageless and by talking to someone they are learning the skills and knowledge to deal with everyday problems.

How to maintain normalcy even when in a pandemic is always a challenge, but working in the school and/or community to bring awareness to many issues that may lead to behavioral problems can be met through activities, potlucks, movie-nights, paint nights, elder teas etc. help alleviate the stress of feeling isolated and alone.



Art Therapy

By Jim Miller



Art therapy can be very useful by means of different media, such as colored pencils, acrylic paint, found objects, almost anything. Some traditional art forms such as beading are powerful for stress reduction because they require our full attention and leave little room for worrisome thoughts. Beading can also be a connection to our culture and ancestors. After mastering the basics, it is easy to get into “flow” which can be a meditational state. It is the same with traditional weaving and skin-sewing.

Many other art forms are seen as “men’s work”, such as wood or ivory carving. Benefits include working together, and storytelling. This working together develops connections that are beneficial in the recovery process from historic trauma, and multi-generational trauma.

At any age, it just feels good to say, “Look at what I made!” With a finished project, we have an opportunity to be a great blessing by gifting the object to a friend or family member. Many Alaska Native artists find traditional art to be a means of extra income or to become a master artist and tradition bearer. At the very least, doing art is a great way to have sober fun with others.



Swan Whale by Jim Miller

All things in Relationship:

Fighting Fair

When emotions are out of hand, the nearest target is generally one's life partner—a wife, husband, or significant other. Harsh arguments stir up more emotions, turning sad or anxious feelings held personally into family drama. Blaming and shaming come into play and things get complicated. It's hard to sort out the solution because everything is colored by actions and reactions. A person needs inner strength and self-discipline to “fight fair” because when we “let ‘em have it,” we can vent everything unkind, cruel or ugly that we've been holding back. You may say something you can't take back. You can't unsay anything.

A set of rules has been developed that set some boundaries around arguments and what we generally call “fighting.” If you and your partner can commit to these, it can prevent a fight from escalating to the point where cruel things are said with an intention of hurting the other person - or worse, where a verbal fight becomes physical.

A search online can find various versions of this list, here are just a few of the key points.

-  No name calling. Name calling inflames the situation. It builds the fight into something bigger and hotter.
-  Don't bring up the past. Let all that go.
-  Stick to one subject. Don't try to win by bringing up something the other person does wrong. You can get to that another time.
-  When you have an issue, ask the other person for a good time to talk about it.
-  Instead of saying “You did this” and “You did that,” start with the word “I,” such as, “I was upset when you stayed out late. I was expecting you for dinner and I was hurt when you didn't call.” If you said, “You didn't come home. You said you would. You never keep your word. You could have at least called.” All those “yous” bring defensiveness and instead of an apology, a big fight can start.
-  Don't tell the other person they “always” do this or that. Nobody does anything “all” the time and when you say that, it will increase the chance of fighting.

These rules can be very helpful if both people agree to use them. But even if you are the only one who changes, that makes a difference, too. In fact, we can only change ourselves. If our goal is changing the other person, we will likely fail. But, in a curious way, if you change your reactions, you change the dynamic and surprising things can happen. This works with children, too.



One example of that. Say you have a child who is about 13 years old. Every morning you struggle to get him up for school. He won't wake up and you have to check on him, over and over, giving the same warnings every time. One day you show him how to set the alarm and tell him you are not going to wake him up in the morning, anymore. The next day he oversleeps and blames you for the fact that he was late to school. But, the next day, he remembers and gets up and off to school on his own. You changed what you did and there was an impact on someone else's behavior. (Now, it is usually not that easy but if the parent sticks to the plan, this can be the outcome.)

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES)

In 1995 Kaiser-Permanente studied and provided information on Adverse Childhood Experiences demonstrating that childhood trauma can affect the health of a person in adulthood, even leading to shorter span of life. This gives a strong message that past experiences need to be dealt with. Healing is necessary to reduce the impact of childhood traumas and this doesn't just include sad, serious things like child abuse, it includes stress that comes with family issues or money problems or the death of family members. Many sad things from childhood are set aside when we grow older, but the physical effects can linger leading to an increase in emotional and medical problems. As they say "the body keeps the score." One can use various approaches in therapy sessions to address these things and to build a bridge that connects you in a good way with the child you once were. The result can actually be a longer, life with more physical health—as well as, emotional stability, happiness and ease in living.



Parenting Hacks

from Kimber Geffe



*Once upon a time,
I was a perfect parent.
Then I had children.
THE END*

Babies

- 🌸 You can use play time with baby to teach them new things!
- 🌸 Babies learn by watching.
- 🌸 They also learn by TRYING.
- 🌸 Use play time to just entertain baby.
- 🌸 Sometimes play time is with siblings or other family members or friends.

Toddlers/Kids

- 🌸 Sometimes they just don't want to eat (It happens)
- 🌸 They can be picky.
- 🌸 Try to make it fun!
- 🌸 Let them help cook.

Chores

- 🌸 Let them help you.
- 🌸 Reward them with encouraging words/action.
- 🌸 Don't give them a chore that's too big for their age.

Education at Home

- 🌸 Have one on one time.
- 🌸 Be repetitive.
- 🌸 Let them be hands on.
- 🌸 It's not always "in the books" learning.

Tips for Kids of all Ages

Traditionally, children learn by observing. This indirect approach allows each child to learn at their own pace and to pursue the things that draw their interest.

When children begin to crawl, they will get into everything. The most frequent response is “No. Don’t touch.” It is a far better idea, to keep the area clear of the things that baby should not touch. This way the child can explore what they see. Some parents say, “But I want them to learn the meaning of the word ‘No’.” This is important but maybe not when they are so young. What is more important, learning the word “No” or learning the shape, texture, depth, distance and feeling of things? When a child grabs for something they should not have, a parent can quickly substitute an appropriate toy.

For language acquisition, you can try – once in a while – keeping a running dialog of what the small child is doing. This tells them the words for the activity. “Baby has a block. It’s a green block. Whoops. The block fell down. Now, baby has a red block.”

Who Wins a Power Struggle?

When a child will not obey, the parent may raise the stakes, escalating the situation along with the child. Example:

Parent You are going to finish your dinner.

Child I don’t want to.

Parent I don’t care if you sit there all night.

You are not leaving the table until you have eaten everything on your plate.

Child (tears, screaming) It’s not fair.

But they still won’t eat.

This may be a poor example because, these days, most parents don’t force a child to eat. But it provides a clear illustration because the dynamics are so clear. The parent is in a power struggle and doesn’t want the child to get away with this behavior. The parent may well make the child sit at the table for hours, when all they really wanted was for the child to eat the carrots or whatever the dreaded food was. Who has control here? In a way, it’s the child. The adult hadn’t planned to spend the evening dealing with this. The child can sit in the chair and pout or make a lot of noise and the parent is suffering more than the child.

If there is a food the child won’t eat, it’s probably better to avoid the scene above by asking the child to have just one bite and to set that up with demonstration when they are very young. In some families, these are called a “No thank you bite.” The child doesn’t have to eat the food they are refusing but they have to at least try it.



Tips for Kids of All Ages (cont.)

The power struggle can show up anytime the parent wants one thing and the child does not obey. Counting to three is a useful intervention. “I want you to be back in your room before I get to three. One, two, two and a half, two and three quarters, THREE!” A behavioral chart with rewards given after a week of getting everything done, is another intervention that can get the kind of behavior a parent wants to see.

And one more is the “serious talk,” which should be used sparingly. When the parent is at the end of their ropes, they can say to the child, “We need to have a serious talk.” These talks should take place out of the hearing of other people. As with fighting fair, the parent should use “I” statements and should be prepared for the talk in advance.



Parenting Teens

Be a Coach not a Critic

The biggest complaint from teens is that their parents do nothing but lecture them. And from parents the biggest issue is, “They don’t listen,” followed by “They think they know it all. You can’t tell them anything.” This leads to a kind of impasse; a place where things stay stuck.

There is a way to get through to a teenager. Try being a coach. Say, the parent says, “Better take a coat. It’s going to rain.”

The teenager runs off without a coat and the rains come down. The teen comes home soaking wet. The critic says, “I warned you. When are you going to start listening?”

The coach says, “Oh, no. You must be freezing. I bet your just kicking yourself that you didn’t grab that coat this morning.” You don’t even need to add “Like I told you.”

A coach helps a kid get up and return to the field of play, saying something like, “I know you can do it.” These parenting interventions are just the sort of things that come up in Family Therapy. If you think ideas like this might be helpful for your family, call the Crisis Line **1-844-891-0444**.

Self-Harm and Suicide

Behavioral Health providers are trained in prevention of suicide and other kinds of self-harm. Each year, this training is renewed so they have all the most recent information about prevention. In recent years, some Chugachmiut communities have held suicide prevention walks to demonstrate the importance of prevention. Nationwide, suicide is a significant problem and Alaska is listed as a state with one of the highest suicide rates. The efforts to combat suicide in this region has been very successful but vigilance is important. Don’t be afraid to talk about suicide. All evidence shows that talking about it doesn’t give people the idea. If you are worried about someone who seems depressed or self-destructive, don’t be afraid to ask “Are you thinking about ending your life?” Regardless of the answer, since most people will say no, even when they are having thoughts of suicide, let them know you care about them. Say things like “You are really important to me.” “I care about you.” The personal message is more powerful than saying “Everyone cares about you.” Speak for yourself when offering support using the word “I” to show your concern and to give validation. You can say, “I will help you find someone to talk to about your thoughts and feelings.”

Then, regardless of the reassurances you get from the person, call the Crisis Line **1-844-891-0444** and ask to be referred to a clinician for family counseling. We will help connect the person to a counselor.



Parenting Teens (cont.)

We can legally intervene when the person is “actively suicidal.” If a person has the intention of killing themselves with a plan and the means of doing it, we may pursue a Title 47 process and have the person transported for further assessment and safety.

Most of the time, those who are referred are seen by our clinicians, rather than being sent out of the community. Our staff will immediately develop a safety plan with the person. As the person enters treatment, a detailed assessment and treatment plan are completed.

The person may meet criteria for the diagnosis of depression which can be alleviated with medication. Medical providers partner with Behavioral Health and the patient to prescribe medication as indicated. Medication and weekly counseling are considered the best practice for helping with clinical depression.

There is another kind of self-harm that occurs commonly but especially in younger girls. It is referred to as “cutting” and generally involves making superficial cuts in the lower arm or on parts of the body that are hidden from sight. Cutting behavior generally comes from emotional distress, but it can become a habit. Intentional injury might involve pulling hairs out of one’s head or picking at skin but cutting is most common.

Cutting is usually not a suicide attempt unless it is deep and severe and involves loss of blood. In those circumstances, connect with the clinic right away. If you discover that someone is involved in cutting or other self-harm gestures, make contact with the health clinic or the crisis line at **844-891-0444**.

Staff will make suicide prevention presentations at schools, community centers, or anywhere requested. Staff will also help organize prevention events such as marches with materials to hand out like bracelets and scarves with prevention messages and the Crisis Line number.

“Our Kids, Our Culture” Project

Iguillrrapet, Lumacerpet

As part of the Iguillrrapet, Lumacerpet “Our Kids, Our Culture” Project, Chugachmiut began using Brief Strategic Family Therapy (BSFT) as a means to work with youth and families.

In 2019, staff began visiting families in their homes to provide home-based counseling for families of youth. Visits occur in Chenega, Tatitlek, Port Graham, and Nanwalek. We provide consultation to families in Cordova, Valdez, and Seward. To maintain a level of anonymity, the BSFT clinician visits many families including those that are not seeking services.

We have agreements with schools to allow access to the classrooms and to meet with the youth in a safe, confidential space. Schools have become a place where youth can meet with the counselors one-on-one, in groups, and within talking circles.

As a means for doing outreach, counselors purchase craft supplies and have giveaways like hoodies, hats, magnets, mini flashlights, etc. personalized with the Crisis Line number. We want young people to be creative, receptive to discussions, and to see counseling in a welcoming light.

“Everything has a person. Everything has a suk, a spirit”

—Sally Ash



Native Youth Thriving

Through a grant, Chugachmiut is partnering with the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium to decrease youth alcohol and marijuana use among youth ages 9–20 years. Chugachmiut is interested in the wellbeing of the communities and of its people; we will conduct community readiness assessments to look at how best we can decrease youth alcohol and marijuana use. We believe collaboration is key and encourage community members to join us as we create coalitions to draw on the strengths and assets of your community.

If you are interested in joining this effort or if you have any questions, please contact Chugachmiut.



Juanita Bales
Behavioral Health Aide
Nanwalek

CHENEGA YOUTH COALITION



Help At Home for Substance Use

An addiction can sneak up on you. A person can get hooked on a substance without noticing that alcohol or drug use is becoming a problem. Use becomes a habit, and then a need. Over time, the body begins takes over and demands the next drink, smoke, shot or pill. Then, the person may start to protect their use by lying, denying, and withdrawing from others. There can be arguments and fights over the problem. It's so hard to get out of this alone.

Alaska has residential rehab programs and they have helped many people change their lives. But for some people, it's better to get clean and sober at home. Chugachmiut staff will help you with recovery, right where you live. When you get sober at home, your family and others can be part of your path to sobriety. You can create a helpful support system.

We combine one-to-one meetings, group meetings, and family meetings. The person who is working on sobriety is the one who decides which way to go. The counselor or clinician will guide them but the path to recovery is a person's own way, a journey toward insight, discovery, surprises, and, sometimes, miracles.

Our substance use program staff members welcome anyone who wants recovery; we work with youth and adults. If you have a child or teen in need of early intervention, we have staff members especially trained in the issues faced by youth who can work with the family to "bring them back from the edge." To talk about recovery services, contact Chugachmiut or call the Crisis Line: **844-891-0444**.



Valdez Waterfall by Jan Vanderpool

The Transformation

By Mandy Wood

As a cocooned caterpillar you are sheltered and
have not yet reached your potential or your beauty.
See, where there is transformation there is pain.

A masterpiece in the works.
All the pain and all the hurt,
make the little quirks
in this painting that is you.

But like the Caterpillar transforms
You are waiting to perform.
You take the stage Your hands trembling
Will they recognize you without the mask of alcohol.

You show yourself to the world all beaten
and bruised yet so beautifully imperfect.
You fear rejection because that is the worst,
the pain the sting the little bursts.

You crash, you burn, you fall,
But thru it all you stand up tall
The world may not always clap along
As you transform cause they are wrong

They prefer you weak
But you are strong
No matter what they say or do
To thine own self be true

And grow into that butterfly
Transform beautiful you and fly
Let your freak flag fly, don't be shy
You have arrived
It just took some time.

Accept yourself with your whole heart
God painted you, your every part
With imperfections to add that special quirk
How can you question the master's work?

Look in the mirror.
You're a wonderful piece of art
Now love yourself, just as you are

"The scariest moment is always just before you start."

"When your past calls, don't answer. It has nothing new to say."

"I used to be into the Hokey Pokey, but I turned myself around."

*"The hardest part of sobriety isn't getting clean and sober.
It's healing."*

Thanks to the Facebook group
"One Day at a Time"
for these amazing quotes.

Llangarwik Recovery Camp

The Llangarwik Recovery Camp forms the center of Chugachmiut addiction services. It is a two-week, mobile camp that can be held anywhere there is housing and a meeting space.

Llangarwik has one very amazing attribute. We never would have guessed that clients would want to return again and again. They don't have to be struggling with sobriety. They want to return so they can go further in personal growth and recovery. Past participants can become peer mentors and group leaders.

In the summer of 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting 'shut-down' led to significant travel restrictions. Staff was challenged with the prospect of running a virtual recovery camp. By September, the 'experimental' camp was ready to go using Zoom as the meeting/session platform. Sessions ran four hours in the afternoon and two hours in the evening. By the end of week one, it was clear that the concept worked! The experience was deeply meaningful for clients and staff and the first virtual camp was extended by one week at the request of clients. The incredibly successful and popular virtual Llangarwik Recovery Camps will continue as long as necessary and likely even after travel restrictions are lifted.

The following section covers what to expect in camp but the approach to treatment is the same whether we meet in person or virtually.

What to expect in camp?

When you check into Llangarwik, you can expect to accomplish a great deal each day. While your days will be busy, our goal is to create the perfect balance of growth-oriented activity and healing restfulness.

In the secluded environment of the camp, you will focus on the many healing activities prepared for you. There is also a window of time each day to check in with the outside world and on the week-ends to have family members visit.

With a staff-to-client ratio of 3-to-1, you'll experience a high level of personal attention from the Chugachmiut team. Our credentialed addiction specialists are at the top in each of their respective fields of expertise. You can rest assured that you're in excellent hands at Llangarwik Recovery Camp.

We create a unique treatment plan customized to your needs, pulling from a wide variety of evidence-based and holistic treatment techniques, such as traditional healing through arts & crafts, earthing, fishing and more with the ultimate goal of creating the foundation for a lifetime of sobriety and satisfaction.



“People can’t imagine what a loving environment it is and what tools and support you will leave with... There is no judgment, only support at camp. You have to come to believe it. It’s miraculous, really!”

“As staff, I appreciate the peer-ness of recovery. No us-them, as some professionals still seem stuck in. It fits with being in AK Native culture I think, to counteract historical trauma by recognizing that ALL of our liberation is tied to each others’ liberation.”

Substance Use Issues

Chugachmiut meets each client at the place in their journey where a helping hand is needed. Some clients are self-referred. They come to us because they want to make a change. Drinking and using can make a person feel stuck, going nowhere and can have an effect on relationships. Our program of counseling, group activities and support group meetings set a foundation for building recovery, and moving onward to achieve the dreams of a productive life. The attitudes of our providers are positive and embracing. They are willing to walk with our clients down the path of change, right through the hard parts.



*“If you believe it will work out, you’ll see opportunities.
If you believe it won’t, you’ll see obstacles.”*



Anna Gust
Addiction’s Trainee

Chugachmiut Domestic Violence Program

Chugachmiut Community and Family Services serves the communities through prevention-oriented community outreach services for domestic violence and sexual assault. We work hard to help improve education and communications within families to prevent fracture. In emergency cases, staff will refer and direct victims to resources where they can get critical medical attention or shelter. Chugachmiut maintains a toll-free number **1-844-891-0444** for those who have been harmed and need someone to talk to.

Crisis Intervention

Chugachmiut provides a Domestic Violence Hotline that is part of the Crisis Line that is answered twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. Individuals in crisis, survivors, or anyone who knows someone in crisis are encouraged to call and talk to a trained advocate about their situation. Transportation to the shelter and medical, legal, and social services are available as well as safety planning.

On-Going Services

Chugachmiut Domestic Violence Program offers a variety of education and support groups within the region. Education groups cover a wide range of topics on various facets of domestic violence, and support groups offer participants the opportunity to share their experiences in a supportive environment. Groups led by our amazing staff and art therapy and traditional groups are also offered. Participants do not need to be actively in crisis of domestic violence; we understand that support is needed during and after. Crisis intervention counseling (individual) followed up with ongoing support services and referral and assistance with accessing longer-term counseling where applicable. The legal system can be difficult to understand and navigate, so Chugachmiut Domestic Violence advocates are available to help with protective orders, applying to pro bono legal services, and accompanying petitioners to hearings. Assistance and information on filing for Victims of Violent Crime Composition is available as well.

Chugachmiut Domestic Violence Program (cont.)

Types of Abuse Abuse isn't just physical, there are many types of abuse and they are all difficult to experience.

Emotional Abuse/Verbal Abuse Non-physical behaviors such as threats, insults, constant monitoring or "checking in," excessive texting, humiliation, intimidation or isolation.

Stalking Being repeatedly watched, followed or harassed.

Financial Abuse Using money or access to accounts to exert power and control over a partner.

Physical Abuse Any intentional use of physical force with the intent to cause fear or injury, like hitting, shoving, biting, strangling, kicking or using a weapon.

Sexual Abuse Any action that impacts a person's ability to control their sexual activity or the circumstances in which sexual activity occurs, including restricting access to birth control or condoms. Ignoring someone's refusal to engage in sexual activities by repeatedly using emotional, verbal or physical pressure.

Digital Abuse The use of technology such as texting and social networking to bully, harass, stalk or intimidate a partner. Often this behavior is a form of verbal or emotional abuse perpetrated through technology.



Three Courageous Conversations

Family Violence

“I care about you and I want to help.” These words provide a good start toward helping someone you think is living with domestic violence. “Can we talk about what’s going on? I am worried that you are not in a safe situation.”

If your friend or your relative is open to your help, connect with our advocates.

Talking to Children About Sexual Abuse

It is helpful to approach this conversation like a safety lesson. Just as you would warn a child about fire, it’s important to warn them about sexual abuse. The Behavioral Health Aides can provide books that can be read to children. This makes it easier because thought has gone into finding the right words for this delicate conversation. Here is a quick narrative. “Sometimes, certain grown up people want to touch the private parts of children’s bodies. There is no good reason for this touching like there might be with a doctor or your parents. This person will tell the child not to tell. They will want this to be secret touching. If this happens to you, tell them ‘No.’ Get away from them and come and tell me right away. It is not a child’s fault if something like this happens, so don’t be afraid to tell. We will make sure you are safe.” *The Right Touch* and *Talk About Touch* are two helpful read-aloud books.

Talking to Teens About Sex

This is not a talk about the birds and the bees. This is a talk about older teens getting into intimate relationships with those younger than sixteen. In Alaska, sixteen is the age of consent. It is considered sexual abuse of a minor when someone eighteen or older is involved with someone under that age. The consequences can be arrest, trial, conviction, serving time and a requirement to be listed on the Alaska State sex offender list. Sometimes, these relationships are positive and loving but they are still against the law. Young people need this warning so they don’t forget about the age of consent when pursuing relationships.

Tribal Opioid Response - TOR

This grant will allow Chugachmiut to partner with all of the communities we serve in order to address the opioid crisis facing our communities. With the grant, we can get help to the people who are struggling with opiates and also help to stop people from starting to use opiates in the first place. How will we do this? Many different ways, for instance, Zoom meetings, pamphlets, counseling and more. We can help people get services and even help to pay for it in some cases. If someone is just getting out of jail or prison we can also help with getting services.

Even if someone can't pay for services, we can help. We also have supplies for those who may overdose, so that we can help to stop deaths from opiates. We can help with job search and case management and even help families of those using opiates.

We have been meeting with medical providers and tribal leaders. We will continue meeting with others developing plans to help all people in the villages Chugachmiut serves.

Chugachmiut wants to hear from anybody who has an issue with opiates (or the broader term of "opioids" that includes drugs both natural and those artificially produced), or has any questions about opiate abuse.



The Child Welfare System

Chugachmiut is proud to serve the children through our Child Welfare System (CWS). In accordance with the mission and goals of Chugachmiut, the CWS works to preserve our families following the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA). Through this program, Chugachmiut provides services in the areas of prevention, training, and assistance with OCS cases.

Under the umbrella of prevention, we provide training on parenting, ICWA, and services to families at risk. Chugachmiut expects to provide the following training in 2021: Parents Plus and Our Champions! to our families and ICWA training for our ICWA advocates. We also provide additional training in Recovery Camp, Laugh and Learn presentations, Health Fairs, and other local events.

The CWS also provides support to our communities with the compacting process between Tribes and the State of Alaska. When a case is open with OCS, we will work together with our Tribes in the areas of 🐾 initial diligent relative search, 🐾 ongoing placement, 🐾 safety evaluation, 🐾 licensing, and 🐾 family contact.

Our team provides direct assistance to families and children in vulnerable situations. We can help with accessing services, and casework if needed.

The Chugachmiut Child Welfare System belongs to our families and communities. Our commitment is to keep our children safe and preserve our families. Please contact us with any suggestions you may have.



Quitting Tobacco

If there was one change in your life that you could make that would have the biggest positive impact on the rest of your life, would you take it?

Before you answer, consider that this change would:

-  Keep more money in your pocket
-  Help you look and feel younger longer
-  Benefit your overall health and that of those around you
-  Reduce stress and anxiety
-  Decrease your risk of serious illness
-  Raise your self-esteem

Please take the time to talk to your medical provider about how your health would benefit from quitting or cutting back on your tobacco use—including smokeless tobacco, vaping devices and e-cigarettes. After the consultation, you may be connected to further resources to help curb the cravings to help you reach your goal of becoming tobacco-free.

Contact local Behavioral Health staff if you are using tobacco products as a way to handle the stresses and anxiety of daily life. The provider will help you find healthy stress reduction techniques that promote greater overall health without the damaging effects of tobacco.

Understanding the benefits of being tobacco-free and the consequences of tobacco use is the first step in making this important choice. We encourage you to explore the Alaska Tobacco Quit Line at 1-800-QUIT-NOW or **1-800-784-8669** by phone or online at <http://alaskaquitline.com/> for further information.



Help for Elders and Vulnerable Adults

Chugachmiut has a new program, Aprun Asiwigmen: A Pathway Toward Healing, Phase II, that is for helping Elders and Vulnerable Adults who have been mistreated. Occasionally someone is financially, emotionally, physically or even sexually taken advantage of, and they need someone to help them deal with what has happened. The new program can help with this through the Elder and Vulnerable Adults Program Coordinator. The coordinator can help find services and can show you some ways to protect yourself or someone you know that could use the help.

Maybe you are interested in learning how to recognize what mistreatment is and ways to prevent it. We can provide training for empowerment and safety. We will also be helping to provide referrals to other programs and agencies that can help connect them to services they are qualified for. This new program will provide outreach to the villages of the Chugachmiut region on recognizing abuse, how to make a report of harm to Adult Protective Service, and safety procedures so people stay safe in their homes. Chugachmiut's program will be working with Adult Protective Services to provide culturally appropriate investigations and assist in resolving allegations of mistreatment.

For people who have been victimized, Chugachmiut will provide information to help them recover as well as case management services. My hope is that we can help people feel safe in their homes and communities through education, outreach and advocacy.

We will contact individuals through letters and phone calls to introduce staff and the program until we can meet in person. Call the crisis line for information **844-891-0444**.

Life Skills

This is a diverse group, meant to help others by teaching, talking and working through issues in a fun, encouraging way.

Those attending Life Skills Group will talk about a variety of life issues; for example depression, letting go of things in our life, that might be holding us back, ways of managing stress... and so many other issues. We do this using talking circles, art therapy, and games. This is at the moment a Zoom group that meets on Wednesday from 1:00 to 3:00 pm. Those that have come say they enjoyed the meeting. It is open to anyone who needs to come. If you come and have a particular issue you need to work on, we can do that. The group is flexible, and we try to make it fun.

Tribal Victims Services

The tribal services Human Trafficking program provides tools to the Chugach people, specifically the younger population, to increase awareness about what might make someone more vulnerable to exploitation, especially as they leave their village for the city or higher education. We will also work on building community partnerships (such as with the Alaska Brain Injury Network) to provide more connections to the people of the region.

Home is Where You Know the Plants

“But if you do know what is taught by plants and weather, you are in on the gossip and can feel truly at home.”

—Gary Snyder



Kathy Brewster, of Nanwalek, is a woman with more than a half-century of knowledge about medicinal plants.

In December of 2020, she agreed to talk to Sandra Kleven and Sharon Whytal about the healing properties of local plants so we could add it to this handbook.

Kathy Brewster remembers a time when gathering medicinal plants in the fall was part of a way of life. She says, “That was the only medicine we had,”

Ms. Brewster explains, “We could eat anything that was wild. Of course, our parents told us about what not to eat – anything that was poisonous.” She sounds mystified when she adds, “I don’t know where they learned.”

Some important plants were Wormwood, Devil’s Club, Star of Bethlehem and Yarrow. She says that Yarrow can be used after a baby is born to help the mother avoid infection. Pineapple weed is another important plant. It can be used to stop diarrhea.

Most plant medicines are made into a tea. When I asked if they tasted good, Kathy says, “They tasted okay. I guess we were used to them.”

Most Native plants were preserved by drying but some were cooked and put up in jars. “They would boil them in water and put them away for winter.”

With the Wormwood and Devil’s Club, “you take the brown part off the stem, to get to the green. The leaves are used, too.”

The sap from some fir trees can be used as medicine. “You don’t drink that.” She explains. “You chew it. It stops your heartburn and cold.”

Plants were used for many things, including respiratory issues, stomach aches, kidney problems and to stave off infection.

“When the fishing was over, all the ladies would get ready to go out collecting, so they could bring home plant medicine.”

According to Kathy Brewster, in spring and summer, people could pick needed plants whenever they liked. Some said the medicine was stronger in the spring. But in the fall, it was necessary to gather enough of the medicinal plants to last through the winter.

“We would go up to Second Lake. When they were done collecting, they would return home and hang up their plants in their house. Inside, It smelled like a greenhouse.”

Pineapple Weed The medicinal properties of pineapple weed are supposed to be similar to cultivated or wild chamomile. It's a mild sedative, effective against anxiety and mild gastrointestinal upset. It's a traditional tea plant "used for stomachaches, flatulence, colds, menstrual cramps" and externally as a wash for sores and itchy conditions.



Yarrow is an herb. The above ground parts are used to make medicine. Yarrow is used for fever, common cold, hay fever, absence of menstruation, dysentery, diarrhea, loss of appetite, gastrointestinal (GI) tract discomfort, and to induce sweating. Some people chew the fresh leaves to relieve toothache.



Devil's Club Plant (*Oplonanax horridus*) is a historical medicinal and herbal plant used for centuries by First Nations people. It is also known as devil's walking stick or bear's claw. Tribal medicine indicates that the plant was used to treat colds, arthritis, digestive tract issues, ulcers, and even diabetes. It was also used to combat tuberculosis and as a purgative.



Wormwood is used for various digestion problems such as loss of appetite, upset stomach, gall bladder disease, and intestinal spasms. Wormwood is also used to treat fever, liver disease, depression, muscle pain, memory loss and worm infections; to increase sexual desire; as a tonic; and to stimulate sweating.



Star of Bethlehem is a plant. The bulb of the plant contains chemicals that have been used as a medicine. Despite serious safety concerns, people take Star of Bethlehem for congestive heart failure (CHF).



With the passage of time, things began to change. Mrs. Brewster says that, "When the clinics opened, they started going for penicillin and Amoxicillin."

Kathy Brewster worked in the village clinic for 20 years. She would dispense the new antibiotics but then when she went home to her own family, she would make her own medicine. Her daughter and her grandkids are able to collect with her now. "You have to know what plants they are. You have to study the leaves too. Some are bigger and some are small and you need to identify them by leaves to know what they are."

Kathy Brewster is gracious and generous in sharing this knowledge, acquired over a lifetime. She says, "I have to pass it on."

More Tips for Living Your Best Life

Barriers in Thinking

Closed Thinking

-  Lies by omission
-  Not self-critical
-  Unreceptive to responsive alternatives

Victim Role

-  Full of self-pity
-  Blames others: family, childhood, genetics, social conditions, the past, etc

Superior Self-image

-  Focuses only on personal good deeds
-  Refuses to acknowledge harm to others
-  Fails to acknowledge own destructive behavior

Reckless Attitude

-  Says, “I can’t” when means “I won’t”
-  No concept of obligation to others
-  Unwilling to do anything found disagreeable.
-  Considers responsible living to be “dull” or “boring.”
-  Complies only when immediate benefits to self can be gained

Instant Gratification — “I want it now!”

-  Does not learn from the past
-  Expects immediate response
-  Makes decisions on feelings only

Fear of “Losing Face”

-  Has profound fear of “put downs”
-  Experiences the “zero state” (feelings of worthlessness)
-  Has irrational fears but refuses to admit them.

Power Control

-  Compulsive desire to control every situation
-  Manipulates and deceives to gain power over others
-  Refuses to cooperate (unless someone can be taken advantage of)

Possessive Attitude

- 🌱 No respect for rights or property of others
- 🌱 Other's opinions are worthless
- 🌱 Views all people places and things as theirs to possess
- 🌱 Uses sex for power and control, not intimacy

Uniqueness

- 🌸 Quits at first sign of failure
- 🌸 Demands more of others than self
- 🌸 Views self as unique and better than others



Five Tips For Keeping Your Recovery Plan Alive

Barriers in Thinking

People starting in recovery might not have an understanding of their new lifestyle. Some have likened it to going into a darkened room that is unfamiliar to them. They know that they want to stay clean and sober, but what does that look like on Friday night at 10pm? What will they do, say, and think differently? What will they do for fun?

Be willing to change

There are no secrets to recovery. It gets down to a few questions. What do I want and what price am I willing to pay for it? Am I willing to change the people, places, and things in my life? That sounds harsh. But notice the wording: Be willing to change. The Big Book of AA points out that what we need is the honesty, openness, and willingness to change. In time the rest will follow.

Stay around positive people

Millions of people have walked the well-lighted highway of recovery before you. What's more, many of them are willing to walk with you right now. When you go to 12 Step meetings, attend counseling, or meet with your sponsor – you're involving other people in your recovery. This is one of the most powerful things you can do for yourself. There is no need to ever go it alone. Reach out! Trust one more time! Ask for support.

Keep learning about recovery

Many people in treatment cover a few pages of the Big Book, do a First Step, but after the “graduate” they fail to read anything more about recovery. It works a lot better if you keep reading, listening, and speaking with people about recovery.

Keep in mind the saying, “What you think about expands.” Flood your mind with recovery thoughts, and your recovery will start to expand in healthy directions. Try spending thirty minutes each day with recovery-related material.

Keep doing what works

Life in recovery sometimes feels like a roller coaster. It's easy to get stopped by the lows, and attached to the highs. Sticking to a basic recovery plan helps us ride the ups and the downs while growing serenely.

There is an old story about a recovering addict and his sponsor that demonstrates this idea. It seems that the addict lost both his job and his formerly supportive wife on the same day. That evening, in despair, he contacted his sponsor and told him what happened. His sponsor listened with great understanding, and at the end all he said was, “Don’t use, keep going to meetings, and remember this too shall pass.”

Although the addict didn’t fully understand, he managed to follow the advice—even through some pretty grim times. After awhile his life started to turn around. He gave up resentments and fears, he started forgiving other people. He became sharper, more clear-headed. Eventually he reunited with his wife and family, and his old employer hired him back with a large increase in pay.

Bursting with pride, the addict contacted and told his sponsor all of the marvelous things that had happened. The sponsor listened with great understanding. And at the end all he said was, “Don’t use, keep going to meetings, and remember this too shall pass.”



Stress Management Tips

Barriers in Thinking

-  **Practice relaxation techniques daily** This can include deep breathing exercises, meditation, and self-affirmations.
-  **Exercise to stimulate natural endorphins** While at work, get up and stretch periodically. Or the exercise can be brisk walking, running, biking, or swimming. Remember to keep it to a rate where you can still talk.
-  **Get regular sleep** While at the office, make sure that you get a break every four hours to relax as much as is appropriate.
-  **Reduce fatty food intake, caffeine, and refined sugar** Avoid alcohol, marijuana and nicotine as much as possible. These may give a temporary sense of relief, but in actuality, all of these cause greater stress-related problems over time!
-  **Utilize humor** Put some fun into everyday life activities!

Anti-Stress Foods

Vitamin A This Vitamin is found in milk products, chicken, peppers.

Vitamin B's When under a great deal of stress, consider investing in Vitamin B-50's to help you sleep and to calm you somewhat (also helps with panic disorder!)

Vitamin C This is found in the citrus fruits and some vegetables- tomatoes, oranges, lemons.

Vitamin E Vitamin E is found in leaf vegetables, spinach, and cruciferous vegetables (vegetables in the shape of a cross- broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage). They may also aid in the prevention of some cancers.

Minerals When under prolonged stress, it may be important to take a mineral supplement of Calcium-Magnesium-Zinc.

During periods of stress especially, take care of yourself!



Rules for Fighting

SLOW DOWN!!!

Figure out and discuss,
“What specifically is the
problem between us?”

Brainstorm, “What can we
(sometimes pronounced as “I”)
do to make the situation
better for both of us?”



Rules of Communication

- 1** All communication, verbal and non-verbal will be done in a respectful manner. There will be no cussing, name-calling, yelling, biting, kicking, beating, knifing, or other attention-getting attacks.
- 2** References to past history will be free of accusation and will have a “positive” purpose. For example, “My fondest memory of you and what brings a smile to my lips is that time when you and I...”
- 3** Kids are not to be involved in working things out. No fair using them as bargaining chips, trying to get them on your side, bringing them into relationship discussions, or assuming that you are the only one with the kids’ best interest in mind.
- 4** Be quick to say “I love you” when you see your partner doing something that warms your heart. Also be quick to apologize when you perceive that you have offended. (Pride often is the biggest obstacle to communication.)
- 5** Never use the word “divorce” as a threat (in fact, avoid all threats- they don’t accomplish what you want them to accomplish). And do not discuss the marital problems or separations of others. Make no comparisons of yourself or your spouse with these people.
- 6** Try to do one unexpected, selfless, utterly loving act for your partner every day. It can be doing dishes, preparing a special meal, giving a backrub, buying a single rose and card and leaving them in a conspicuous place, anything. But do not keep track of whether the other is falling behind in doing things for you.
- 7** Be respectful of the other’s private time, yet try to be generous with your own time. Quiet moments of reflection are often the most beneficial to healing.
- 8** Plan things together, but just small things at first. Plan your vacation, what you are going to do later in the evening, what movies you are going to see, etc. DON’T BE A MARTYR. Saying, “Whatever you want, dear,” or “I’ll just go along with whatever” is not being agreeable, and it is not being part of the planning process. You are human, have opinions, and, for Heaven’s sakes, be heard (in a respectful way).
- 9** Talk and laugh with each other as much as possible. Argue and be difficult as little as possible. Think about what you are going to say. If it doesn’t look like it will heal, then it has the possibility of doing harm, and probably isn’t worth the saying.
- 10** Never use the counselor’s name in vain. In other words, be careful of the mistake of bringing counseling into communication as a weapon. “The counselor says that you are #&*& *%! And that you need to work on your attitude!” Statements are easily taken out

of context when remembering quotes. And, heck, I might have been wrong. But regardless, your relationship is too important to have even friends or a counselor coming between you.

11 Replace “YOU” statements with non-threatening “I” statements. The complaint of “You and your damn tuba playing make me sick!” becomes “I need quiet time in the evenings.”

12 Live in your own head and heart. If you find that you are “mind-reading” in that you “know” what your partner is thinking, how they will react, and there are no more surprises – stop it. Chances are that expectations are ruling both your behaviors. (Think of your partner as a multi-faceted gem. And that perhaps you have been limiting your experience of that person by looking at them from only one angle.)

13 Throughout your communication efforts, always value yourself. Work to improve your self-esteem. Give yourself strong and healthy boundaries. Don’t bend over backward for the relationship. Couples who do emotional contortions and twist themselves to “please” each other wind up unhappy, feeling unappreciated, and somewhat shame-filled.

14 Avoid bringing up old, past relationships. It’s not fair to your partner to have him/her competing with the ghosts from the past (or your refurbished, cleaned and polished memories). Even with current friends of the opposite gender, don’t stir up jealousy. Explore your own motivation behind your words. If it doesn’t heal, don’t say it.

15 Be honest with one another. Although this may seem self-evident, most do not practice it. People have a tendency to spare each other’s feelings and not express their own desires and their own feelings. Without honesty understanding of each other is not possible. When making daily choices to stay together, it is important to fully know whom you are choosing to be with. Good communication can clarify the situation, and crystallize decisions.

16 Avoid generalities (“You always do this to me!”), and work with specifics. It will improve the tone of talk.

17 Make your own rules. Compare and discuss them. Realize that you will forget them from time to time, but you always have the option of remembering them when they are needed – especially if you SLOW DOWN. Review them once a day, but also be natural. Love each other, love God as you know him, and follow your heart a bit more often than your head.



Resources

American Association of Retired People (AARP) Alaska The nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to empowering Americans 50 and older to choose how they live as they age. **866 227-7447** Toll-Free State Office

Adult Protective Services (APS) This state agency investigates reports of harm and provides protective services to vulnerable adults aged 18 and older. To make a report call **1-800-478-9996**. Behavioral Health staff can assist in making a report of harm. Call the Crisis Line to request assistance.

Aging and Disability Resource Centers (ADRCs) The ADRCs help people access the long term services and supports available in their communities such as waiver services, in-home care, transportation, and assistive technology. For more information, call **907-262-6333** (Independent Living Center Soldotna.) This office serves all Chugachmiut communities.

Alaska State Association for Guardianship and Advocacy (ASAGA) An organization that provides information on guardianship and conservatorship. They also provide trainings, tools, resources and advocacy for guardians and conservators. They have information on how to apply for guardianship and how to complete annual reports. For more information or to ask questions, please email asagaak@gci.net or call **907-444-4015**.

Alzheimer's Resource of Alaska A non-profit organization that provides family consultations and education programs to individuals diagnosed with dementia, family caregivers, health care professionals and the public. Care Coordination Resource of Alaska provides services to all disabilities including seniors not eligible for waiver services. For more information, call **1-800-478-1080**.

Center For the Blind and Visually Impaired The Alaska Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired is the only vision rehabilitation and training center for blind and visually impaired people in Alaska. **907-248-7770** or **1-800-770-7517**

Family Caregiver Support Program Alaska's Family Caregiver Support Program provides assistance to caregivers of any age caring for someone 60 and over, and Grandparents 55 and over raising grandchildren. These programs are operated statewide. **907-262- 2322** or **1-866-776-8210** (Soldotna Area Senior Citizens, Inc.)

Medicare Information Office This state agency helps Medicare beneficiaries on how to get more out of their Medicare. They offer trainings on Medicare. They also provide tips on how to spot and report fraud. They do not provide services.

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Elder Nutrition Services This program provides supportive and nutritional services to community Elders 55 and older. These services include: food boxes, pot lucks, social gatherings, and can also assist Elders with finding and applying for financial assistance and other resources. Call **1-800-478-4155**.

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Term Care Ombudsman Advocating for the rights, dignity, and welfare of older Alaskans. Contact: **800-730-6393**

Long Term Care Support Web Resource Center <https://akaccesspoint.com/SitePages/Home.aspx>

Service providers (personal care, in home services, respite)

-  **Hearts and Hands of Care, Inc. 907-929-5826.**
www.heartsandhandsofcare.com
-  **Homewell Care Services 907-868-3100.** www.homewellseniorcare.com
-  **All Ways Caring HomeCare – Homer (formerly ResCare) 907-235-7683.** www.allwayscaring.com
-  **Center for Community – DBA Compass Homecare 907-276-6960.**
-  **Consumer Direct Care Network Alaska 907-283-0809**
www.consumerdirectak.com
-  **Visiting Angels 907-868-2650** www.visitingangels.com
-  **Connecting Ties, Inc 907-835-3274** <https://connectingties.org>

Medicare Information Office This state agency provides one to one counseling to Medicare beneficiaries on how to get more out of their Medicare. They offer trainings on Medicare. They also provide tips on how to spot and report Medicare errors, waste and fraud. For more information, call **1-800-478-6065**.

Older Persons Action Group (OPAG) This nonprofit membership organization is dedicated to improving services, developing programs, educating, promoting and implementing changes to help Alaska’s seniors live healthy productive lives. For more information, call **1-800-478-1059**.

State of Alaska Department of Administration: Elder Fraud Representation, Office of Public Advocacy. The mission of the office is to investigate claims regarding the financial exploitation of Alaskans 60 and older, and seek civil remedies on behalf of elders unable to bring a complaint without assistance. Toll-Free: **1-877-957-3500**

Tobacco Resources

Alaska Tobacco Quit Line at **1-800-QUIT-NOW** or **1-800-784-8669** by phone or online at <http://alaskaquitline.com/> for further information.

If Emergency Assistance is Necessary, Dial

9·1·1

If information on Community Services is Needed, Dial 211

U.S. HOT LINES

Substance Abuse/Prevention **1-800-729-6686**
Elder Care Locator **1-800-677-1116**
Childhelp USA®
National Child Abuse Hotline **1-800-422-4453**
Center for Disease Control **1-800-342-2437**
CDC Hearing Impaired **1-800-243-7889**
Poison Information Center **1-800-222-1222**

NOTE: The above listings are US. Hot Lines.
If your case is an emergency, call **9·1·1** or local authorities:

Chugachmiut Main Office **1-800-478-4155** or **1-907-562-4155**
Chugachmiut Main Office Fax **1-907-563-2891**
Crisis Line Chugachmiut Behavioral Health **1-844-891-0444**
Behavioral Health Confidential Fax **1-907-278-0300**
Crisis Line Alaska Careline **1-877-266-4357**
North Star Clinic (Chugachmiut Seward) **1-800-224-3076**

Alaska Native Medical Center Anchorage
1-800-478-6661

Offices/Programs

Alaska Native Medical Center Anchorage
1-800-478-6661

Clinic – Port Graham
1-907-284-2241

Providence Hospital – Anchorage
1-907-562-2211

Behavioral Health – Port Graham
1-907-284-2261

Haven House – Homer
1-907-235-8943

Health Clinic – Tatitlek
1-907-325-2235

Chugachmiut North Star Clinic Seward
1-800-224-3076

Behavioral Health – Tatitlek
1-907-325-9682

Health Clinic – Chenega
1-907-573-5129

Office of Children’s Services
1-800-478-4444

Behavioral Health – Chenega
1-907-573-5127

Alaska State Troopers – Statewide
1-907-269-5511

Health Clinic – Cordova
1-907-424-3622

Crisis Line –
Chugachmiut Behavioral Health
1-844-891-0444

Health Clinic – Nanwalek
1-907-281-2250

Crisis Line – Alaska Care Line
1-877-266-4357

Behavioral Health – Nanwalek
1-907-281-2217

VPSO
Call **9•1•1** for Assistance

Homer Resources

Support Groups

AA

*(someone will meet one-on-one for support
before a person's first meeting, if desired)*
Several groups daily 12 and 9pm, T/Th/Fri. 6:30

299-6226 for more info

Depression and Anxiety

Thurs 3-4:30

235-7701 the Center

Brain Injury Support Group

Tues 12-1 **235-6226**

Clinics and Other Services

Food Pantry

Mondays at **1** drop-in at Methodist Church;
or call if emergenc, also help with other kinds of
emergency needs

235-1968

Tribal Health/Clinic Services

Homer SVT

226-2228

Haven House

Women's Shelter and Support Groups

235-7712

Kbay Family Planning - Free Services
teen hangouts after school with activities

235-3436

The Center - individual counselors
support groups

235-7701

