

# Niitaqama wii (*When I Hear*)

Niitaqama wii ayiyiriya  
Nunaniqvagtaq Avani Ellartaq, Ayiyiri ia  
Tengaurullua-Ilu

Kina Imna Yuk Maligngalria  
Nepaunani Yuuciqiq, Ayiyiri ia  
Kayuriyugluni

Niitaqama wii ayiyiriya  
Nunaniqvagtaq Avani Ellartaq, Ayiyiri ia  
Tengaurullua-Ilu

When I hear  
It is so beautiful those ancient things  
It gives me flight

Any person who follows wisdom  
Will live peacefully  
And strengthen from within

When I hear  
It is so beautiful those ancient things  
It gives me flight

*Ossie Kairaiuak*



# *"Tangllemni": The Way We See*



Understanding Alaska Native Culture and Values  
Through The Eyes of Yup'ik Story, Song & Dance

Polly Andrews & Ossie Kairaiuak



Alaska Native Languages Map



Yup'ik/Cup'ik rural villages  
Southwest Alaska



## ~Understanding Culture~ and the lives of Alaska Native people today:

Alaska Native people continue to sustain and pass on cultural values and traditional practices into these contemporary times.

Some of the values that influence Alaska Native life today are:

- *Traditional language*
- *Storytelling*
- *Song and dance*
- *Subsistence practices*
- *Collective family & community*





# Life In Rural Alaska:

Nearly every aspect of life is different in the village

From the homes we live in...



...to the way we travel



...and the food we eat



# Alaska Native Youth:

- Arnat Piciryarait – girl's roles
- Angun Piciryarait – boy's roles



# The Collective Nature of Alaska Native People:



It is common for 3 or 4 generations of family members to live together in one household

“The entire community shares in decision making and often the influence of the community is more important than independence and self-expression”  
(Kenyon, D. & Hanson J., 2012)





**For families in rural Alaska,** hunting and gathering food is still a part of life. Families work together with the changing seasons, harvesting food to last through the year



Aunties Balossa and Annie  
drift-netting on the Kuskokwim River



Auntie Nina skinning a beaver at fish camp



Rural village = Land & Water & Sky



## The “fresh produce department”



In Lower Kalskag, AK



# *Yuraq*: Traditional Yup'ik Dance

The community comes together to sing and dance for ceremonial purposes, for village celebrations, expressing thanks, and sharing story



...and prayer



Traditional dance is still a part of many rural Alaska Native communities



Members of the community - children and elders - participate in singing and dancing



## Four Generations



Continuing the  
traditional value  
of yuraq





# Drift Net Song



Bouncing and jumping around,  
All the while the net floats shake vigorously.  
Over here and over there,  
On the Kuskokwim River drifting.

And then we pull in the net  
And take out the fish  
And then we wait for a while  
To let the fish pass up river

And then we cut up the fish into slabs  
And then we hang them  
Up in the smokehouse



*"So the river will know us"*



# Alaska Native Language Today

...and the value of cultural awareness



# Unani Tangvauralarakut

*"Down There, They Watch Us"*

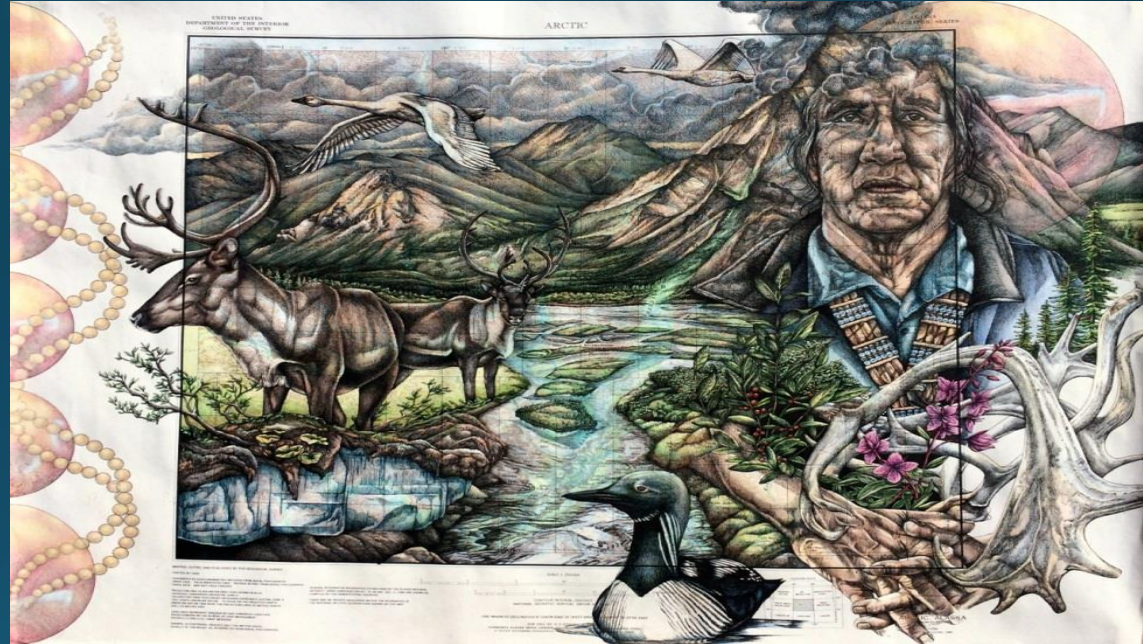
*Down there, they watch us  
And we gather those teachings*

*Everyday I want to clear a path  
So they will recognize me when I go out*

*My spirit is restless,  
I try to see clearly  
as I travel*

*Down there, they watch us  
And we gather those teachings*

*Ossie Kairaiuak~*





# Traditional Storytelling:

Storytelling is a strong part of Alaska Native culture, and teaches themes in life such as human origin, human and nature relationships, and male and female roles



Themes such as humor, humility, listening to elders, and sharing are common within traditional stories

# Traditional Stories...



- Picking berries in the tundra
- The Dragger: *Qamuulek*
- Figure by the Door
- Nine mile lake
- A Lost Voice



- He Will Become What You Speak
- A Yup'ik delicacy



# Ellavut

## *Our World*

Our world  
Outside and inside,  
The land will remain the same  
The weather constantly changes

The cold weather spirit  
Makes everything barren  
Outside and inside

The warm weather spirit  
Brings everything to life  
Outside and inside

Our world  
Outside and inside,  
The land will remain the same  
The weather constantly changes

- Ossie Kairaiuak



# Measuring the Impact Of Cultural Values Implemented within Modern Treatment Approaches *For Alaska Native Youth*

By Polly Andrews



## Alaska Native Culture Learning Circle:

- A place for youth to *share their stories*
- An opportunity to learn skills surrounding Alaska Native culture

### With a Focus On:

- Alaska Native song and dance
- Traditional storytelling
- Native sports and games
- Native Elder role models



# Alaska Native Culture Learning Circle

## The Setting:

- Long-term residential treatment program
- 20 male and female Alaska Native youth
- Urban and rural youth with varying degrees of cultural knowledge
- The students experienced a range of behavioral & emotional issues
- Challenges: childhood trauma, violence, significant loss & addiction

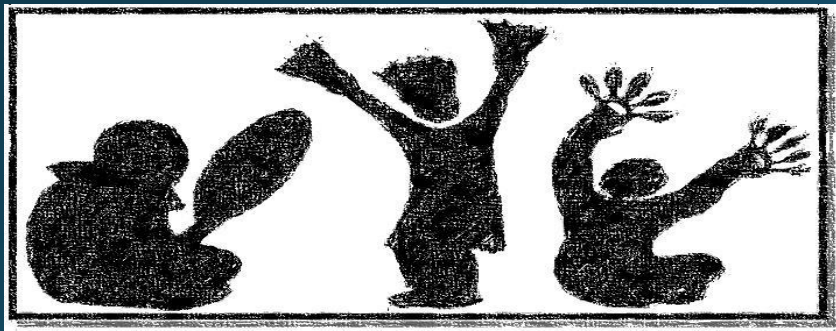




Start Date: September 21<sup>st</sup>, 2015

Five questions were asked surrounding cultural connectedness and cultural meaning:

1. I have a clear sense of my cultural background and what it means for me
2. I think a lot about how my life is affected by my culture
3. I understand pretty well what my culture means to me
4. I have a lot of pride in my cultural group and its accomplishments
5. I have a strong attachment towards my own culture



1 = Strongly Disagree

2 = Disagree

3 = Agree

4 = Strongly Agree

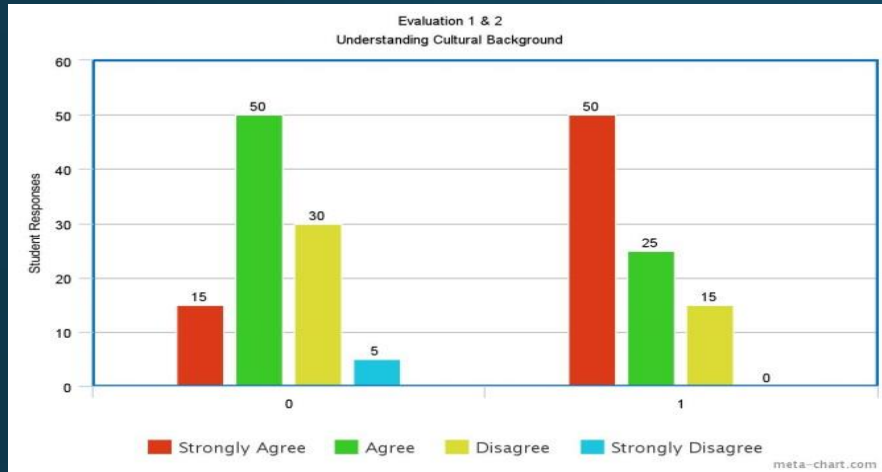
- Alaska Native Culture and Values were taught for 12 weeks
- For two hours each week, students engaged in cultural activities

Within 12 weeks students:

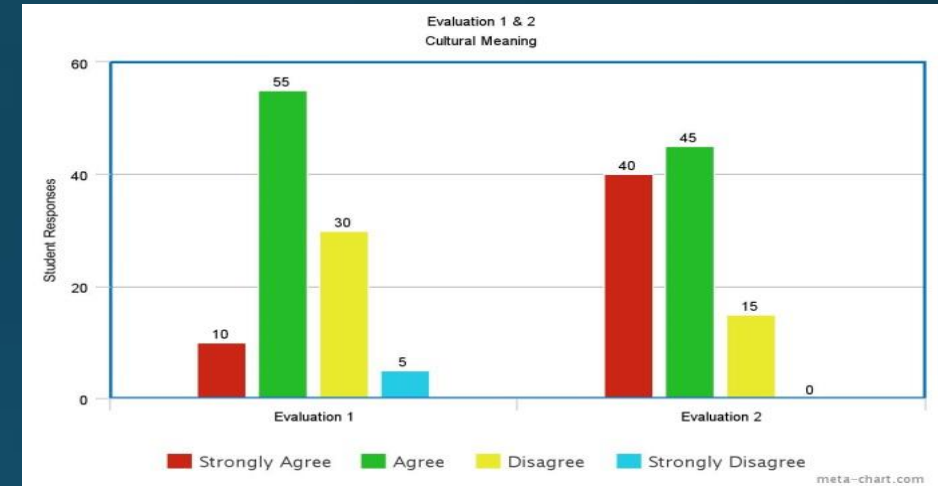
- Learned and performed 5 traditional dances
- Held a small tournament for Native games
- Shared their own personal and traditional stories
- Discussed what Alaska Native values meant to them
- Engaged with Elder role models within the community



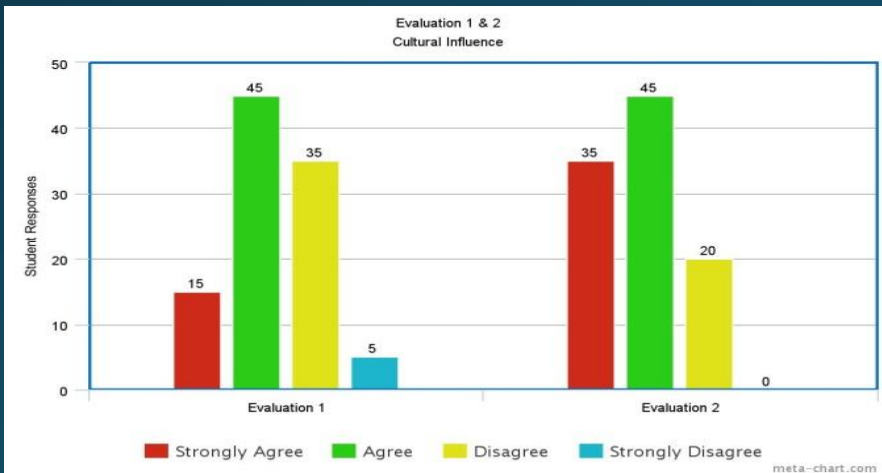
# Results: Initial & Follow-up Survey



Cultural Understanding



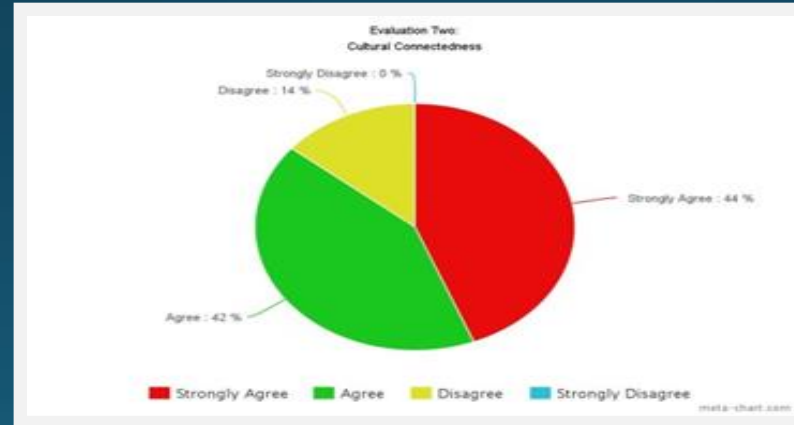
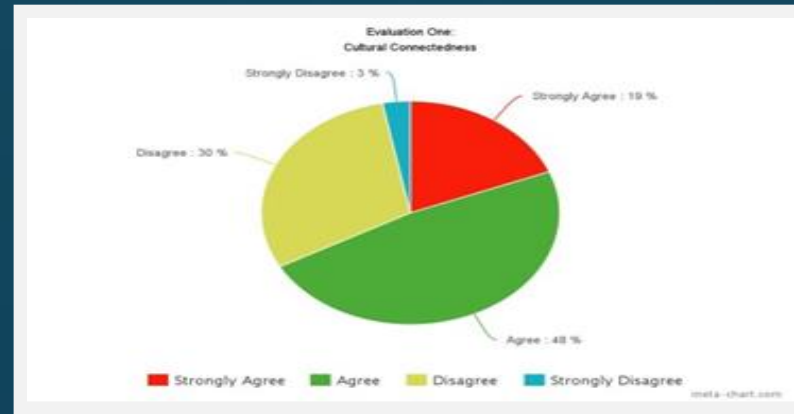
Cultural Meaning



Cultural Influence



# Overall Results



- 25% Increase in Strongly Agree
- 30% decrease in Strongly Disagree

## Conclusion:

Research continues to show that the implementation of cultural values within treatment models yields positive results and builds strength and resilience among participants.



*Being rooted in culture comes with a responsibility*

*- Ossie Kairaiuak*

# Aturluni “Singing from Within”

Ossie Kairaiuak







Linson Olaf



Amari Nangqerrqalria



Leg'taq Piiyuguaq



*Tangruskiluk-wa*



*“See You All Later”*