



# Zuni Life Skills Development

## Program Description

The Zuni Life Skills Development (ZLSD) curriculum is a culturally tailored intervention that targets high school students. It is based upon social cognitive theory, which proposes that suicidal behavior is affected through the interaction of modeling influences (peer and community), environmental factors, and individual characteristics. By developing competency in a range of life skills, program participants decrease known risk factors while increasing protective factors.

The ZLSD curriculum contains the following seven units:

1. Building self-esteem,
2. Identifying emotions and stress,
3. Increasing communication and problem-solving skills,
4. Recognizing and eliminating self-destructive behavior such as pessimistic thoughts or anger reactivity,
5. Receiving suicide information,
6. Receiving suicide intervention training; and
7. Setting personal and community goals.

In its evaluated state, the curriculum was presented three times a week for 30 weeks in a required language arts class.

## Evaluation Design and Outcomes

The ZLSD evaluation employed a quasi-experimental design with intervention and non-intervention conditions (LaFromboise, 1995). A variety of measures were used to identify program effects; these included the Suicide Probability Scale, the Hopelessness Scale, the Indian Adolescent Health Survey, student self-ratings of program skills, behavioral observations of program skills, and peer ratings of program skills.

Statistically significant differences were found in decreased hopelessness (effect size = -.40) and in program student's ability to role-play suicide intervention skills (mean effect size of 1.00) and problem-solving skills (mean effect size of 0.61). Role-playing data were collected from reviewers blind to group assignment.

## Generalizability

The program was specifically tailored towards the Zuni culture; its effectiveness beyond that population is unknown. However, the process of cultural adaptation incorporated in the program is certainly transferable to other populations (see Item #1 under Implementation Essentials).

## SPRC Classification

# Promising

<b>Program Characteristics</b>
Intervention Type <b>School-Based</b>
Target Age <b>14-18</b>
Gender <b>Female &amp; Male</b>
Ethnicity <b>American Indian</b>
IOM Category <b>Universal Selective Indicated</b>

This program is supported by a grant (1 U79 SM55029-01) from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). No official endorsement by SAMHSA or DHHS for the information in this document is intended or should be inferred.

**Implementation Essentials**

The success of the ZLSD curriculum is based upon several factors; critical among these are the following:

1. The program should only be implemented after extensive community involvement that adapts cultural norms within the curriculum and establishes community support;
2. Each lesson should be comprised of the following training techniques: (a) providing information about the effects of target behaviors, (b) modeling of appropriate skills, (c) behavior rehearsal of appropriate skills, and (d) providing feedback; and,
3. Teachers should receive adequate training in utilizing the curriculum.

**Targeted Protective and Risk Factors**

The Zuni Life Skills Development program impacts the following risk and protective factors that have been targeted by the *National Strategy for Suicide Prevention* for the reduction of suicide in the United States.

**Increased Protective Factors**

Easy access to a variety of clinical interventions and support for help-seeking  
Skills in problem solving, conflict resolution, and nonviolent handling of disputes

**Decreased Risk Factors**

Hopelessness

**Program Costs**

American Indian Life Skills Development Curriculum text.....	\$29.95
(See references below)	
Teacher Training .....	Variable
Cultural Adaptation.....	Variable

**Program Contact Information**

*Program Developer*  
Teresa D. LaFromboise PhD  
Associate Professor of Education  
Stanford University  
Cubberley 216, 3096  
Stanford, California, 94305-3096  
Voice: 650-723-1202  
Fax: 650-725-7412  
Email: [lafrom@stanford.edu](mailto:lafrom@stanford.edu)

*Program Publisher*  
University of Wisconsin Press  
Voice: 800-621-2736  
Fax: 800-621-8476  
Web: [www.wisc.edu/wisconsinpress/](http://www.wisc.edu/wisconsinpress/)

**Additional Resources**

LaFromboise, T. D. (1995). The Zuni Life Skills Development Curriculum: Description and evaluation of a suicide prevention program. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 42(4), 479-486.

LaFromboise, Teresa D. (1995). *American Indian Life Skills Development Curriculum*. Chicago, IL: University of Wisconsin Press.