



“Being an Indigenous Youth is not a risk factor.”

Indigenous youth are rejecting the idea of being inherently at risk because they are Indigenous.

They invite adults to contemplate the following truths:

- Beyond simplistic stereotypes lie the strengths and complex knowledge of Indigenous youth.
- Singular narratives about Indigenous youth are harmful, but recognizing that youth are situated in networks of relationships which can provide strengths, skills, knowledge, and sustenance is empowering.
- Youth have expert knowledge of their own lives and their voices deserve to be heard.

Indigenous youth want service providers to accept and understand that **HIV is closely linked to a variety of social determinants of health** that influence vulnerability to HIV/AIDs so they can provide *compassionate, strengths-based support* for testing, treatment, and related services.

Wise Prevention Practices For Youth Prevention Programs

- **Respect:** Use harm reduction & trauma-informed approaches to treating the whole person.
- **Inclusivity:** Welcome and support 2SLGBTQIAS+ folks.
- **Acceptance:** Of all lifestyles and substance use: meet youth where they're at.
- **Cultural & Community Support:** Access to Elders and ceremony has preventative effects.
- **Localized:** Provide youth access to cultural activities, language lessons, elders, and traditions to draw strength from their community.
- **Holistic:** Address the whole person without stigma.
- **Strengths-based:** Use a positive perspective & language that affirms positive qualities modeled by youth Arts-based research & programs: Talk about difficult subjects to engage youth in a meaningful way