

NCJTC- Fox Valley | Drug Endangered Children (DEC) Alliance Development - A Successful Tribal Model

Welcome everyone to the National Criminal Justice Training Center webinar, Drug Endangered Children Alliance Development, A Successful Tribal Model. Presenting today's webinar is Stacey Read and Eric Nation from the National Alliance for Drug Endangered Children and Melanie Smith from the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes.

My name is Joann Joy and I will be moderating today. Thank you for joining us for this webinar, which is part of a webinar series for the Bureau of Justice Assistance, BJA, Comprehensive Opioid, Stimulant, and Substance Abuse Program otherwise known as COSSAP and the Indian Alcohol and Substance Abuse Program for Coordinated Tribal Assistance Solicitation Purpose Area 3 grantees and non grantees focused on responses to alcohol and substance abuse related crime.

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With that, let's try our first poll question. This is a simple question to find out who is joining us today. The question is, which of the following best describes your role? Your choices are probation, parole, or community corrections, law enforcement, victim services, child welfare and/or advocacy center staff, treatment provider to include mental health or substance abuse, or other.

Reviewing these results, we see that approximately 38% of our attendees are within the victim services child welfare and/or advocacy center staff roles. Our next largest chunk falls into the other category and it does appear that we have a large representation in probation, parole, and community services.

Let's go over our learning objectives for today. Our first learning objective is to list the steps that the Confederated Salish and Kootenai tribes took to implement a DEC alliance. Our second objective is to identify key partners used to create a successful DEC alliance. And our third key learning objective is to describe successful strategies to sustain a DEC alliance.

I am so pleased to introduce to you our presenters for today. Stacey Read and Eric Nation are from the National Alliance for Drug Endangered Children. Stacey Read is the director of DEC Network Development. She provides technical assistance to National DEC network and is an integral member

of the training team and has participated in curriculum online training and publication development.

Eric Nation is the director of training and development. He is a certified court DEC instructor that has been involved in the training of thousands of professionals across the United States as a trainer for the National DEC. Melanie Smith is a tribal member of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai tribes.

Melanie is a multidisciplinary team member in her community and has helped to identify the need for services, develop an action plan to improve services, and work to develop relationships collaborate and think outside the box to build a multidisciplinary team for her community. Stacey, Eric, and Melanie, I am honored to turn the time over to you.

Thank you so much. My name is Eric Nation and we want to thank you for attending this webinar and thank the National Criminal Justice Training Center for hosting this. Today's webinar, we're going to discuss the Tribal DEC Alliance webinar, an overview of what's going on, what the tribal DEC alliance is about, why it was needed, the challenges of getting it started, the process, the benefits and then the next steps.

This is an ongoing series from what we've did a couple of weeks ago about the DEC awareness and the next steps of actually forming a tribal and/or local DEC alliance.

So when we talk about DEC alliances, what are actually we talking about? What is the DEC alliance? So we consider a DEC alliance a group of committed agencies, disciplines, and professionals that regularly meet to focus on and find solutions around Drug Endangered Children, or DEC, and other issues. So it is a multidisciplinary group of professionals that are coming together.

So these alliances are committed to continued discussion, so regular meetings. They're solution focused, so staying positive and really trying to find solutions for things that come up within these discussions. They're committed to identifying, developing, and implementing promising practices to assist.

They educate one another on disciplines, policy, and laws because we know those are always ever changing. They continue to educate the community and other disciplines on DEC efforts and community issues surrounding drugs, and they continue to think outside the box as to how we can better identify, respond, and provide services to children and families.

So why was the alliance needed in this CSKT? So the alliance was needed because the tribe was seeing an increase in substance use across the reservation. Increases in criminal drug activity also across the reservation. Building tested positive for methamphetamine when that building was

actually tested.

Housing options decreased due to positive test. So if somebody tested positive, they were being kicked out of housing or not being able to get into housing due to substance abuse. The disciplines and agencies were not working together collaboratively. They were not sharing resources. They were not communicating.

They were not providing each other with information and they had a lack of foster and kinship placement. So children were being removed and they didn't have any placements that were tribal placements for those children.

And here, we have our second poll question. The question is what is the biggest challenge you are currently facing around Drug Endangered Children efforts? Your options are no or very little Drug Endangered Children knowledge currently in your community or tribe, no collaboration between disciplines, leadership is not supportive of Drug Endangered Children efforts, it seems like there is so much to address around the issue and you're not quite sure how to tackle it, or you just need help from National DEC or others.

Let's review our results. Our largest numbers come in knowing very little about DEC in our communities and tribes. We can understand the frustration too that comes with our next largest represented answer, and that is that there are too many issues to address and we're not quite sure how to start. And just below that is no collaboration between disciplines. Eric, Stacey, and Melanie, please continue.

So in order to get started, we need to address what challenges we face as we got ready to start the DEC alliance within the Confederated Salish and Kootenai tribe. And Melanie, I think you would be a great person to get us started with the challenges that you faced locally as you got this DEC alliance up and going.

Yes. Thank you, Eric. So we did have some challenges that I don't think we're just completely unique to the reservation, but also just unique to communities and getting people to truly collaborate. And some of those were a lack of support. People didn't know what to do or maybe they weren't educated on DEC efforts, Drug Endangered Children efforts.

There was a lack of collaboration. A lot of-- there was always a lot of talk about collaboration, but there really wasn't true collaboration or agreements where people were able to work together and actually make decisions. And some people just felt like that's out of my scope. It's not my job. It's not

my problem.

And then, some of it was we actually had to reach out to the tribal council to get people in to come and be trained about how to identify drug endangered children and what is their role in that. And so what we did was we approached and communicated and have lots of transparency with our tribal council.

And when we said, hey, we have DEC issues here. We have to work together to find solutions and we're stuck. Can we please make a change of duty so that tribal employees can attend a DEC training without having to take PTO? And the tribe agreed with us, which was very nice.

And so, we had to keep using these roadblocks or challenges as we went each time so that we could reach out to as many people as possible. But also, the reservation is very large and we have six districts and four counties. And we also had to, a challenge was to reach all the areas in the reservation so that we could get as many people educated about it.

And then getting buy in from above, that was also a challenge because department heads are busy and we needed many disciplines and many department heads, not just with the tribe but also non tribal, to understand what was going on. So those were some of it. And then another big one is with this next slide is on neonatal absence, baby story.

So in all of this beginnings of DEC education, social services reached out to tribal council because they said we have a big substance use problem on the reservation. And in a cluster, we had 10 babies-- all tribal babies-- suffering from neonatal absence syndrome and withdrawing in hospitals that were off reservation, which are 70 plus miles away in each direction and then even farther to Florida to 10 hours away depending on the severity of their withdrawals.

So we had a big problem and we didn't know what we needed to do. We needed to identify services. We needed caregivers trained. We needed to be able to have the medical community here to be able to identify what are the outcomes for these babies and to get training. And so, it was really a very serious situation.

And we were all very stressed about it. Like, how do we approach this? And DEC definitely had the map to do that to lay it out for us and support us. And then, also one other thing was finding later on too that some of our children weren't diagnosed as drug affected or FAS, or from substance use, they were diagnosed with ADHD or autism and they weren't being treated or cared for properly.

And that can be really frustrating for caregivers and professionals. So those were some of the things that we really needed to have DEC come and help us through that.

So National DEC and CSKT came up with a process and this process was individualized for the tribe utilizing National DEC's road map and tool kit to the DEC approach. So when we talk about the road map and tool kit, there are three different stages. There's an awareness phase, an implementation phase, and an institutionalization phase.

And we're going to go through each of these columns and Melanie is going to provide you with some information as to what this looked like for the tribe. So when we talk about the awareness phase, we're really talking about getting as many people aware of the problem as possible, whether it's a professional, or community member, or a family member.

We want to make sure that everybody is aware of the problems so we can get as much help as possible to identify these children and help. So creating awareness of the problem-- and we're talking about in different ways through different avenues whether it's in-person, virtual, online, social media; I'm just thinking outside the box as to how many different ways we can create that awareness.

Identifying leadership, disciplines, and stakeholders. It's really important when you're thinking about starting a DEC alliance to really get the right people involved up front and then really expanding on those disciplines as well. Providing awareness training. Melanie is going to talk about how that happened as well, but National DEC provides a lot of the awareness training across the country. So that was something that we had helped with.

Initiating a community assessment. When we talk about community assessments, we're not talking about reassessing your community. We're really talking about gathering the data that's already out there from the different disciplines that can really show the impact to the children and families in the community or the tribe to which you're from.

And then, connecting with National DEC. We only say this because we are the National Alliance for Drug Endangered Children. We have connections across the country, resources from across the country. We also can provide a lot of support and technical assistance and help along the way, so you're not out there alone doing these efforts as well. So Melanie, can you talk about, kind of how the awareness phase and how you really took that and ran with it?

Yes. So initially, we went and Eric and Stacey were here for training and it was amazing. It was like

finding the missing piece of the puzzle or the keys to the car we didn't know how to drive, to start developing an alliance and having true collaboration. And so, we started talking to everyone in the community and the disciplines that we thought should be involved and asked to have National DEC come back and train the community.

And as I mentioned earlier, it was-- if we didn't have enough people there, then I would go and ask tribal council and other departments and agencies for support and help and we got more people there. So we conducted several core trainings to many different disciplines, both tribal and non tribal. Where I live, this is a people problem not just a reservation issue. So it was important because we live in this diverse community to work together.

And we started talking to community members individually, and in different disciplines just reaching out one on one or in groups. We also surveyed. I did a lot of outreach to different community events and we're able to really get a picture of what the needs were. Do people know about Drug Endangered Children? Do they know what to do, what type of awareness we had?

And that was all part of our community assessment form as well. And along the way in those meetings, we'd ask, who do you think should be at the table, and why aren't they at the table, and how do we get them at the table? And always being focused on being solution oriented when we're dealing with stuff was very beneficial because the problem is a big one and it's a tough one that can make people feel badly about themselves or their community and that would not be the outcome that we wanted.

So always focusing on solutions. And then, we used social media. Facebook often worked really good in our area. PSAs on the radio actually work really well here. We used billboards and community events, being part of those. So we just have the exposure that we're here.

And then we did additional trainings and education with baby dolls in demonstrating drug effects and continued-- and then we continued to communicate with National DEC often. If you get stuck, call up and get the support from the national organization to help us work through where we needed to connect in developing this.

Melanie, can you talk about the different disciplines that you got involved?

I can. So I started with a lot of the tribal government ones, which was DHRD, tribal social services, Tribal Health, tribal law and order, I'm missing one, the prosecutor's office, one that was dealing with the children, I wanted them to be involved. And then, it went to the hospitals, local hospitals. We have

two here, as well as multiple police agencies, highway patrol, city police in the different towns, first responders.

Schools was huge, so reach out to the schools. And did I miss any Stacey? I'm sure I did, but then I'd ask people who needs to be involved. Who do we need involved in this?

So then in this process of creating the DEC awareness, I got a phone call from the City of Polson, because they had heard about this Drug Endangered Children, they wanted to know about it. And in the process of that call, there was a commissioner's meeting that evening that the city manager said hey, can you come and present there. And so, I just "sure, I'll change my schedule".

I went in. We presented to the city Polson and the mayor. And when they were done, they said we want in as a whole city. We want to partner with the tribe. This is the direction to go. It was a good thing. And it's not every day that all these disciplines can work in unity at times. And so, this was a really positive thing for our community that we live in, that we had the tribe and the city working together for our children.

And Melanie, you did such a wonderful job of bringing the awareness to the community. And between our visits to the tribe and the reservation, the momentum only kept getting bigger which allowed us to then go to the next phase, which was the implementation phase.

And with that, we encouraged the continued awareness training and just awareness in general. And we then had to start engaging the leadership. We had to start engaging different disciplines and we had to start engaging the stakeholders even more, getting them at the table to make decisions to discuss the issues that were being challenges that were preventing the disciplines from working together.

So we then went into the next phase of our training as well and we started doing what we called the DEC approach training, which is moving from that awareness piece to the action piece and that seemed to be very beneficial. We got a lot of activities and a lot of questions and a lot of good results that came from that training. We continued to work with Melanie on the community assessment and get that completed and disseminated out.

And we continued to identify and develop and implement promising practices. We as National DEC take promising practices that are occurring from across the United States and bring them to the local area that we are working in, but also we're identifying promising practices that are occurring within that local area ensuring them the opposite direction. And then, we continue to connect with the tribe

in connection with National DEC.

We had weekly phone calls back and forth. And Melanie, I think you can describe how that went a little bit better through that implementation phase.

Yes. It was really nice. We had really good attendance at our meetings. We had a big group of people that we felt was significant to get a community voice. And National DEC came in with the tools on how to run the meetings, and do the training, and get that community voice and come up with workable goals.

Like I know in the polls, one of the polls said there's so many things, they don't know where to start, there's so many steps. And the process of the implementation and having the group meetings where people would work together and say what do we have and what do we not have and narrowing that down was significant.

And it had a lot of power in that for our DEC efforts because it came from the community. It didn't come from myself or the National DEC. It came from the goals that were developed were for our area specifically and it was the community, not, it was a multidisciplinary group of people as well.

So that was really amazing and it gave us the format to look at the problem and go ok, here's what we can do and we can develop an action plan on that with the goals and you know, objectives of being able to address. And we continued to have the meetings and we continued to address issues as they change. There's other emergency issues that can come up with DEC issues.

And when you have an active alliance, we're able to address those whether it's educating other disciplines, educating the community, or handling a crisis. We're able to come up with that. And it was really important to hold the meetings, send emails, keep that communication going as well.

And then, we also had, we needed more trained trainers for DEC too, so that other people in the community could also help with the DEC awareness and approach. And we were able to do that as well with the community. And we continue forward to this day with our PSA's, with our meetings, with addressing issues that come up at times whether it's miscommunications or not understanding each other's disciplines.

We then arrange the training so that we can address them. So all those people that are working the front lines with our DEC affected children are able to understand each other's jobs better and share information better.

So Melanie, I think the one thing that I think is important to bring up-- and maybe Stacey you can help discuss this by one of our poll questions-- is where do you begin. There's so much going on, where do you begin? And the process that you and Stacey work through to come up with the goals was extremely beneficial to this group of residents and community members and disciplines.

So Stacey, if you can take a few minutes and kind of describe how we work to come up with those goals. So we knew what to focus on and how we could benefit the community moving forward, which helped us in the direction that we were going.

Yeah, no. I think that's great. So Melanie and I worked really hard to really make this, not a National DEC effort, but a CSKT effort. So we really, when we talked about an action plan, we really wanted it to be theirs. And Melanie, obviously, we worked really hard to make sure that it was culturally sensitive.

We had buy in and input from different people, so there was lots of conversation on the side outside of meetings as to what people anticipated, what people expected, what people wanted, just to kind of get a feel for some of the things that people wanted to move forward on. And so we had at one of the meetings, quite a few members had come and which was not unusual because people were super excited about the process and the movement that had already occurred.

And we wanted to get people focused on things that this group wanted to accomplish. So we did a couple activities. One activity was getting people into different groups, not sitting with a group that maybe that they had already sat with. So they were multidisciplinary.

So we separated them out into these multidisciplinary groups during one of the meetings and had them talk in the groups about what was working around substance abuse on the reservation or within their community. And we had them each go through all of the things that we're working good. We put them up on a whiteboard. Lots of different examples, but many were the same.

So a lot of people were on the same page as to what was working. And then what we did is we had them stay in those groups and we had them talk about what wasn't working around substance abuse. And this is where you will see when these groups come together that there is a lot of similarities in what people think are not working in that community.

So that actually happened. And when we put those on the board, it was amazing how much similarity there was. And so, what we realized at the end of this process-- and explaining it really fast. It wasn't a fast process. It was one of the longer meetings that we had had.

And what we realized was that collaboration was one of the big issues that people wanted to tackle first. And that's really a short in the long term goal because you have a lot of things that fall under that collaboration piece. Like for example, some of the things that they came up with were, developing protocols, developing MO use, developing information sharing ideas and examples.

So those are some of the things that we definitely see across the nation that comes up a lot under the collaboration piece. And then the other one was an education piece, which I thought was brilliant because a lot of other disciplines don't know what the other disciplines are doing or what's happening in the community or who can do what, who holds what grants, what the laws and policies are. So that was another goal that they really wanted to tackle as well, which also can be a short term and a long term goal together.

And then the other ones that really were more long term and bigger goals were housing and treatment. So there wasn't an inpatient-- and correct me if I'm wrong, Melanie. Wasn't inpatient treatment on the reservation. People are driving hours for inpatient and outpatient, depending on the specific need of that individual.

I mean, that's difficult because a lot of folks are in need of things now. So there are waiting lists, as well. So lots of things around treatment and then, housing was another issue. Because what we saw was that if you tested positive or got caught using in one of the housing units, you were kicked out. So there was that homeless issue that we were creating as well.

So just getting people together to think outside the box as to how we can tackle as a group from this reservation, these issues. And they're still continuing to follow that action plan and really build upon it, crossing things off and completing things which is always fantastic to see. But that process is something that we utilize across the country and communities and tribes and it really, really helps them stay focused both on the short term and the long term.

But it also I think gives them hope because they are tackling things and this is something that this group can remedy in some fashion, finding solutions.

So Stacey, we also ran into-- as you and Melanie completed the goals in that education piece which helped us develop a promising practice not only for the Confederated Salish and Kootenai tribe, but also one that we have then extended out throughout the United States-- and that was we realized that the lack of information about what each discipline did was a huge barrier. People did a lot of assuming that they knew what the other discipline was about, what the rules were, what the protocol

was.

So we began following our goals and objectives that Melanie and Stacey had worked on. And every meeting that we had around the DEC alliance started off with 15 or 20 minutes of education from a different discipline. And Melanie, do you want to discuss a little bit more about that? I think you're law enforcement actually started it and then, you work through, I think almost every discipline that was at the table.

Yes and that was huge. We did law enforcement and social services was one of the first one because there were, just as Stacey stated, there was confusion about what the roles were and there was a lot of assumption. And we got several different police agencies represented and social services, tribal and non tribal together for a meeting, and went over what the rules were for the police officers and the social services and what are the timelines, when are they supposed to have reports in?

And it was amazing to know that they didn't know each other's timelines and it was very helpful for the police to know that social services needed their investigation information back before because of their timeline. It opened a lot of doors for them to call and approach each other and even working together in the field in tandem.

I think one of the most interesting ones, Melanie, was when we had a brief presentation about addiction and how many professionals had no idea how addiction worked and how it affected them. And you did a really good job of bringing in a professional to talk about addiction, mental health, behavioral health, et cetera.

Yes. And in it, we ask what-- if it's not identified, we'll ask at the meetings, what trainings do we need as well so we're staying attentive to that. And one of them was very impactful too because we had some addicted community members and some families that had not had custody of their children due to the substance use and they attended.

And it was very emotional. They cried and said we saw all these people were against us and we now see this community of people and disciplines that are working for us. And it was really heartwarming to also have the meetings open to community members where they could see what a DEC alliance was doing for them and for their children.

The other real beneficial thing was is, we were very honored as National DEC with the assistance and the support of Melanie is every time that we were in town to do a training or do a meeting development, we then had the opportunity to go with Melanie to tribal council and give them an

overview of what was happening and the progress that was made. And with that became huge support from the tribal council.

And we found it very key in the community that without tribal council's blessing or support, this would have been a whole lot tougher. So that definitely was a great asset that Melanie brought in getting us in front of tribal council whenever we were in town.

I was just going to say yes, that was very beneficial and they would also assist if I needed a discipline there. They would help with that, tribal council.

I think the other key thing is through the implementation process was-- it wasn't very common for the tribe and the City of Polson to work together. And the way that Melanie brought it to both the tribal council and the city council, brought the two organizations of the two communities together as one to start combating the substance use that was affecting the children and trying to change the trajectory of those children's lives.

And really, the Confederated Salish and Kootenai tribe DEC alliance also became very integrated with the Polson DEC alliance.

Yes, they did. Through this process, we were able to train multiple police agencies beyond the DEC awareness too and it was very beneficial.

Melanie, can you also talk about some of the drug raids that had happened and how those looked different once the DEC alliance was established?

Yes, I can. So once the police agencies were DEC aware, they had expressed that it was eye opening. They now have-- well, they do police raids and with shields, and guns, and busting doors down and with little kids right amongst things doing their job, but it wasn't really trauma informed. And now, they have a trauma informed approach.

I know specifically the City of Polson and the tribes, they have a DEC officer that will care for the kids, reduce trauma. If they're able to remove children when they're not-- pardon me, I'm sorry. I meant do the drug raids when the children are present, they try to do that. It's not always the case, but they also work and communicate with-- on the most part with the different social service agencies so that they know that this is going to happen.

So we're all more prepared. And in that sense, we're able to reduce the trauma to the children and the families that are experiencing the effects of substance use.

And Melanie, were your child welfare professionals on scene after those drug raids or execution of search warrants to help with the children?

Were they on scene? Oh, yes. Sorry, I forgot about that. We also worked and we have jackets that we did. Because in some cases, they're pretty scary. People are fleeing from the police. We had cartel here and there was a lot of danger involved too. And then, social services is showing up.

So we came together and developed our Drug Endangered Children coats that are reflective and identify that it's social services there as well to better protect and communicate. And it's less likely that in a drug raid that they're going to take someone that looks like they're part of the police agency or the team that's there.

And so, we have jackets that they wear. Is that what you were referring to as well, Stacey?

Yes. And I think that you guys being on scene as child welfare was also something that was developed out of or what came out of the collaboration between the law enforcement and the child welfare agencies.

Yes. Even in getting-- being able to get your investigation done, they will let us on the scene and let us get our evidence that we need. You know, and they understand that there's different evidence. They're not looking at it-- we're not looking at it from a criminal as much as we are as safety issues with social services. And so for them both disciplines to know that, they knew that they needed to work together.

Perfect. Moving on to the institutionalization phase of that roadmap and toolkit for the development of the alliance. So we definitely recommend continuing the awareness and DEC approach training. So that's not something that's ever going to probably stop due to turnover, and new professionals, new community members. It's really just an ongoing process.

Providing local DEC development training. So local DEC development training is helping with the development of that alliance. It's more of an education and facilitation piece that is provided to the disciplines. Train the trainer within the community. So National DEC is more than willing to come in to the community all the time. It's just not realistic for the community and the funding and those kinds of things.

So we really recommend having National DEC come in and train professionals and community members within the community or within the tribe to be able to provide those ongoing trainings for

years to come. Institutionalize and share promising practices. So that would be MOUs, protocols, and lots of other things.

Conduct regular meetings. We usually recommend that people have meetings at least every other month, but we've seen them quarterly. We've also seen them monthly. We definitely see the more frequency, the more institutionalized things can be.

Political and policy support. Like Eric and Melanie talked about, getting folks on board and educated and bought in at different levels. This is going to be key. Obviously, having tribal council attend things or at least be able to present to them and get them on board is going to be supportive for the efforts.

It could be really counterintuitive if you're working against tribal council or against other folks, so getting those folks educated on board, that's going to be really important. And then, continuing to reassess. There's nothing worse than having something put into place and then never looking back to say OK, how could we have done that different.

I think Melanie and them have done a really great job and she can talk about some of that reassessment and conversations that we've had over the last couple of years in regards to what's working and what's not working with the DEC alliance or with one of the agencies. And then, connecting with National DEC. Again, it's just to provide resources and support so you're not doing this alone.

And we're able to spread what you guys are doing in your communities and reservations or tribes, and then also vice versa bringing things to you to be helpful. Melanie, do you want to talk about some of the things that helped institutionalize DEC in your community?

Yes. And I want to say that the awareness piece is always so important because we have administrative change happen almost every two years, it seems like, with a lot of the disciplines. And so, people need to be made DEC aware. Always being able to provide local DEC development and training is significant for the same reason.

And engaging our tribal council, our governor. We have the state of Montana and MOUed with us as well on the DEC efforts and that was just super beneficial to know that beyond locally, the state is supporting and approves and likes what we're doing. And it's something that all people can benefit in all communities.

And reassessing is really significant as well because things change. Sometimes, goals can change too with new elected officials or new department heads. And so being able to look and see what we can

control and what we can't, our DEC alliance has developed like it's a living moving document that we're able to make adjustments as we go.

We had an issue with an MMIW here on the reservation that was also drug or substance abuse related and it was quite emergent. And so to be able to team up and work with other disciplines in crisis as well, to help train or to communicate, you know just working together is really important as well. Did I miss anything, Stacey? There's so much we've done.

I think one of the main things, Melanie, that you guys also did during this institutionalization phase is when we came back for the meetings we were willing to discuss what was working and what wasn't working. And to understand that maybe we're trying to change the way that we're collecting and reporting evidence collection.

And a lot of people get confused that that's just the law enforcement mission, or a child welfare mission, and it's not. It's every discipline. But what we figured out is certain ways that it wasn't working and the way we were doing stuff was more of a email hand off instead of a warm handoff followed up by a phone call. And a lot of the information was getting missed.

So the tribe's willingness to continue to look at what wasn't working, but also what was working really well and benefiting from that which helped in the development of some checklists and some fact sheets and stuff. And if you look at our website at www.nationaldec.org, under the roadmap and toolkit, all a lot of those checklists are on there and have been created to make it an easy thing.

But that continuous what is working, what is not and be willing to have that conversation was very important during this institutionalization phase.

I also think that Melanie did a really great job with helping other folks within the state of Montana, specifically other tribes, answer questions about Drug Endangered Children. I believe you've done some presentations to help get the word out to other folks. I know we've had you present at our national conference and the idea is to spread the word as to this is working.

And it's not easy, but it's working and it's making this look different in your community and helping the children and families and the professionals as well, make things a little bit easier. So I thought that that was a really great piece of that institutionalization piece as well.

Yes. We wanted it to be duplicated everywhere, that this is not just a benefit for our reservation, but I saw it as a benefit in all Indian country as well non Indian country. But it was important to be able to

continue to train and make other communities aware.

So after going through the stages, we knew that it was time for change and we knew that we had to do something different and they were. The tribe was working really hard on making changes for the better and impacting the children in a positive way. So we want to discuss some of the benefits of the DEC alliance and what was experienced, not only within the Confederated Salish and Kootenai tribe, but what we have seen across the United States.

So one of the big benefits is that it will assist in establishing and maintaining sustainable and effective DEC efforts within the community. And we definitely saw that with CSKT that they are still meeting on a regular basis. They're still working that action plan. They're still making an impact in changing things and moving things forward.

The other thing it gives is, it provides a common vision. So many times disciplines, each discipline have their own vision, have their own goals, have their own objectives, and we have to have that. I get it, but this allowed the community to have a vision. And that vision was their children being 100% healthy, happy, and safe.

And having that vision brought not only disciplines together, but community members together. It kept them focused that what we were doing wasn't just about a single discipline. It was about the community because we knew and we do know continuously that these children are 100% of our future and that became the vision for the community.

And through that, it enhanced our partnerships and enhanced partnerships with every discipline. It brought disciplines together that had rarely worked together before and that vision kept us all going. And not only in a DEC case, but outside of the other cases, that collaboration in that partnership continued to grow.

And it also helps to develop the collaboration between disciplines and agencies. And I'm not talking about just like the regular disciplines that you're thinking about or that are often involved initially. I'm talking about thinking outside the box as to what other disciplines have information that would assist you or that you could assist them with in providing something.

So what we see with DEC efforts and in building these alliances is that people from different disciplines, like the funeral director or a boxing coach, they want to be involved. And they have information and strategies and a stake in the game and they want to help. So I think that the collaboration between the disciplines and agencies, especially with CSKT, we just saw it be enhanced.

And people were amazed as to who came to the meetings and who was doing what. Because, you know at oftentimes, DEC effort starts with, you know five or six or 10 different disciplines. And Melanie brought together double, triple, quadruple that at times within that reservation to impact the change. And I think that's the cool thing that DEC offers that maybe other things don't.

And with this DEC alliance, and especially with the community assessment that was done, it helped leadership in the development of programs that were needed, not programs that just were developed. Programs that the community actually needed where the gaps were, but also understand that we had policies that were in place that were old and that weren't very connected to a multidisciplinary strategy and services that weren't being utilized.

We discover a lot that there are services out there that are available, but they're not being utilized because they're overlooked and not everybody knows about them. And the DEC alliance really spearheaded that leadership around the development of, not only the programs, the policies, and the services, but it was also the leadership around the development of the children and changing the trajectory of their life so we didn't see that multigenerational cycle of abuse or neglect.

Also, the DEC alliance can assist in coordinating resources, services, and practices. Oftentimes what we see in communities is a duplication of services. So child welfare will ask a family to do something. Probation will ask a family to do something. And then, there's that overlap.

Where the DEC alliance can come into play, is everybody knows who's doing what and what services are out there and there's more of a coordination of those resources and services. So we're not setting families up to fail. We're setting up families to succeed. So really providing different resources that are more family centered or specific targeted services instead of just providing something that's open, but also not duplicating them between disciplines.

So those disciplines are upfront talking about what's going to happen, what they can offer, what they're going to require. And then, seeing what services best out there for families.

So we also see the improve of intervention and advocacy and services. I come from a law enforcement background and we all play a part in early identification and intervention in these children and families' lives. We also play a very vital role from all disciplines in that advocacy and helping get services to families and children that are in need.

And we have to switch that mentality from it's somebody else's job to it's all of our job within the community. We all have the ability to intervene and to help provide services and advocacy to our

children which are 100% of that future.

And everything that's done through the DEC alliances really is done to increase the likelihood of better outcomes for the children and the families. We want to make sure that children are able to be children, and that they're safe, and that they're with their families if possible.

So we're really looking at better outcomes and that's what we're seeing across the country in local, and tribal communities when DEC efforts are put into place and DEC alliances are built that there are a lot of different outcomes that are better for these children and families.

And that change in attitudes. We get away from the attitude that it's somebody else's job. The children and the families are all of our responsibility. We all play a part in changing that trajectory. And instead of being frustrated with another discipline, we start understanding the restrictions and the needs that they need.

So as a law enforcement officer, I'm going to better understand what child welfare needs around risk and safety. And instead of being frustrated that something isn't happening the way I want it to, I'm going to change my attitude to what can I do to help benefit the children by understanding other systems, understanding what mental health, behavioral health and treatment can do, understanding the services that are available to children and helping support.

It's not about a removal. It's about changing the trajectory of a child's life. And then, we talk about individual benefits. The one individual benefit that I really like is it's less system inflicted trauma. Like I said, I'm a law enforcement professional by trade. That's where I served most of my career is in law enforcement.

We unintentionally caused trauma on a regular basis. And it wasn't until we started working with other disciplines that we learned how we could reduce trauma and how we could do our jobs with less involving or inflicting less traumatic events. Disciplines were making better decisions. We are including more accurate investigations.

Instead of working just a drug crime, we were working at child abuse and neglect and a drug crime because children were involved. We were making more appropriate interventions. The earlier that identification, the more efficient and effective. We know that is true.

The efficiency. The time that we were spending chasing each other around as other disciplines was exhausting. We really were worried that starting the DEC effort was going to make more work for

disciplines when in the end, it reduced it because we were limiting our resources. We were working together and we were spending less time because the disciplines were coming together.

And the training, I can't tell you how important it was to be trained by child welfare, to be trained by mental health, to be trained by prevention, to be trained by teachers. The more training we get an understanding around other professionals, makes us more capable professionals and better investigators to help our children and our families.

And we also seen that where there was more respect within the community because our mission was about the kids and the families. We seen less burnout amongst the child abuse professionals because you actually had a purpose. It wasn't just a revolving door. We were working together to combat the issue.

And in the end, the ultimate goal is what Stacee said. It's better outcomes for these children and these families, which will include and translate into safer communities. So Melanie, you can probably give a better example of the benefits that the Confederated Salish and Kootenai tribe has seen.

Well you know, one of them was with working with the different disciplines that it was so beneficial to know what each other did. And one of the examples is with probations, with the police agency needing to get warrants and social services. One of the things in the training they discovered was if they have a service treatment agreement, they have to allow us in the home so you don't have to get a warrant.

Same with probations, you know that you could work together as a family and help each other and reduce stress in that. So that piece to us, that education piece, has just been invaluable because it's had, it's made enabled people to work together and with less effort really.

You can call up if someone's on probation and they're not letting you in the home, you can get permission that way and there's a lot less red tape. But it also reduces trauma when you're working with the family, because they've got other agencies reaching out. So that was one of them that came to mind when you were talking about this too.

And being solution focused too, that's really improved stuff. So we don't have naysayers or people coming with a problem and just bringing negativity. We have hopefulness and empowerment is what I saw from our community and our disciplines. And I saw people supporting each other and reaching out to each other on individual cases.

And that was really hopeful to see and helpful. Whoops, did I miss anything? I was busy talking and

didn't look at the slide.

Nope. You're great. Here are some examples of the positive feedback that Melanie got from outside of the tribe from the mayor and stuff like that just on how wonderful it was that the two partners and the two programs and the two communities were coming together.

Yes. That was very appreciative.

So I have to tell you that there's a lot of work that's already been done with CSKT between National DEC and Melanie and all the people that were involved, but there's still a lot of work left to do. So some of the next steps, obviously continuing regular meetings which Melanie has been fantastic at even through the COVID-19 time.

Continuing to address goals and objectives, both inside and outside of meetings. There's been some subcommittees that has been developed that continue to address some of these issues. Continue the stages of development. The awareness implementation and institutionalization phases, those don't stop. They continue to move forward and they aren't going to stop in any fashion.

And then, continue to look for funding for DEC goals and objectives as needed. I think one of the big things that we've talked with Melanie about and Melanie is approached us on numerous occasions is, funding does make things easier. DEC efforts don't have to cost money. People can get really creative with time and funding that's already there, but, you know funding obviously can benefit DEC efforts in the fact that you can do things maybe that you wouldn't normally be able to do.

So we're in the process of looking for more grant funding at a federal level to provide some support and training in technical assistance. And then obviously, Melanie's been looking for funding as well to move some of those goals forward, some of those big goals around housing and treatment.

So Stacey, I think it's important if you can explain a little bit how when we got involved with DEC with the Confederated Salish and Kootenai tribe, we did not have a grant. But we then did seek out a grant, which allowed us three years of commitment to the tribe through the CTAS grant.

Yes. So I think that's a great point. There's lots of funding out there, especially now around substance abuse issues, around drug endangered children issues, around child victim issues. So National DEC provided some training for the tribes initially and then, we decided that this can't continue forever.

So we really wanted to do a lot of work with the tribe and they really wanted to do that work as well. So we looked for grant funding and Melanie's folks applied for it, and received it, and we partnered on

it. So it allowed three years of continuous Drug Endangered Children work that focused just on the development of that alliance and moving those goals and objectives forward and finding solutions.

So a lot of these things can be done obviously without the money, but it funded Melanie's position to be able to focus 100% on Drug Endangered Children as the coordinator for the reservation. And I think that that was a tremendous idea that Melanie had early on that allowed for a lot of good work.

So with that, we're willing to partner. I know Melanie is willing to help as well. So think outside the box as to what you write in a grant or what you write in for funding and budgeting around drug endangered children efforts. Because I think if we think outside the box, a lot of good things can happen.

Thank you, Stacey. And now, we have our final poll question. We would like you to indicate if you agree or disagree with the following statement. The statement is, "my community needs more assistance from National DEC in setting up DEC efforts in my community or tribe".

Your options are strongly agree, agree, not sure yet, disagree, or strongly disagree. In reviewing our results, strongly agree and not sure yet are evenly split at 32%. Approximately 31% of our respondents agree. Eric, please continue.

So as we get ready to close out this webinar, we want you to remember a few things. Be persistent. We all play a role in changing the trajectory of children and families' lives, but this isn't an easy task. As you will find out and as I found out as a professional, collaboration and working together is one of the toughest things that you will ever do because you're trying to bring different personalities, different missions, and different perspectives to the table.

But in the end, it all pays off. Continue to look for others to get involved. You have to continuously ask yourself who is missing from the table. As you start a DEC alliance, as you start working together, you should never quit asking, "who are we missing"? From as simple as child welfare is not at the table or law enforcement isn't at the table, or if we're going to just do awareness and not so much a teen team type thing.

Is your cable guy, your cable companies involved? They see children on a regular basis. Is the water company involved? The water meter readers? Keep asking yourself who needs to be involved to help protect your children and your families. And stay positive. It is really easy to get negative and to focus on the negative of other disciplines and other professionals.

We have to learn to stay positive because the only ones that are suffering with our negativity in the end are the children and the families that we serve. And don't forget why you're here. You're here because you've made a choice to protect and to serve the community. And in the end, it is worth it.

In the end, you will change the trajectory of maybe one if not more children's lives in your career. And when you can look back on your career and say that you've had that impact, it has all been worth it. I promise you, as a practitioner myself and starting a local DEC alliance myself in our community, you will see the benefits and the benefits are grand.

So one child is too many.

[VIDEO PLAYBACK]

[MUSIC PLAYING]

Children are our future and if there's one child in trouble from a parent or caregiver's drug use, that's one child too many. It's not too late to change this to reverse the cycle.

[END PLAYBACK]

We do have a few questions that have come in for our panel. One of the questions that we do receive fairly commonly is, how do I find out if my community has a DEC unit? From our friend Virginia.

Panelists?

I think there's a couple different ways you can tell. So if you jump on our website at nationaldec.org, we have a state site tab that you can look under. National DEC is doing efforts in every state, but not every state has formalized state efforts. You can also contact either Eric or myself which our emails are, I believe on the screen currently, but also on the website.

You contact us at either the emails or our phone numbers which are on the website as well to find out where those local and tribal efforts are because we are not listing all the efforts on our website because it does tend to get very crowded. But I can't think of a state that we're not doing something in for folks. So I think that's probably the best place to start.

Thank you, Stacey. Our next question is a two part question from our friend Kelly. What can I do in my community to get funding for cross training disciplines? As a follow up to that question, how would I go about getting local law enforcement onboard? Eric?

So I think there's a couple of different ways to get funding. A lot of local jurisdictions are required to

do in-service training anyhow. And if you can get involved with the disciplines and start having the conversation around being a part of their in-service training, there should be very little funding that is needed to help support that as long as you make each other's disciplines a priority in your in-service training.

The other one, we've had local groups within communities provide grants or scholarships to help provide local funding for training amongst disciplines. And then, I would always suggest to go to the Department of Justice, the cops organization, BJA, OVC and others, OJJDP and look at their funding for training around multidisciplinary team and children that are affected by substance use.

And as far as the second part question on how to get law enforcement involved, I think the biggest way that I got involved is realizing and understanding the impact that our community is facing when it comes to substance use. I've seen it from a law enforcement perspective as a very pre DEC mindset when I first got started. And that was all about the number of arrests, the number of cases that we were doing, and the asset forfeitures that were being seized.

What I didn't see until my eyes were opened by other disciplines to include child welfare and behavioral health specialist was the impact that was happening to our children. I think bringing that to the attention of law enforcement and making them understand the impact of the multigenerational cycle of abuse and neglect that becomes so frustrating at times and realizing that we could as a profession impact our most vulnerable and our most precious population, which is our children.

And there isn't many disciplines that aren't willing to help change the trajectory of children's lives that are being impacted.

Thank you, Eric. We have a really excellent question for our friend Emily. Are any of the partners within your DEC alliance with the local public health agency and mental health board or any prevention focused agencies? Melanie, that may be a good one for you.

Yes. The answer to that is yes. We have our public health agency as a partner, as well as several other.

Excellent.

Joann, if I can add to that, we see across the United States, prevention efforts being very much involved in DEC efforts. Utilizing coalitions that are already in place, et cetera. And public health is 90% of the time at the table every time we have a DEC alliance or a DEC training.

Emily, we hope we answered your question. Here's a question from our friend April. We have conducted some trainings with law enforcement in our county, but not all the districts, mostly trauma informed approach trainings. Is this a good approach to take when entering into a DEC alliance?

So Joanne, I'll answer that. It's definitely not a bad place to start, understanding trauma and that trauma informed approach. I think as a law enforcement professional myself, the thing that really grasped me was the children. Is, like I said, there isn't many individuals let alone disciplines that don't want to impact children in a positive way.

Understanding the trauma that is caused to the kids and how we can help reduce that from a child's perspective was very motivational for me. So I think the trauma approach is definitely a positive way to do it. I think the part that really helped myself and our agency get involved was the impact on children, was a good starting point for us.

Wonderful, thank you. Our next two questions are from our friend Christine and they're going to center on the tribal experience. Please give a brief example of how you engaged tribal services with area communities and non tribal community members? I think this question likely goes to bridging those gaps between different working groups. Melanie?

So hopefully, I can answer this clear enough. I went individually to the agencies and spoke about DEC as well. And then, inviting them to the DEC awareness training was significant. And then, you were asking also how they worked together? Did I get that right on the question?

Please.

So they worked together because once they could identify all of the risks involved with a drug endangered child, everyone has children or family members that are impacted by the substance use issues. And it was really relatable when talking to the different disciplines in that it was a people problem and something that we needed to be able to talk about it. And so, I approached it that way.

And we also knew that we couldn't solve all these issues alone and that it was better to be working together. And so going with that attitude in the awareness training and saying also that we cannot help our drug endangered children without knowing what issues are in our community, what services are in our community, and also that we cannot change the trajectory of a child's life without helping the family as well.

I wanted to add that Melanie did a really great job with communication between tribal and non tribal

entities. I know when we first started, there was a lot of discourse and not the best relationships. I think that trust had been broken down from many years ago. And I think Melanie did a really great job bridging some of those gaps and really getting people involved and having there be benefits both ways for tribal and non tribal entities.

And we saw people come to the table that had never been to the table before and I think Melanie did a really great job bringing them in and really getting people involved outside of the tribe.

And I'd like to speak also to the fact that this is something that we felt ashamed and embarrassed, afraid as a community member that is impacted by the substance abuse issues, that those are some of the things that our community felt ashamed of. And we needed to be able to talk about it safely without that shame and in a supportive manner.

You know so, and it was that way also with some of the other big issues on the reservation too, is to get rid of that shamefulness and to be able to really talk about the hard stuff in a safe place. But also at the meetings, we always had our mission statement that it's about 100% healthy, safe, happy children and that we're solution oriented, but also that we're kind to each other.

We're not pointing fingers at different disciplines or bringing up mistakes, but we're learning and we're assessing and we're looking for solutions. And that was very beneficial too. And we just had a quick reminder before each meeting, whether big or small, about those ground rules and that was effective.

That's wonderful. Thank you both. Melanie, our friend Christine-- and Christine, I apologize. I believe I may have called you Christy. Our friend Christine has a follow up question that again goes to working with our tribal partners. Melanie, did you integrate historical trauma information and training into your DEC collaborations involving your area communities and their agencies, please?

Yes. You have to look at the whole picture, as well, of how to get a community well. And the historical trauma is a piece to that puzzle and it's significant. And so yes, we have to address that. At times, much more depending on the situation.

But it's always a piece that we mention because that is a piece of one of the issues we had is we have a people with historical trauma and then we have substance abuse traumas and how they layer. They're layered on each other. So how do we address that in a respectful and manner, in a healing manner, is very important here with our tribe.

Excellent. Thank you, Melanie. So we have what is more of a statement from our friend Virginia. And I want to thank her for posing this to us because it's something that even for myself and for Eric being from a law enforcement background that I don't think that we would have considered. So Virginia, thank you.

Now I'll leave you with this. Grocery store workers can be involved. Virginia's husband has seen so many children in the middle of the night who have been told to leave their homes so their parents can continue partying. Virginia, that is an excellent and very thought provoking statement and something again that I would have never considered.

So it's something that we can certainly keep in our minds as we look forward to establishing who should be at the table and have a voice at that table to keep our children and our vulnerable populations in our largely underserved communities safe. So that concludes this portion of the webinar.

In closing, we would like to share brief information on additional training and technical assistance opportunities. NCJTC is a training and technical assistance provider for Coordinated Tribal Assistance Solicitation, or CTAS, Purpose Area 3 grantees and non grantee tribal agencies focused on implementing system wide strategies to address crime issues related to alcohol and substance abuse in tribal communities.

We are also a TTA provider assigned to assist tribal comprehensive opioid, stimulant, and substance abuse program grantees focused on developing implementing or expanding comprehensive efforts to identify, respond to, treat and support those impacted by illicit opioids, stimulants, and other drugs of abuse.

TTA services for both programs include customized on site and virtual training, regional trainings, conferences, webinars, peer to peer support, on site or virtual meeting facilitation, written resources, community planning, justice system collaboration, and sharing grantee best practices. For additional information on general TTA services, links to featured offerings and to request TTA, please visit our program website as shown on the webinars and our robust library of webinar recordings and self paced online training opportunities.

Another valuable resource is the COSSAP resource center. A screenshot of the COSSAP resource center is shown here along with a web link. Featured resources available include funding opportunities, COSSAP grantees site profiles with a data visualization tool, information about demonstration projects, peer to peer learning, and recordings of all previous COSSAP webinar

covering a range of substance use, disorder related topics, and strategies.

Of particular significance is the ability to request training and technical assistance sometimes listed as TTA whether you are a COSSAP grantee or not. The COSSAP TTA program offers a variety of learning opportunities and assistance to support local, tribal, and state organizations.

Stakeholders and projects in building and sustaining multidisciplinary responses to the nation's substance abuse crisis. For more information, you can contact the COSSAP program at COSSAP@iir.com Again, COSSAP@iir.com. We want to thank you again, attendees, for attending this webinar. It has been an honor.

Thank you again Stacey Read, Eric Nation, and Melanie Smith for the excellent presentation today and sharing your time and valuable expertise. Please remember to complete the evaluation. Thank you for attending our webinar and please enjoy your wonderful day.