

NCJTC- Fox Valley | 2020 8 26 SORNA Public Education On Registered Sex Offenders v1

Welcome, everyone, to the National Criminal Justice Training Center webinar. Presenters for today's session include Paul Fuentes, Christopher Lobanov-Rostovsky, and Lea Geurts. My name is Joanne Joy and I will serve as your moderator today.

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I'd like to welcome you again to our webinar. I am so pleased to introduce to you our presenters for today. Christopher Lobanov-Rostovsky is an associate with NCJTC, as well as a licensed clinical social worker and the program director for the Colorado Sex Offender Management Board.

Paula Fuentes is also an associate with the National Criminal Justice Training Center. Paul serves as a court administrator for the Cheyenne and Arapaho tribes. Finally, Lea Geurts is a project coordinator within NCJTC.

Before we begin the presentation, we want to begin by opening in a good way. Let us take a moment to clear our minds and center our focus on the important work in front of us today. Paul, the time is yours.

Awesome. Thank you, Joanne. Well, hello, everyone and thank you for joining us today. It's always an honor for me to be with you guys, even if it's virtually. But just really thankful for your time. I believe today's sessions are really going to give us some insights that, if applied, I think it could really strengthen your SORNA program and, of course, your community.

But let's go over our agenda. So I'm going to kick us off first with the public education on registered sex offenders and sexually offending, but Chris is going to walk us through the benefits of public education, the purpose of public education, and developing a community-based prevention program.

I have some thoughts I want to share on SORNA multidisciplinary teams. And then afterwards, I will pass it along to Joanne and she's going to facilitate for us a panel discussion on best practices. Lea is going to be a part of that, Chris is, and I'll be a part of that too.

And then Joanne will just close us out with some questions and answers. So as we go along today, if you have questions or thoughts that come up, feel free to write those in under Questions, and hopefully we can tackle those at the end of today's presentation.

So let's go to-- oh, thank you, Chris. So public education on registered sex offenders and sexually offending. I think that this part has been so important for our SORNA program with Cheyenne and Arapaho tribes. And we know, we see here on this slide, that SORNA requires sites-- it says to include to the extent practical links to sex offender safety and education resources.

So we know that, through the Adam Walsh Act, tribes that implement SORNA, at least at a minimum, are supposed to provide a resource on their website where people can go to, the public can go to.

Now, as I was saying, I think that this is so important for especially our program, because sometimes people hear about the Sex Offender Registry Program and maybe-- I don't know if they get down on that a program like this even needs to exist or that a registry even needs to exist.

And so I always think it's important in everything that we do, especially in our SORNA programs, that we're not only showing them the number of people that are registered, but also giving people some insight, information, resources, giving them the opportunity to have answers too.

And so I think that that empowers our community. And so even though, at a minimum, we find that we should have a link on our registry website, I think that the SORNA program could really excel, really take their program to the next level by providing some public education as well.

Again, this is why our sex offender registry web sites or jurisdictions have this. Most of our TTSORS websites or registries have a tab called Resources. A lot of us, a lot of the tribes probably have information on adult sexual abuse and family violence resources.

So there's legal and advocacy resources on our TTSORS website, preventing and responding to child abductions and child abuse resources, preventing and responding to computer-facilitated crimes and child sexual exploitation. So all those types of things are already on most of our TTSORS websites.

A lot of times, the SORNA program gets taken aback whenever they get a call asking for resources and we go, hey, we just don't have that. But you can always direct them to your own TTSORS website. Again, hopefully that information is there. And you can always go in as an administrator and include additional local resources if you'd like to.

So not only that, but we know that the National Sex Offender Public Website or the NSOPW.gov has

information and resources too. I'm going to walk us through those two slides in just a minute. And then, of course, the SMART office and the SMART website.

You can always go there for information and/or talk to staff about if you have an issue that's come up, you don't really have a resource available for that person, they may be able to connect you. Or, as always, they know someone who knows someone.

And so they've always been helpful to our program. And I know that they welcome you reaching out to them. So this is a screenshot of the National Sex Offender Public Website. If you'll notice the third tab there, so it's Home, Search, and then Safety and Education.

But if you click on that tab or if the public were to click on that tab, they would go to our next slide, and so there we go. But once you click on Safety and Education, visitors can obtain information and resources on sexual abuse.

So they can learn about how to prevent sexual abuse and assault. There's information there. There's statistics. There's facts. There's tip sheets. All this information that would be so helpful for our community to have their hands on.

There is how to identify sexual abuse and assault, so warning signs in children and teens and warning signs in adults. Now, as a court administrator, I'm often in court and we're shorthanded like we are now because of COVID. I'm oftentimes in the courtroom and I see so many cases so many times where this type of information is sought or is needed.

And so to be able to have this kind of information on hand or at least be able to refer people to this website can really help the public, help the community, get them some information. But it has how to respond to sexual abuse or assault, and there's information there, like, what if a child or a teen discloses that they've been sexually abused, or what about an adult who discloses this.

And then there's a Questions and Answers section. It has stuff like what is sexual abuse and why do people sexually abuse. So all this information is already at our fingertips.

And where I think the challenge for our program is is how are we going to get that information that we have available here into the hands of the public. And so I think I will pass this along now to Chris, because I know he has some great ideas on how we can do that.

Thank you very much, Paul. It's great to hear your voice and I miss seeing you and all of my teammates in person. And I'm Chris Lobanov-Rostovsky, and I want to say that I also miss all of you

out there as well.

We took for granted the idea that we could come to your tribal communities and be providing training and technical assistance. And clearly, our current circumstances have shown us that there are always limitations in what we can do. But I certainly hope we'll be able to get back out to your communities again in the future and to see you all face to face.

And I also hope, and wish, and pray that you all are staying safe, you and your families, and that your tribal communities are helping to keep this virus at bay. So here's hoping that everybody out there is OK, and I know there's a number of our friends out there and we wish you all well.

I myself have been working in tribal communities now for over a decade. It's so hard to believe. It seems like it's gone by in a matter of just a blink of an eye. And I would say that this is obviously the strangest year of the work that we've done over this decade of work that I've been working on this.

But it's still great that we have this opportunity to share this kind of information with you all, and so we're very pleased today to talk about this and to talk about public education strategies. I will say that in all of my travels to different tribal communities, this topic typically is one that is one of the most requested and the most interested of topics.

And I want to thank the SMART office today for allowing us to talk about this and to support us in doing this. I will say that this also can be a somewhat polarizing issue. I'm sorry, SMART. I know that Marnie, and Julianna, and some of our friends are out there.

And I don't mean that polarizing in a bad way. I just mean that, when we talk about public education, I think that it leads to reactions within audiences, and within communities, and within professionals. And those reactions and impacts can kind of be all over the map.

I remember one time going to one tribal community, and we were talking about this topic, and an elder, an older gentleman, a very traditional gentleman, expressed concern about having this conversation within a tribal community, expressing that how is it that you expect us to have this conversation. We cannot even talk about the historical trauma that's happened within our tribe.

And so we recognize that talking about these issues can be very uncomfortable for people and that there can be a great deal of fear and anxiety that this could provoke. I myself always am sort of a believer that it's better to talk about these issues and then encourage community members to talk about them than to sort of try to ignore them and hope they go away.

The other thing I can recall, one time that I was doing an interview with someone on a radio show talking about public education. And the announcer was literally yelling at me and saying, how dare I expect for him to talk to his 8-year-old daughter about sex offenders and sex offending.

And I'm like, who's going to do it, then? With all due respect, I mean, I don't think we want offenders talking to our children about these things, so I think it's better that we talk to our children about these things. And so just know that this topic may elicit that reaction within your communities as we try to raise to the surface something that is often hidden in our communities.

On the other hand, I have seen that many tribes, as they've begun to talk about how to implement their SORNA program or how to expand services for offenders in terms of accountability, monitoring, safety of the community, as we've begun to talk about those things, many communities have seen really the value and importance of engaging the community and having education be a part of that initiative.

Whether that's setting the stage for some type of an initiative or whether that's the initiative itself. And so I've worked with tribes where they've said, let's stop what we're doing here and let's talk about how to engage the community and have this discussion.

And so I think that I've seen kind of different reactions. And as you-- if you begin to think about doing this within your tribal community, maybe you'll see some of those reactions as well. Now, we know as we started to think about this training that many of you out there are at different points in the spectrum in your experience in working with SORNA.

Some of you may be the brand new SORNA coordinator that started last week and with very little guidance being given to you about what to do. Others of you may be some of our SORNA coordinator veterans out there who have been there for five or 10 years.

And so we recognize that the range of responses may be based on what your level of expertise is, what your background is. I mean, maybe you come to this with more of a mental health background or an educational background that might be helpful in doing this. Or perhaps you don't come to the table with that.

But I think there are different things you can do regardless of what you bring to the table and where you're at. Paul mentioned sort of the basic, and the one that's required by SORNA, which is to publish information, the basic publishing of information on a public website.

That's the minimal thing you can do. And you can push information out so that when people go and

gather information about the registrants within the community, they will have access to this information as well.

But above and beyond that, there's other things that you can do sort of as add-ons if you want to. These things are additional ways of doing public education beyond sort of that public website requirement. One of the things that many folks have done doing this type of education is just to collect specific materials.

As Paul showed you on the NSOPW website, there's a lot of great materials out there. You don't have to reinvent the wheel. You don't have to create these materials. You can just go get those materials and you can share them. You can print them out. You can make them available. You can email them out.

There's a variety of different ways. If you have a newsletter or some type of an email blast to talk about the SORNA program beyond the required notification on registrants, those are great sources of information to be able to provide to members of the community.

One other resource that I would just make a plug for as well is the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, NCMEC. Has some really great educational resources there as well. So I think between NSOPW, TTSORS and NCMEC, there's a lot of great materials out there that you can share with your community by handing them out, pushing them out, emailing them out.

And then what we've seen from some of our SORNA registrars is to try to engage the community more directly. Now, this is in the old days when we actually could get together as community members. And maybe we can do that and maybe we can't right now.

But certainly, having face to face interactions and conducting community notification meetings, we recently did a couple weeks ago, how to do these types of notification meetings. If you didn't catch that, you can contact the National Criminal Justice Training Center and get that information and watch that.

But so one way to do education is through notification, but there are other ways as well. Attending community events, such as cultural events, pow wows, ceremonies, other types of things, is a great way to get SORNA information out and public education information out.

So going to those things, maybe setting up a table, maybe asking if there's a series of speakers, could you have a speaking slot if you're comfortable in doing that and you feel like you have the skill set to

do that. But making those materials available where the community is.

Meeting the community where they are and making those available, having handouts so that people can come up and pick them up. Although to know that, in some ways, people may be a little shy and reluctant to want to come up and to talk to you or to grab the material.

So having those available and then initiating and engaging with the community if they're comfortable and if they want to do it. So any and all of those things are things that tribal SORNA registrars can do as a way of doing this public education. And there's no right or wrong way. Any and all of these things can be great ways of doing that kind of stuff.

So what are the benefits of doing this? I think that the benefits kind of go to several different levels. First of all, the idea of engaging with your community, the SORNA program engaging with the community. SORNA came in as a requirement. Many tribes implemented that as a requirement.

But how do you make it so that SORNA really adds value to your community? And so how can you engage the SORNA program in the community? And so I think that talking about this, talking about educational materials, talking about the SORNA program really can help with keeping SORNA in place, sustaining it, and it can keep support within the community and within leadership within your tribal community.

We've all seen examples where there was a great deal of support for SORNA, and then maybe there was a change in leadership or an incident happens involving a prominent community member or things like that. And all of a sudden, the SORNA program maybe loses some of that support.

So you really want to generate some of that goodwill and develop some of that through this process. And I think it may sound kind of ironic or contradictory to say in talking about this stuff that you're generating goodwill, but I think it shows the importance of the SORNA program and what the SORNA program can do for the community.

I think the second thing that it really can do is to help the community feel empowered and to feel like it has control over itself and over-- the community members can have control over their own lives and understanding how that they can deal with these things.

I think knowledge is power. And so if we can provide information such as Paul described and how to prevent things, how to identify things, what to do when things happen, those kinds of resources can be very valuable to community members to know what to do in that situation.

So it sort of makes this thing more public. It brings it out into the open. It allows for conversations, and it gives people skills and resources, which is what they want. I mean, we're all oriented towards the final thing, kind of protection and safety for ourselves, our family members, and our communities.

And so by doing public education, I think it really supports that goal of protecting and keeping safe the community. And again, it engages the community in doing that. I know that sometimes community members may look to us as being the source of safety and protection, but I think we really want to empower people to be able to do that themselves. And so public education and a public education initiative can certainly do something like that.

So in terms of collaboration, and Paul is going to talk about this more when he talks about multidisciplinary collaboration more specifically. But I think that public education can really be that bridge between the SORNA program, between you and your work as a SORNA registry or tribal registry SORNA coordinator, and other tribal agencies.

And in particular, if there are prevention programs within your tribal community or victim service programs within your communities. I think that education and working together on this really builds a bridge between those who are monitoring and holding registrants accountable and those who are supporting those who have been harmed by sexual abuse and/or trying to prevent sexual abuse from happening.

So I think that public education can really be that bridge. And again, depending on your comfort level and your experience level as a SORNA coordinator, support can mean a variety of things. It could be providing resources. It could be sharing information about your program or it could be being more actively involved in collaboration, multidisciplinary collaboration, and collaborating with prevention and victim service programs.

And so I think this public education approach can really help support victims and survivors of sexual assault. And by providing this information, it helps other people to understand this experience, maybe offer support.

It also sort of can provide that information directly to those who have been sexually assaulted. And what we know is that many people out there have been sexually assaulted but have never been specifically identified. Maybe have never reported this information to anybody. There's never been a prosecution.

There's many people walking around in silence who have been sexually abused. And so I think doing

this education can help give them information, even though they've never told anybody about what's happened. I mention oftentimes at the community notification meetings that we've done, I've never done one of those meetings where someone hasn't come up to me and said, I was sexually abused a long time ago and I've never told anybody about that.

It just always happens. And so I think a public education initiative probably will also lead to people coming forward and reporting things that they've never reported. Maybe they didn't realize that they - what the nature of what happened to them was. Maybe they've repressed it.

Maybe they just were not comfortable in reporting it. They didn't know what resources were available. So by doing education, you can also point to those resources and connect those people to victim services and things like that so that when people are ready to access those, that those things are available and help them if people do want to come forward and report.

So it creates a culture and a community where openness about this and the ability to bring these things forth are more acceptable than to keep them secret, and to hide them, and to not share them for fear of the offender getting in trouble or any kind of embarrassment that this may cause to a family or whatever it might be.

And so I think that this collaboration approach really can be helped by public education and can just work on so many different layers there. Providing this information on the slide a couple of slides ago, I didn't specifically reference this, but it can help correct misinformation about sexual assault and sexual offending.

Many people do not have accurate information about the nature of sexual offenders. When we think about sex offenders, oftentimes we get this worst case scenario in our mind about who that person is. Someone lurking in a playground, ready to snatch a child, and sexually assault, and do horrendous things to a child.

And that's certainly one type of offender, but it's not the only type of offender. And so we want to provide accurate information. We want the public, for example, to know that 9 out of 10 victims know the offender prior to the offense.

Many people don't realize that because the SORNA program focuses on registrants and maybe people that are not known. But we also want them to understand that this can be happening within their own social circles as well.

So public education allows for that reframing of the issue and providing information to the public so

that they have an accurate understanding about what's going on. And again, even despite the reaction of the elder that I talked about before, it may lead to some initial anxiety and discomfort.

My experience has been in providing people information that, at the end of the day, they always feel better about it. And so there is a decrease in anxiety, but an increase in feeling like I know what to do, I can take these steps, I can protect myself, I can protect my family.

So by providing those resources, and those skills, and those tools, I think people feel better. It also engages the community, as I said before, and it gets them involved in the process. And I think we want that connection between the community and the agencies that are providing these services and that are providing this support.

And so education is an active experience where you're talking to people and you're giving them information, and hopefully getting them to have a dialogue with you about it. And I think at the end of the day, it does protect victims as well. It helps protect people either who have been harmed or potentially could be harmed by providing this information and helping the community to understand what the nature of this is.

And so by doing active engagement, talking to the community, providing education, and then listening, hearing back from the community what their observations are, it can be very helpful, I think, in making sure that accurate information is provided and engaging the community in that way.

And so it's kind of a shift. I think for many years, sort of this approach from criminal justice has been, you guys in the criminal justice system, you handle the problem, and we as the community will kind of trust that you handle that.

And so we want the community to be a part of the solution and to work with us on it, and we want them to be engaged in the solution and so that they are choosing what we do and they are supporting what we do, rather than that we're doing something without their knowledge, approval, or against their support.

We want to gain that support. And we want that support for the SORNA program. And if we're going to do any kind of prevention initiative, obviously we want the support around that as well. So one of the things I think is very important is to make sure to just kind of give a bit of a cautionary tale, a bit of a note about being careful in doing this.

This can certainly go badly if not handled in a very careful manner. And so again, depending on

where you sit, and what your role is, and what your experience is, is to think about how much you want to do in this.

But I would certainly not suggest you put yourself in a situation where you're talking in front of a community as a brand new SORNA coordinator, for example, or you're participating in a prevention program, so if you haven't sort of got the skills and the training to be able to do that.

Because we've certainly seen situations over the years where public education has led to some kind of a backlash against offenders. I tell this story a lot about the state of Washington. And when they were doing community notification, they didn't handle that particularly well.

And at the end of the day, there was an act of violence against the registrant. And so we certainly don't want that to happen. We don't want to see situations become aggravated and worse if-- and if the community is not ready to do this and to talk about this, to then force that issue upon the community doesn't make a lot of sense.

And so certainly, it can be bad for community members. It can stir up trauma for people who maybe are not wanting to deal with that trauma. It can lead to backlash or sort of targeting, and vigilantism, and harassment related to people who are registering.

And the biggest thing, obviously, I mean, not that none of those things were big. But certainly, we don't want to traumatize victims any further in terms of what we do. And so we want to make sure that victims are aware of what's going on, that they understand how this is going to happen, that their confidentiality is protected in what we do.

And that anything that we do is not going to lead to some type of a backlash against victims as well. We see many times where offenders, particularly offenders of status within a community, may get the public support, and the victims may be the ones that get marginalized or targeted in terms of, why did you bring that forward, you're lying, or whatever it might be.

And so we want to make sure that whatever we do in terms of public education leads to positive support for offenders coming back to the community, supports the community in dealing with this, and provides support for the healing of victims as well.

So in terms of the SORNA registrants, and this may seem like an oxymoron a little bit too in terms of, how is it that when we talk about sexual offenders and offending in very graphic detail, and very specific detail, and provide all these facts, how in any way does that help offenders?

Isn't ignorance bliss and aren't they more likely to be left alone based on the fact that we're not sharing information about them? Well, what we know is that people have their preconceived notions already about offenders. Oftentimes, that information may not be accurate information.

And in small communities like tribal communities, most people know who these guys are whether they're tapping into a SORNA registry or not. And maybe knowing who these people are even if they've not specifically been arrested and prosecuted.

And so there's attitudes and there's beliefs, and this is all going on in the community right now. So why not provide accurate information, right? Why not help the community to understand what we're doing with offenders, what we know about offenders, what the risks posed by offenders are, what the likelihood of re-offense is by the offenders. Give that information to the public.

I think my experience has been that if I've gone into communities and talk about this stuff, they're usually in a great sense of concern and despair when I first arrive. And it's not me. I don't mean to be grandiose about this. Usually it's a team of people coming in and doing this type of stuff.

But when we talk to a community, after we talk to them, I think they feel reassured to know that there's people out there that are dealing with this stuff and to know that we're handling it and that we are going to be holding these offenders accountable and trying to support them in returning to the community in a good way.

And so I think my experience has been that doing public education actually provides more support for the community. And certainly, there are always community members in there that are probably more sympathetic, if you will, or more supportive of offenders than others.

And so you're giving them a platform to say, you know, hey, I appreciate what you're doing and I want to support what happens here. And so as we develop programming in addition to the SORNA program, other types of accountability and monitoring types of programs, reentry programs for offenders, that reassures the community that we're doing something in the community to try to be able to help these guys to come back.

But we're not being reckless about it and we're not-- they're not going to just go back to the way they were. Hopefully. I mean, there's no guarantees in what we do. But having everybody working, having education, providing information, and letting the community know what it is we're doing to hold offenders accountable I think can be very beneficial.

As well as helping them to understand what the risks pose. And that's one thing I always say is that

when we provide information on the registry, that gives them some information, but it doesn't really tell them what to do. Doesn't tell them what the risks are.

We know that what somebody is convicted of may or may not truly encompass their behavior. There may be other risks. And so beyond just the registry information, we want to help the public to make sense of registrants, what that risk that they pose is, and what they can do, and all of that kind of stuff. And so I think that having public education can really benefit the SORNA registrants in that regard.

And I think registrants know that if the public is talking about this and if there's a dialogue and a line of communication open between the SORNA program and the community members, maybe that's more likely to keep them on the straight and narrow in some ways, if they know that if they do something, someone will probably notice that and hopefully someone will say something to the SORNA program, to law enforcement, to whoever.

And so the slide, the bullet there talks about getting better tips, getting better information, from the public. And my belief is that if you help the public to understand what the nature of the problem is and what you're looking for and educate them about that, then maybe they will be a better collaborator and know what to be able to do with you related to that.

And then the other thing is to recognize that registrants are in all different situations. Some of them are just going through the court process. Some of them are under supervision by probation and parole. And others are off paper.

And those offenders have much more freedom, subject, obviously, to the tribal code and the restrictions of the code, but some people don't understand, well, why can he do this or why can he do that. Well, it may be that he's not under probation or parole anymore.

So helping them to understand the different levels of monitoring, but that the SORNA program will be there, and that this guy is required to register, and that you will be a resource for them through this process. I think public education can sort of benefit all of that as well.

So in terms of the purpose of public education, it talks about what information can we share. And I think I've talked a little bit about the information that can be shared. Where you get that information is sort of the second thing, and we've talked a little bit about where do you get that information that you can share.

And then what is the goal out of this? It's to get this information in the hands of members of the public so that they can then do what's necessary for themselves to keep themselves and their families safe.

But maybe that's your goal and maybe it's not. Maybe it's just to make sure that they're aware of the registrants. It depends on how far you want to go with this with the community. And so I think that just knowing what your goal and your program through this public education process is, how much do you want to be doing in this, again, what's your level of experience and comfort in doing some of this.

If you just make yourself a resource and people can contact you to get information, that's a great thing. If you can put information on the website and you have handouts available, that's a great thing. And so-- and if you can go and participate in events and share information, that's great as well.

Know that, again, I think people are oftentimes reluctant even to engage you in this. And so just be aware that if you're setting out pamphlets, maybe at the end of the day, all the pamphlets are still there, so they may be reluctant to want to come up and get a pamphlet or something like that. And so it's possible.

But hopefully, at least, they're making note of you. They will reach out to you in some shape or fashion. We've talked about establishing kind of a tip line or an email where somebody can email in and get some information so they can do it in a bit more anonymous fashion.

Again, in small communities, oh, I saw that you were walking up to the SORNA table and grabbing a pamphlet, what's that about, or whatever. And so just know that people may be aware of what other people are doing. And we also know that some offenders are very aware of what those who have been sexually abused are doing.

And so they may be also putting some kinds of threats upon people to not access your information. But again, I think providing this information can help on multiple different levels. But you just need to think about what is it that you're trying to do with this, what are your goals, and what information do you want to provide.

So the final thing that I'll talk about before turning it back over to Paul is some examples of tribal prevention programs. Again, this is kind of moving well beyond the scope of the SORNA program here. I'd be remiss if I didn't mention that the requirements from SORNA talk about providing public education.

Moving into these next layers, these next levels, these enhancements here are things that are sort of,

where do you take your program from there, but they're not things that are mandated and required by SORNA. And so here are some examples of some of the programs that may be currently in existence within your tribal community.

There's a fair amount of funding around here for a number of these initiatives. Prevention programs, there's funding, federal funding out there that provides funding for these types of programs. Maybe your tribe has something like this. Maybe not.

That would be a great place to start, is just to find out what other programs are out there and is anybody doing this or not. And again, is there a way that you can collaborate or partner with them. And so learning more about what those initiatives are and how might those fit into what you're doing.

And so I've seen in one tribal community where the SORNA guy who was very experienced, had a long history and background, actually started participating in some of these prevention programs or prevention initiatives, and would talk to people, go to the groups and things like that, and share information and just build that connection between the SORNA program and between himself and the people of the community.

And so that's one way you can do this, is to find out what those prevention programs are. Can you provide resources? Can you engage? Can you support to the extent, again, that you're comfortable in doing this?

Wellness courts is another great example. I mean, I think that many tribal communities have started using wellness courts as using traditional sort of indigenous practices within the court system to be able to promote healing, to work on sort of restorative practices and things like that.

And so many tribal communities may have a wellness court. Some of what they're doing is definitely prevention in nature, and so are there ways that you can connect with, and partner with them, and share resources there as well?

The use of cultural advisors. I'm always impressed by sort of the carriers of the cultural traditions within tribal communities and how these people engage, whether they're in a mental health program, or a court program, or a wellness program, or whatever it might be.

And so these people can be great sources of collaboration as a way of-- they have that relationship and those practices are very prevention and developing of strengths, and protective factors, and things like that.

I've actually, in my travels, seen some health care programs that have sort of taken on an entire prevention orientation. And so the goal of the health care program is really a prevention-oriented mission. And so, again, can the SORNA program collaborate?

I think the goals are very comparable. The mission is very comparable. And it's a great way, I think, to figure out how to partner. So looking at that can be really another place that you can look. And then finally, the victim service programs.

And so victim service programs, oftentimes as part of those victim service programs, they will be doing educational-type work as well. And so can you partner with them? I think the victim program and the offender monitoring programs have a lot in common in terms of goals, and so how can you work together?

And I know that some tribal communities don't have victim service programs, but there may be some in the area. So even if there's not one within your tribal community, maybe the local county has one. So looking kind of around for these types of programs to connect with can be another thing.

So these are examples of sort of prevention programs that are going on and how you as a SORNA coordinator can maybe engage in that and support that mission or participate. Again, to the extent you're comfortable. So Paul, I think I'm going to give it back to you at this point to kind of bring us down the homestretch.

Sounds good.

Thanks, Paul.

Uh huh. OK, so the tribal SORNA coordinator's role. And so Chris emphasized multiple times on how this, in a lot of ways, is going above and beyond in some ways.

But I think at a lot of tribes, there's at least a running joke here on sometimes you're calling a program and they don't answer their phone, or if they do, a lot of times they're very short and aren't very helpful. Sometimes even ask to transfer and they will refuse to transfer you.

So all of these types of things that are kind of like a running joke, at least in my area. I think it's so important for the SORNA program not to fit in that category, but to have the mindset of, we're going to bridge. We're going to be a bridge. If we don't have the answers, we're going to find someone who does.

And so if we think along those lines, the SORNA coordinator's role does involve these next bullet points that I'm sharing here, which is to be able to be a resource, to be able to share information about one SORNA program.

And so I remember early on, before we were substantially implemented, we just had a resolution saying that the tribes have decided to partake in the Adam Walsh Act, and that we would create our own SORNA registry.

But at that time, we didn't have anyone or any-- I mean, really, we didn't even know what we were doing. We didn't know we didn't have a law in place. We didn't have policies and procedure. We were just learning about these things.

Early on, we had gotten other programs that couldn't be a part of meetings, and we were all kind of discovering what SORNA was together. And a few times I remember bringing in the US marshals, and they were able to share stories and really get us motivated about moving towards having a registration.

And a lot of times after we've become implemented, that kind of falls by the wayside and there's no more of that. But really, I think that's important that the SORNA program continue to share information with other programs and with the public in general.

And Chris talked about the importance of collaborating, and we'll talk a little bit more about collaborating. Regarding cross training, I think it's so important that-- when we've talked about it on webinars in the past, especially that of sustainability, that the SORNA person is looking for someone to cross train.

And even if there's only one SORNA registering official, maybe you can identify a security guard or just someone else, if it's a court clerk or whoever is in your department, another officer, that you're kind of bringing along and cross training.

And so I think the emphasis here is that we're not only cross training them on the registration, which is so important. But we're also sharing with them the importance of notification and community notification, and in this case, public education.

So I think that all these things are important, that we're always reaching out and making schools be a part of-- that they're in the know of what we're doing and the resources that we provide, and of course the victim services groups as well.

So all this stuff I think is so important for the tribal SORNA official to adopt and to make it a way of practice. And so now we're really going to tackle or spend the next few minutes on SORNA multidisciplinary teams.

And so, of course, I can't gauge from everyone right now. But do you have a multidisciplinary team, some type of SORNA team, or a task force? So do you have that? Have you found that necessary? Or are you working alone in silos?

And so my challenge for programs would be to develop a team or to become a part of a team. Or if your team has kind of died out a little bit, be the spark to bring the team together. It's so important.

Because for one, I think having, whether it be quarterly or even if you're meeting every six months, some people meet monthly, and that's great to be disciplined and to do that. But I think just bringing key stakeholders together is so important.

I don't know if you've ever gone before your legislative body, or your executive branch, or whoever it is that makes decisions or laws, and you're wanting something to get across, to get passed. You're wanting your program needs, whether it be funding or whether it be revising the code.

And you get there, and you think you're going to have everyone backing you up, and someone raises their hand and the meeting goes sideways really quick. And they're talking about how come we didn't know about this and how come this is the way it is, and all that stuff.

I mean, that's a bad position to be in. I've been there a few times, and I think bringing people in, your stakeholders in early on, is such an important part, because hopefully it prevents something like that. But also you're developing a group of people who will have your back whenever-- again, when it has to do with funding or when they're cutting programs.

That you're in the forefront of those programs that are deemed essential or necessary, that part is so important. The other thing about the multidisciplinary team, it's going to allow your SORNA team to collaborate and piggyback off of what the other programs are doing.

The last slide or two slides ago, Chris was sharing about other prevention programs. And so maybe your multidisciplinary team or maybe you as a SORNA coordinator, you're going to just start attending those sessions, those meetings that they may have. Or if they have a working group, you're attending those.

And the SORNA program is at the table and you're speaking up for the concerns that you see. But

also, you're getting insight onto what other programs are dealing with. So I think that that part was so important.

So many times, a lot of the things that we kind of envision or thought to be helpful for the community we've shared in a meeting and someone else has kind of run with it, and we just support them, and both programs have benefited and the community has benefited from our collaboration.

So I think all that is important. We talked about the public education, how that can be a joint effort. And Chris has talked about the accountability part. And so for us, in our kind of SORNA working group or multidisciplinary team, we do have a healing to wellness court.

And they are actually helping us, and we kind of-- we have a project to Healing to Reentry. And so when we talk about some of our offenders and whether they're registering or they're not, or whether we've seen them recently or we haven't, that counselor is there sitting at the same meetings.

And she's, a lot of times, able to give us insight that doesn't break confidentiality, and she's able to get information from us too. And sometimes those types of things can come up during her meetings with her offenders.

And so that sex offender, he knows, hey, it's not just the registry that has eyes on me. It's probation or it's my counselor. So I think that all that is important. All that can come about by a multidisciplinary team. It really just depends on what your focus is as a team.

So we can go to the next slide. So we've talked about some of these benefits already. But the multidisciplinary team will be able to provide public education and prevention to our communities. And it's going to be a joint effort.

A lot of times, we put efforts out there to either have a community meeting or to have a-- kind of like a panel, or we're trying to educate community, and it's like crickets because nobody shows up. Especially if the tribe-- if you're not offering food or something like that, forget about it. A lot of times people won't show up.

But I found it so vital or important that when you add other agencies, and it's not only you're talking, but you have law enforcement who's going to talk and is involved, well, he's going to bring his crew, and then you have domestic violence, and they're going to bring out the people that they network with.

And all of a sudden, an empty room is not the case. You've got a room full of people. It really brings

in a lot of momentum for your community and a lot of momentum for your program that, hey, we're really making a difference.

I think, again, it's so important for individual community members to have this information and be able to use it as a way to empower themselves, to have the information. And a lot of times they're able to share that information.

I don't know about your tribe, but in our tribe, we have a lot of elders who are guardians of their grandchildren. And a lot of times, they, more than anyone, probably, need this information because of the generational gaps that exist. They can benefit from this information.

So again, you're able, in a multidisciplinary team, to kind of join your resources. And so for us, for example, we want to have food, but we can't purchase food with our federal funds. But maybe another program is like, well, we can't do this, but we can foot the bill for food, and you're like, wow.

So it's that type of collaboration, I mean, that really makes for a great thing. And we've talked a little bit about the safety that it incorporates on in general. So let's go to the next slide and talk about-- we've mentioned different programs and departments, of course. Here's a list of people who you probably want on your multidisciplinary team.

Again, it may depend on what your focus is. But we have law enforcement, members of your community, or elders, a lot of times, are great for this. You may want to have your legislators and your elected officials, social service department and victim services, tribal prosecutor, behavioral health, court staff, probation, and then you guys can fill in the blank on the other agencies.

So I've kind of talked a little bit about our multidisciplinary team as far as how we started at the beginning. At the beginning when we were trying to be implemented, it was more about learning what SORNA was. Once we kind of got our grasp on that, especially after we submitted our implementation package, I mean, that group still needed to exist.

I felt like that would be a strong part of keeping leverage and keeping funding coming into our program. And so really, I mean, what we've kind of been has kind of been more like-- well, twofold. We've been kind of goal-driven. Like, hey, let's try to accomplish this task.

I think the best example for that would be when TAP was an option for us, we all decided together that that's something we wanted to approach. And so our multidisciplinary team took the form of, this is going to be our TAP team.

And I was really proud of our program because it wasn't just the registration, sex offender registration, that joined, but all these programs that we'd been working with for all these years, a lot of them have a part in TAP now.

And so to see our team kind of accomplish that-- and we're still learning about it, but we're getting better and better at it. So I think like that. And then the other reason for us to gather, I've kind of alluded to it earlier, but the healing to reentry part.

And that's staffing our cases and letting people know who's absconded, who's doing good on registration. And, of course, we're bringing in our counselor in those sessions, and probation is available. The prosecutor's office sometimes sits in.

So we've kind of morphed into whatever objective we can accomplish plus that kind of soundboard or being able to staff the cases that we have. So let's go to who is missing. And this is the last slide before our panel discussion.

But, so think about who is missing, which agencies are not currently at the table who need to be there, and then who will lead the efforts. And so a lot of times, that's what no one wants to do is be the leader of the movement.

And so I think it's important that if the SORNA program feels like they're able to do it, maybe it's that they're leading it for some time. For us, we've kind of managed the staffing part. But when it came to some of the bigger goals, a lot of times it was our victim's advocates group who kind of stood in there as the leader and the spearhead.

And so I encourage you to set up a multidisciplinary team. They're so helpful for so many reasons. But this on public education I think this is important. And whether it's you or someone else, but to be able to identify a leader or two, even, that can kind of keep this going.

And I would recommend at least meeting every-- if you can't meet often enough and if that's where you lose momentum, maybe it's every quarter, every six months. I know one thing that we did upfront was just set the agenda for the year. And we set on March. I think it was every first Wednesday every three months.

So we had that date. We told the place where we were going to have our meetings. We reserved the location for the entire year. But that always kept us kind of on task. So I challenge you guys to not only incorporate public education with your sex offender registry programs, but also explore, whether it be collaborating with another prevention or public education program or hosting your own or

having your own multidisciplinary team.

I really think that that is key to having a strong program that is going to be sustainable throughout the years and throughout different financial circumstances, whether it go or be up and down. So I think that's it for my part. Thank you. I'm going to pass it over to Joanne.

Thank you, Paul. We now have the opportunity to have a panel discussion with Chris, Paul, and Lea addressing the questions you see displayed on your screen. As the panel members respond to these questions, if you have additional related questions you would like to ask, please enter them in question box and we'll pose them during the formal question and answer period, which is next. Our first question for our panel. How is your SORNA program participating in public education?

Well, I think I can take that one, Joanne. So of course, we mentioned earlier our TTSORS website. So I think at the very basic level, that's what we're doing. So we provide that. Oftentimes, I think it's maybe every month, possibly, we send out a global email.

So we have about, I don't know, over 1,000 employees here with the Cheyenne Arapaho tribes, and we send out a global email a lot of times that just sends out-- it's like, a notice to register. But it also has other resources available and links to our website.

So I know we do the global emails. And then a lot of times when powwows-- they've canceled all the powwows at our tribe for the rest of this year. But usually during powwow season or other community events, we will try to get prevention material out or some tips for parents on kind of staying on track with your child and that kind of stuff.

I was kind of laughing because I was thinking-- really quick, I shared that my daughter left the care of her mom and ran to me. And I told her how important it was that she see that us as parents pass the child along, and so that there is a transaction where we say, hey, this person's going from my care to your care.

Otherwise, my wife thought she was with me, and I was thinking she was with her, and so there was a little bit of confusion there. So I had to explain it to my kid, and I was thinking-- I was kind of laughing because I know that's in one of the tips, to make sure that that handoff is there, that it's being verbally said and confirmed by the other party. So I think that that part is so important, being able to share that type of education and materials with the community.

Joanne, this is Chris. If I could just add a couple of things. First of all, Paul, it's good to know you've

been able to apply your SORNA skills to your parenting. I'm always worried about all of our children and how we have all of this knowledge and how it plays out with our kids.

So I'm sure some of you can probably relate to that too, but as far as the SORNA law in my jurisdiction, we also require to do some more active community notification. And so beyond sort of the things that Paul was talking about in our jurisdiction, we're also doing these community meetings as well.

Or right now we're not able to do them because of COVID, but in non COVID times, that's what we were doing. And so we always took those. Even though people come wanting to know about the registrant who's moving into the community and we were sharing that information, we would always reframe that conversation pretty quickly to talk about general public and education information and help them to learn more.

Unfortunately, my experience, kind of Paul was talking before about holding a meeting and nobody showing up. When you do meetings about a registrant moving to the area, people tend to show up. When you do meetings in general, maybe people are a little less likely to show up. Unless, of course, you offer food, like Paul was suggesting.

So I think that when people know that someone's moving in, they're interested, and that gives you a chance to kind of provide them with some of this information. So I think, again, education can kind of live on different levels in your SORNA program and think about what might be best for you. So Joanne, back to you.

Paul and Chris, thank you. Our next question for our panel. Are other tribal agencies collaborating with and supportive of the SORNA program? Panel?

I'll go ahead and start that one this time. And I can't tell you how many times I've gone-- we've had tribal communities and tribal SORNA programs that have hosted SORNA trainings. And they'll invite all of the other agencies to come, and they all come because they're interested to learn about what's going on.

And I'm always quite amazed by how much, maybe, they don't know about the SORNA program. And so-- and I don't think that's the SORNA program's fault. I mean, a lot of times there's turnover or different things are happening.

So for me, a lot of times other tribal agencies may not be aware of what the tribal SORNA program is doing. And so hosting an event, bringing in other agencies, doing that cross training that Paul was

talking about earlier, all of those things, I think, can be really, really helpful to help with this collaboration and cross support within the SORNA program.

But recognize that sometimes other agencies may or may not be completely supportive of the SORNA mission. I've had folks come in and say, well, I don't really support or agree with what the SORNA program is doing because they're looking at it through their own lens or through the lens of how that impacts their program as well.

Usually in my experience, once they hear more about what the SORNA program is doing, and more importantly, maybe what the SORNA program does not do, I think that level of support can increase. But you deal with some of those misperceptions about registrants, registration, and all of that kind of stuff, and that that can occur as part of the collaboration. Paul, anything you would add related to that question?

Sure. Not too long ago, maybe it was-- it was right before COVID. But we had an issue where we had an offender who was kind of loitering or hanging around areas that are considered in some jurisdictions as protected facilities.

I know that we had a meeting and we invited multiple programs, and we really did have the support as far as them coming in person. And then it kind of struck a nerve because people could see both ways on whether we needed additional laws or legislation to kind of govern that or not.

But we saw people who were there who were passionate either one way or the other. And I thought that having that dialogue and discussion was really important for us. So I think, at least up to this point, we know we have had a lot of agencies willing and able to collaborate with our program.

And at least they're listening and then they are providing us with their thoughts and opinions. And we always use that as advice as we seek to provide a solution that we feel is best for our community. So we've had the support of people.

And let me just make a note of, sometimes they're nontribal agencies that we've had be a part of our group, and they've been so helpful too. There's like, Youth and Family Services in our area. And then of course, the US Marshal Services has been a part of many of the things that we've done and we've always had their support.

And having their support has been very impactful with almost validating our program too when it comes to the other tribal agencies that are here, seeing that we have the US marshal's support or

other federal agencies to support us, so.

Thank you, Paul. Thank you, Chris. Our next question. How much collaboration is there by the SORNA program with other tribal agencies in their prevention programs? Panel?

I'll start and then throw it over to you, Paul. But, I mean, I think I've talked about this a little bit already, but I think that the SORNA program at a minimum can build connections with other tribal agencies, including prevention programs. And I think you can certainly let people know that you have resources and information to possibly help them in their mission.

And then depending upon your level of comfort, and experience, and skill, you can maybe move to a bit more active participant and that deeper collaboration there. So I would encourage you to just-- maybe if you have to start somewhere, start with getting to know which programs are out there, what they're doing, sharing information about what you do, letting them know the resources that you have, and then maybe you can kind of build from there. Paul, anything else you can think of?

Well, just-- we have our domestic violence programs, for example. I know that they're always supportive of everything that we do. And so whenever they have their Domestic Violence Awareness Month, a lot of times during in the month we're all wearing purple, or maybe a purple pendant, or we'll collaborate with them.

And that's just-- they're always supportive of us. We want to be supportive of them. And ultimately, we're kind of wanting and doing the same thing, which is the safety of our community. So that's one time for sure that we collaborate with them and kind of just are there to support what they're doing. And we have always appreciated that relationship.

Excellent. Thank you, Paul. Our next question talks about building a team. How did you bring your tribal guys multidisciplinary team together? Panel?

This is Lea. I'll go ahead and take that question. I think Paul did a great job of already highlighting some of those areas that we can bring a team together. For me, there's a few different areas that I look at when wanting to bring a multidisciplinary team together, and specifically around our SORNA department.

And that was first starting with asking those questions along the lines of who or what departments will SORNA interact with and who will have information regarding our program. I also like to consider what role each of those individuals might play and what resources or skill sets can they bring to support our team.

For me, I also look for individuals with skill sets along the lines of engagement with the community. So is there a community member that has a strong voice or a strong impact within the community that could really be that conduit to share information that's coming from our board.

I think it's really also important to consider at what level are we engaging leadership or making space on our team for there to be representation from leadership. For our SORNA teams, I think the more informed everyone is in those different levels of our programming, of our supervising, of our administration, of our tribal leadership, the more support we ultimately can garner for our program.

The second biggest things that I consider when pulling together a SORNA multidisciplinary team is being sure that everybody's educated on all aspects of our programs. I think sometimes there's certain assumptions that might be vague, and I want to be sure that our message is always clear and consistent across the board.

And so that's one of those first things that I always try to do is educate folks about our program, and then also let them know what the expectation is going to be of them being on that board, really to have that unified voice or message.

And then lastly, it's really just introducing an MOU or some way to bring the team together to agreement. To say, here's what we're all agreeing to. Here's what we're going to be working on. And I also try to include some level or some understanding around confidentiality, just because there are times where there may be sensitive things that are discussed, and we want to be sure that everybody understands that there's an expectation of privacy on our team.

So in short, I think, really, the first steps when you're wanting to bring together that team is to look to really garner that buy in and understand the roles and responsibilities of everybody that you're wanting to incorporate into that team, and being sure that they understand what you're asking of them. Paul, would you have anything else that you'd like to add to that?

I mean, what you shared is right on point and really awesome. And we kind of incorporated those principles, like I said, early on, when our team was mainly meeting on becoming substantially implemented. And so we were still pulling on human resources or our personnel office to be there.

We were still bringing in our prosecutor to be there, court staff, probation. We're still bringing in all those people. And just like I described earlier, though, our focus just kind of changed from that to-- it's kind of morphed involved multiple times to meet whatever is at the forefront or whatever is

important to us at that time.

And so I think the main thing for us was just that we'd never let it go. And we've had some dry spells where we didn't meet a few for multiple months and we got behind. But for the most part, we're meeting in some form or fashion and we are all working together for the safety of our community, so.

Thank you, Paul. Lea, perhaps you'd consider taking our next question as well. How did you keep your tribal multidisciplinary team moving forward?

Thanks, Joanne. I think this has kind of been alluded to also throughout the presentation, and I think just to reiterate, consistency in how you're meeting, when you're meeting, developing those agendas, communication, and planning for the unknown.

So again, this includes having those regularly scheduled meetings. Sometimes even looking at scheduling those around other meetings as well. So for me, we had a child protective team meeting and a multidisciplinary team meeting.

We would schedule our SORNA meetings either before or after one of those meetings, because we have a lot of folks that crossed over on multiple different teams. And so it was really a way for us not to have to go to multiple different meetings, that you kind of take care of everything during that one time slot.

I think I would also add that reviewing and focusing on where you're at, what needs to be accomplished, again, that accountability component. And then taking out time to really evaluate what don't we know. What might be coming from things that we're seeing out in the field from our different department.

And then, of course, documenting all of this to account for turnover, or if folks get sick, or go into a new position, or are no longer available. How are we going to sustain the work that our program is needing? And I think, Joanne, the last thing that I would just add to that that. There's sometimes I think that we forget about, especially when we're out doing our own thing every day, and that really is to take care of one another.

And I think sometimes when our fields were exposed, sometimes just some horrific situations or different things along those lines, or our community is suffering or has experienced a traumatic event, and we don't always realize how that impacts us.

And so I think that really, our team, especially our SORNA team where we're sometimes dealing with

sensitive information, can be that space for debriefing or for having that step away to be able to talk about some of that stuff that we might be experiencing that we don't always get to share or talk about in other environments.

And so I think that would be my last thing, is just to encourage everyone to remember to take care of each other and support each other. And really, if that team-- if it's built off of trust, can really help do that, to support each other through some of those trying times and create those opportunities to process through some of the things that our different agencies, and departments, and communities suffer. So I would ask Paul or Chris if you have anything else that you'd like to add to that.

Well, I'll just add two things really briefly, and I kind of made mention earlier. But like, scheduling for the whole year. And even if you miss the date, if you can't do that date, as you get close to, say, October, you realize that date doesn't work, at that point, you can move it.

But scheduling for the whole year and reserving your location for the whole year, I think that is really important. And the second thing that I will say now that's even more important, COVID, which would be to make way for kind of your-- whether it be a Zoom meeting or some form or virtual meeting.

I think that's helpful because people don't have to leave their desk and can do that there, and you can meet quicker, and then hopefully you don't have to spend as much time. You can kind of go in, take care of business, and then log out and move on, all from the comfort of your desk or your home. So I would just kind of add those two things as thoughts.

Thank you, Lea and Paul. And again, thank you Paul, Chris, and Lea for the excellent presentation and discussion today, and for taking the time to share your insights and knowledge with us. We are now moving into the question and answer portion of our webinar.

And if our panel is ready, I do have one question here. How are SORNA, Community Notification, and Public Education connected and how are they different?

This is Chris. I can start, and then if anybody else wants to jump in. I think we often use those terms somewhat interchangeably, but I view them as slightly different. Community notification, I think, in terms of SORNA, that's a required activity where you're providing information about registrants, whether that be through some type of a website notification, an email notification, or some type of a community meeting.

Whereas public education, I think, is kind of a broader approach of providing more generalized information beyond what-- SORNA obviously prescribes providing certain information, but you are

providing this broader based information about offenders and offending in general.

And so I think they really go hand in hand. And as I discussed earlier, I think when you do notification, that typically includes education as part of that. But I do view them as slightly different. Lea or Paul, anything that you would add?

Thanks, Chris. I think you did a great job in summing that up.

Thank you, Lea.

Excellent. Thank you, Chris. We do have one other question, and it is as follows. Does public education bring up other traumas for tribal communities, such as abuse that occurred in boarding schools, and then how do you deal with that? Panel?

I can jump in on that and maybe share, then, from there. This is Chris. And I mentioned earlier about the tribal elder who expressed concern about the inability to talk about historical trauma. And obviously, the boarding school issue is one of those historical traumas.

And so when you're talking about present day abuse and offenders and offending, certainly that brings up past abuse issues. As I indicated, I haven't gone through one of those experiences where someone hasn't come up and talked about a history of some type of trauma or abuse.

So I think you need to be very prepared for that if it comes up in a generalized session. I think you can certainly attend to that in a larger setting, but I think the ideal is probably to deal with that more on a one to one basis. And so I would always recommend having sort of a victim services expert, a mental health professional.

Somebody present where, you know, thank you for sharing that. Man, that sounds like it's really hard. I'm sorry that this is bringing it up. If you'd like to talk to someone, here is such and such over here that can help talk to you and try to get them.

Because you don't want them working out trauma in a larger setting like that. But I think it's important to realize that when you have these types of discussions, it's going to trigger people. A lot of people sitting around the room probably will have had those experiences, and/or we've also seen research that talks about intergenerational transmission of trauma and how trauma goes from generation to generation.

And so trauma is definitely an impactful issue, certainly within tribal communities. And it would be

naive to think that you're going to be doing public education, community notification, or any other sort of tribal interaction without that coming up.

And I think a lot of times, that certainly talking about things that have happened to the tribal community from the outside are larger systemic issues and may need to be discussed as well. Lea or Paul, anything that you would add?

This is Lea, Chris. I think that you're really spot on. I think whether it's in that public forum or even if it's in our office and we have people that are disclosing information or are in a state of trauma, that always having a resource available to either make a referral or during the public education meetings, having somebody there who can create that space for that individual to go to is always key. But always knowing who to call and where to go, I think, is vital to supporting our communities in the best way.

Thank you. If there are no further thoughts from our panel, we will begin closing out our webinar. So thank you again Chris, Paul, and Lea. This does conclude the question and answer portion of our webinar.

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