

Qungasvik (Tools for Life):

An Indigenous, Strengths-Based Prevention to Reduce Risk for Suicide and Alcohol Misuse in Alaska Native Youth

Qungasvik Team: Billy Charles, Simeon John, Georgianna Ningeulook, Abraham Rivers, Wybon Rivers, Jorene Joe, Mark Tucker, Emily Kameroff, Arthur Chikigak Stacy Rasmus & James Allen



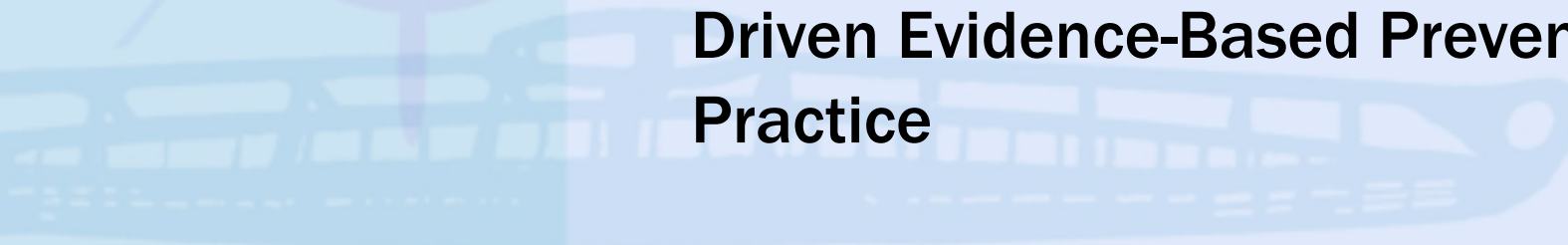
With respect and in acknowledgement to our Elders...



The late Dr. Gerald V. Mohatt with late Elders, Joe Phillip and Mary Theresa Augustine from Alakanuk

Presentation Overview

- **Indigenous Alaska: A People Awakening**
- **The Qasgiq (Communal House) Model: A Yup'ik Theory of Change and Indigenous Knowledge-Based Practice**
- **Qungasvik (Toolbox): Yup'ik Culture as Prevention**
- **Measuring Youth Outcomes and Establishing the First Yup'ik Theory-Driven Evidence-Based Prevention Practice**



Alaska Strong!



Hooper Bay mother and child
circa 1924, courtesy of Gonzaga
University, Jesuit Archives,
retrieved August 2017

Through the millennia:

- Alaska Native young people inherit the strengths and resilience of their ancestors.
- Indigenous cultures, languages and ways of living develop strengths and are protective for children.
- Alcohol was not part of Indigenous cultures in AK and suicide among young people was unheard of in the memories of today's Elders

Indigenous Health Transitions in Alaska



- 58 villages serviced by Yukon Kuskokwim Health Corporation in Bethel
- CHAP/BHA service delivery model
- Subsistence foods make up 2/3 of the daily diet

The highest suicide rate was found among Alaska Native young men aged 20–29 years (155.3 per 100,000 persons).



¹Craig, J. & Hull-Jilly, D. (2012) Retrieved Sept 26, 2020 from http://www.epi.hss.state.ak.us/bulletins/docs/rr2012_01.pdf.

A PEOPLE IN PERIL: A culture in crisis, a people in peril

IMPERILED

Author: Anchorage Daily News Updated: April 4 Published January 10, 1988

Originally published Jan. 10, 1988. First in a series.

If it happened in any city in the country, it would make headlines nationwide: a rash of suicides and violent deaths punctuated by rapes, beatings and child abuse.

But the crisis in Alaska's villages is a quiet crisis. When hope dies, it dies silently. And the epidemic of despair that is robbing an entire generation of its birthright happens far from city lights.

Today, the Daily News begins a series that will detail that crisis. These stories run not as a criticism but as a warning to us all. The Native culture that is the heritage of all Alaskans is endangered, threatened by alcoholism, helplessness and despair. From Fort Yukon to Kake, Alaska Natives are dying in vastly disproportionate numbers.



THE PEOPLE AWAKENING PROJECT

DISCOVERING
ALASKA NATIVE
PATHWAYS TO
SOBRIETY

R01AA11446 NIAAA/NIMHD

Mohatt et al., *Am J Community Psychol.*, 2004

Mohatt, Rasmus, et al., *Harm Reduction Journal*, 2004

Allen, Mohatt, Rasmus, et al., *J Prev Interv Community*, 2006

Mohatt, Rasmus, et al., *Prev Science*, 2008

Allen, Mohatt, Beehler, et al., *Am J Community Psychol.*, 2014



PEOPLE AWAKENING PROTECTIVE FACTORS

INDIVIDUAL

Self-efficacy
Communal-mastery
Wanting to be
a role model
Ellangneq
Giving

FAMILY

Affection/Praise
Being treated
as special
Clear limits
and expectations
Family models
of sobriety

COMMUNITY

Safe places
Opportunities
Role models
Limits on alcohol use

From a People in Peril to a People Awakening

People Awakening Project
(R01AA11446 NIAAAA/NIMHD)

Cuqyun (Measurement)
(R21AA016098 NIAAAA)

Ellangneq (Awareness)
(R24MD001626-1 NIMHD)

People Awakening Resilience Project
(R21AA015541 NIAAAA)

Elluam Tungiinun (Towards Wellness)
(R24MD001626-4 NIMHD)

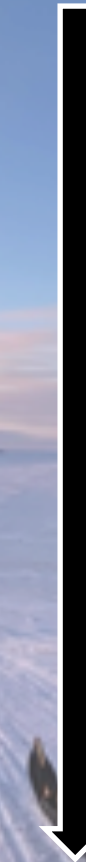
Qungasvik Youth Sobriety Project
(State of Alaska Designated Legislative Grant)

Qasgiq (Communal House)
(R24MD001626-8 NIMHD)

Qungasvik (Toolbox)
(R01AA023754 NIAAAA/NIMH/IDeA)

Emmonak, Toksook Bay, Scammon Bay, Hooper Bay
Native Connections
(SAMHSA)

1996



2021

ALAKANUK: A VILLAGE OF HOPE

*Elluam Tungiinun Egelruciq Ikayuulluta Agayutmek =
Movement Towards Wellness Together with the Help of
Our Creator*

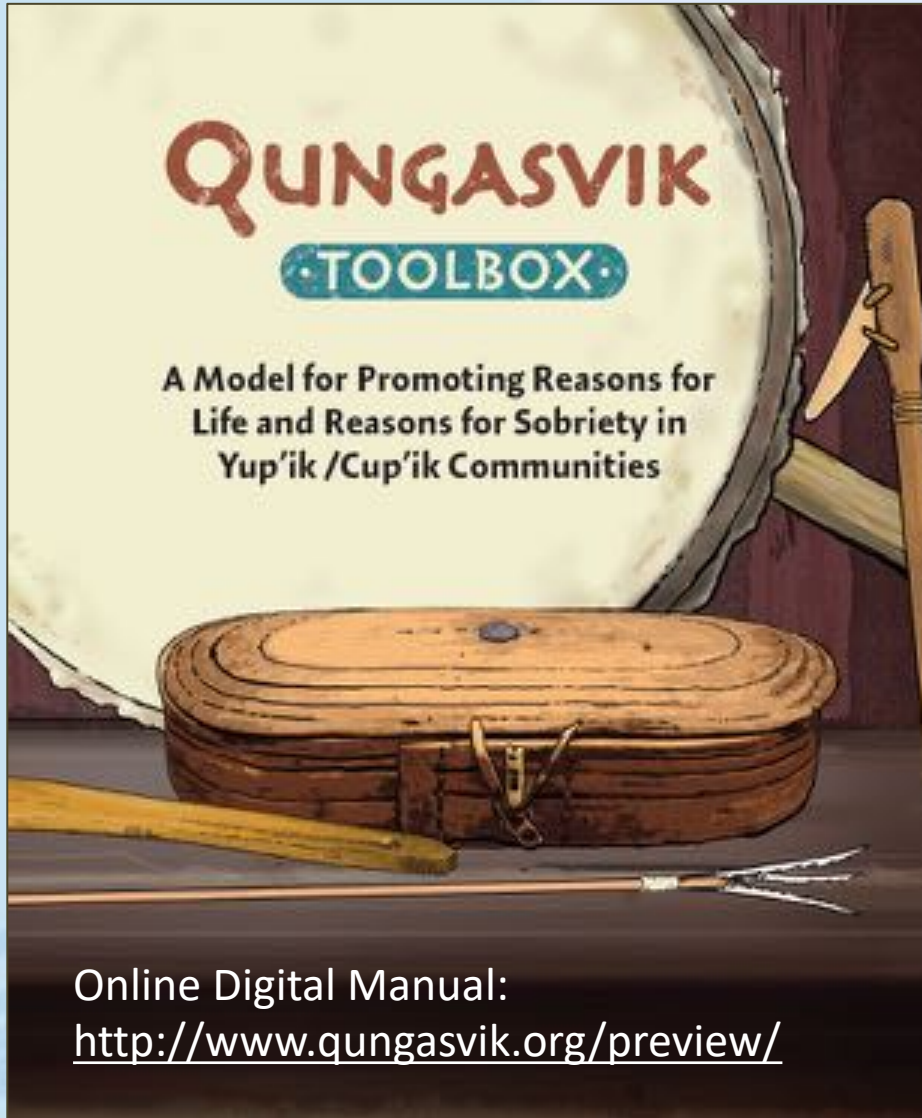
Community Ritual Casting out the Spirit of Suicide : Video link: <http://www.qungasvik.org/introduction/>



Qungasvik (Tools for Life):

Prevention of Alcohol/Suicide Risk in Alaska Native Youth

(R21AA016098, R24MD001626, R21AA015541, R01 AA023754, SM063445, SM053557, SM635560)



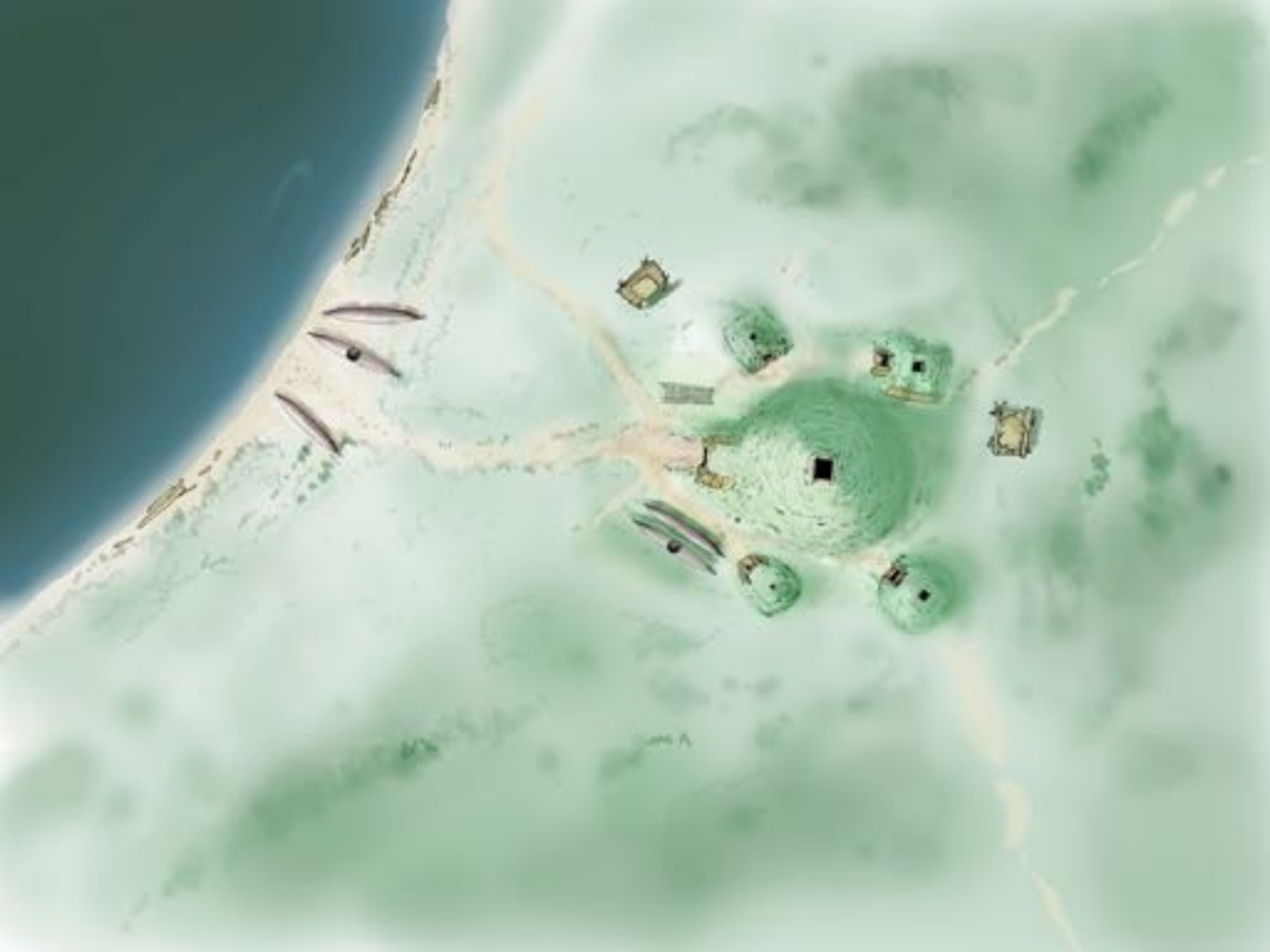
- Leverages People Awakening process and findings to develop a **multi-level, strengths-based and Indigenous protective factors model** that moves prevention upstream engaging Yup'ik youth 12-18 years old living in seven (7) rural AN communities.
- Engages **culture as prevention** in an Indigenous intervention science.
- Provides Indigenous youth **with protective childhood experiences** as a hedge against risk.
- **Empowers Yup'ik Indigenous knowledge** and re-centers communities around **traditional structures and systems of care.**



QASGIQ

OPENING A WINDOW TO OUR ANCESTORS

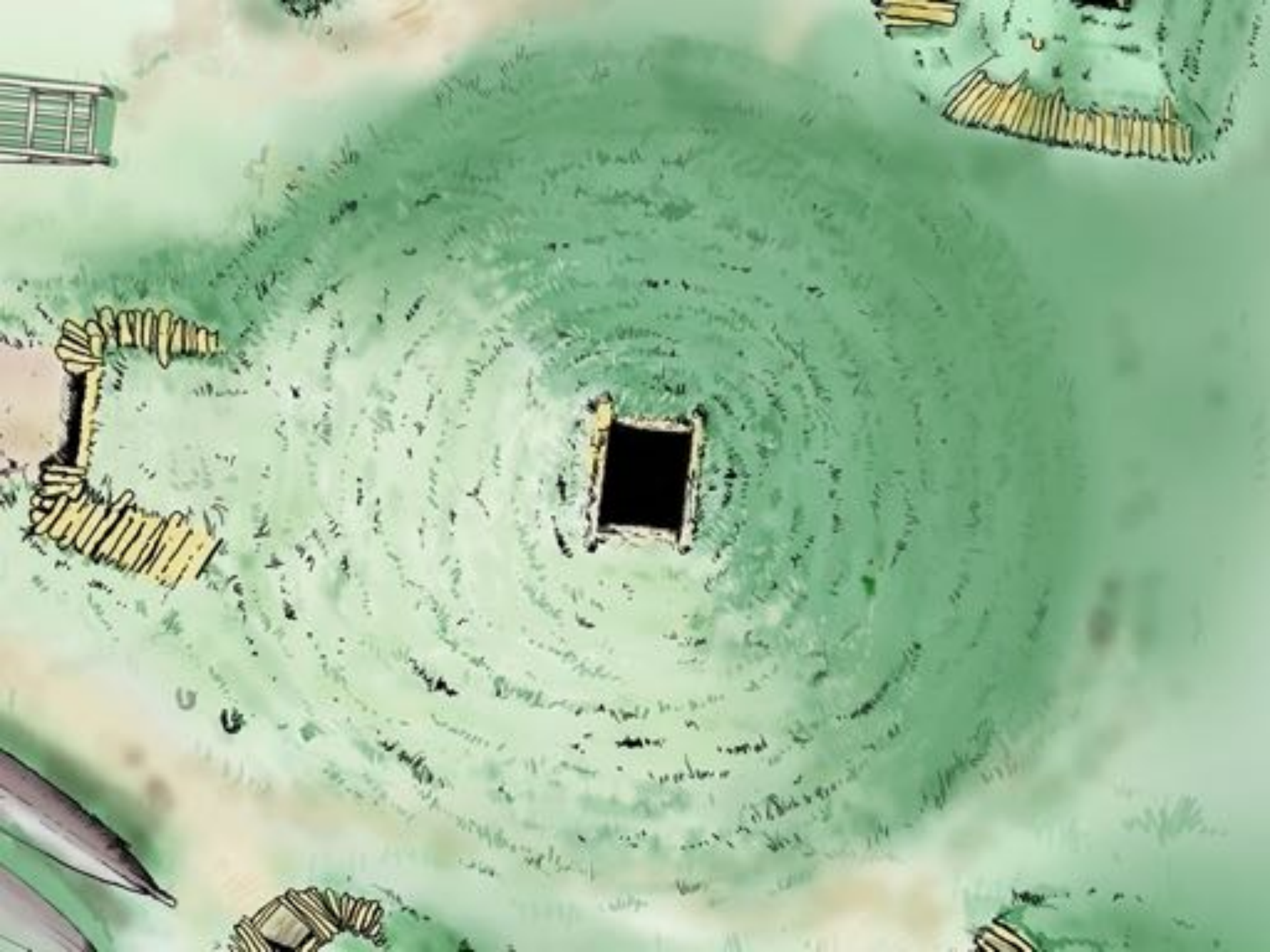
“Qasgiryaraq means to encircle, and in coming together around our youth in the ways of our ancestors, we are strengthening our collective spirit in an effort to cast suicide out from our communities, forever.”















The Qasgiq (Communal House) Model: An Indigenous Model for Youth Substance Abuse and Suicide Prevention



Community
Resources

Inputs

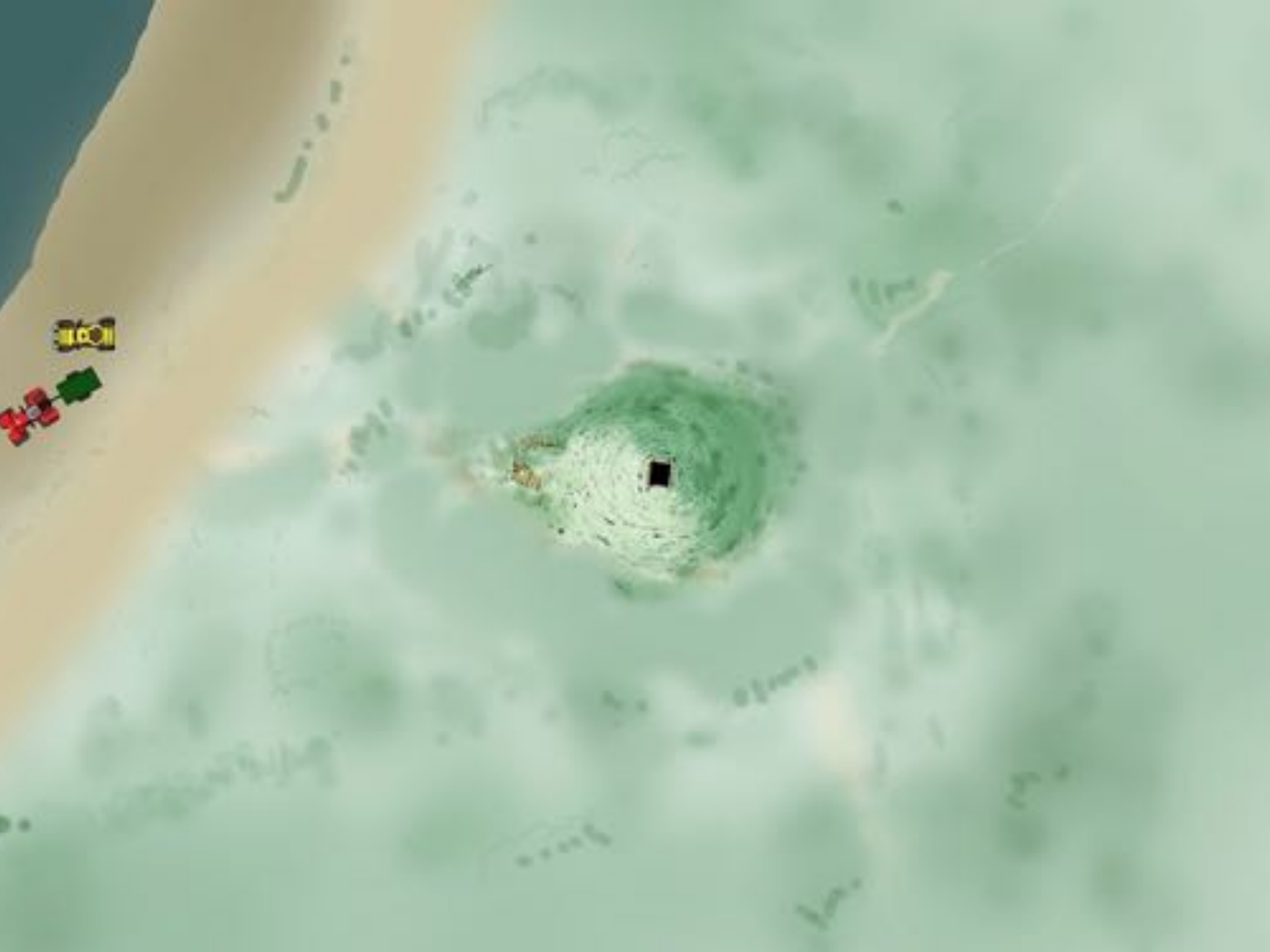
Strategies &
Outputs

Multi-Level
Outcomes

Rasmus, S.M., Trickett, E. Charles, B., John, S., & Allen, J. (2019). The Qasgiq Model as an Indigenous Intervention: Using the Cultural Logic of Contexts to Build Protective Factors for Alaska Native Suicide and Alcohol Misuse Prevention. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology, 25*(1), 45-55.

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/cdp0000243>









EVERY COMMUNITY HAS A QASGIQ!



Qungasvik (Toolbox) Manual

<http://www.qungasvik.org/home/>

Qungasvik: Toolbox – Table of Contents



Qungasvik: Toolbox



Qungasvik Introduction



The Qasig Model



People Awakening Protective Factors



Preparing for the Journey



The Land Provides for Us



Neqpiaput Yup'ik Foods



Stories of Strength



How Powerful You Are



Prayer Walk



Crisis Response Team



Traditional Yup'ik Games



18 Modules/Teachings:

Community, Family & Individual

- Preparing for the Journey
- The Land Provides for Us
- Neqpiaput: Yup'ik Foods
- Telling Stories of Strength
- How Powerful You Are
- Prayer Walk
- Crisis Response Team
- Traditional Yup'ik Games
- Building Tools for Life
- Survival Skills to Gain Confidence
- Where We All Come From
- Be a Friend
- The Whole Human Being
- Yup'ik Kinship Terms
- Surviving Your Feelings
- Strong and Sober
- Relationships for a Good Life
- Parenting Today

Scammon Bay's Qungasvik Project



Georgianna Ningeulook (top center and right), Abraham Rivers, Wybon Rivers





Halibut fishing, whale hunting, moose hunting, & wood gathering.



Summer time harvest





Their first catches







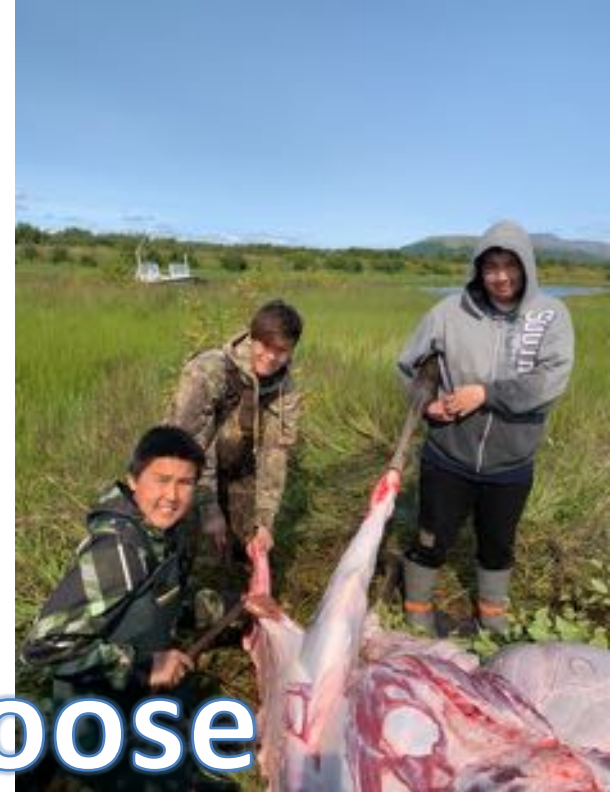
Fall time activities





Gathering wood for Elders





Jeffery's first moose





Mouse food hunting





Making traditional tools





Chopping/delivering wood to Elders



Under ice set net.



Our History is Our Strength...



For Our Youth Today!



Tisha Kaganak



Emmonak Yuu'yaraq Project
Mark Tucker, Emily Kameroff & Billy Charles
Lower Yukon Strong!





Hooper Bay Civuliamta Piciryarait Project

Jorene Joe & Sam Joe



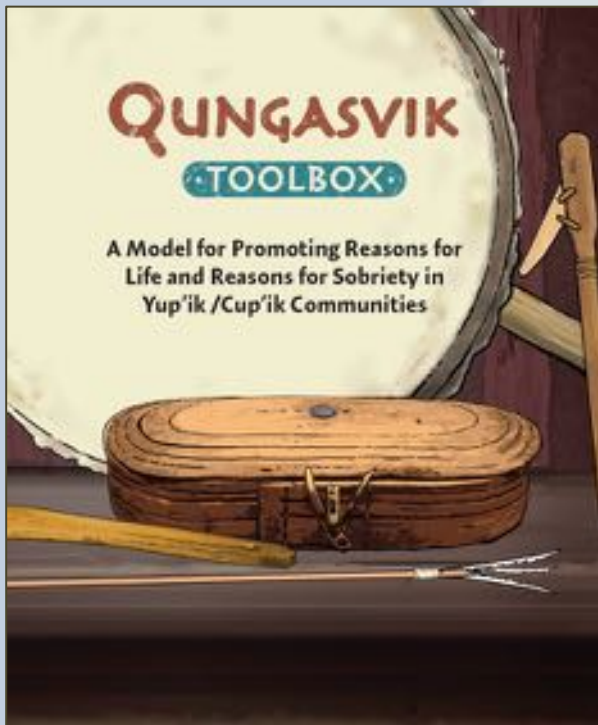


Nunakauyaq--Toksook Bay

Simeon John



Establishing an Indigenous Evidence-Based Practice through Research Partnership





Murilkelluku Cikuq = Watch the Ice

Protective Factors Promoted:

- *Ellangneq* (Awareness)
- Communal mastery
- Self-efficacy



Using the Cultural Logic of Contexts to Build Protective Factors / Qanruyutet¹



Maliqnianeq = Seal Hunt

Protective Factors Promoted:

- *Ellangneq* (Awareness)
- Self-Efficacy
- Communal Mastery

¹Rasmus et al.
Cultur. Divers. Ethnic Minor. Psychol.,
2019

Cuqyun – Measuring

- Ultimate Variables

- **Reasons for Sobriety**¹ – Alcohol Protective Factors – *Umyuangcaryaraq*
 - Reflective Processes on the Consequences of Alcohol Use
- **Reasons for Life**² – Suicide Protective Factors – *Yuuyaraqegtaar*
- **Attitudes about Alcohol Use**
 - Personal, Parental, Community
- **Sobriety Timeline Followback**

- Intermediate Variables

- **Individual Protective Factors**³ – *Elluarrluni piyugngariluni*
 - Communal Mastery - Family, Friends; Becoming a Role Model
- **Family Protective Factors**⁴ – *Elluarrluteng ilakelriit*
 - Family Relationship
- **Community Protective Factors**⁵ – *Nunamta*
 - Support, Opportunity, Connection with Elders, Awareness of Connectedness
 - Social Network

¹Allen et al. *Assess.*, 2019

²Allen et al. *Am. J. Drug Alcohol Abuse*, 2012

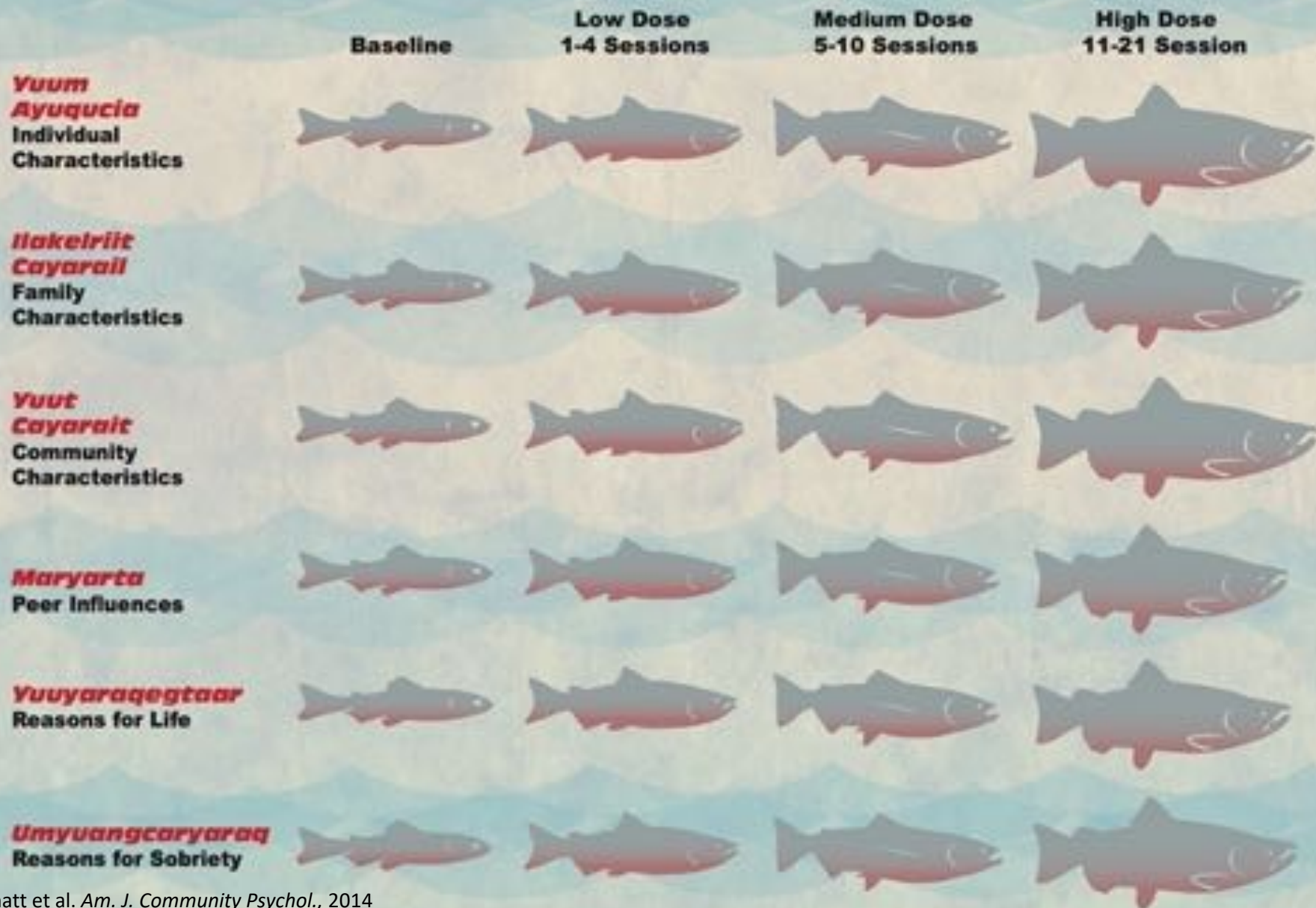
³Fok et al. *Psychol. Assess.*, 2012

⁴Fok et al. *Assess.*, 2014

⁵Mohatt et al. *Cultur. Divers. Ethnic Minor. Psychol.*, 2011



Qungasvik (Toolbox) Youth Outcomes
Elluam Tunnginun (Towards Wellness) Feasibility Study
Growth in Protection in Response to Intervention Attendance



Summary of Current Research

- Qungasvik is a strengths-based, community-level intervention grounded in a multi-level theory of protection¹ and an Indigenous theory of change and implementation.^{2,3}
- Qungasvik can be feasibly implemented in the remote, arctic, rural Yupik Alaska Native community context to produce dose related measurable effects.⁴
- Higher intensity intervention produces enhanced protection in contrast to lower intensity intervention.⁵
- Effects are strongest among youth with lower levels of protection at baseline, and among males, particularly those under age 15.⁶

Ongoing Work:

Analysis of outcomes from a small dynamic wait-listed design (DWLD) trial.

Ongoing implementation of an NIAAA funded 5 community DWLD trial and a 4-year, 2 community interrupted time series trial of long-term outcomes that has enrolled 561 youth.

¹Allen et al. *Am. J. Community Psychol.*, 2014

²Rasmus et al. *J. Community Psychol.*, 2014

³Rasmus et al. *Cultur. Divers. Ethnic Minor. Psychol.*, 2019

⁴Mohatt et al. *Am. J. Community Psychol.*, 2014

⁵Allen et al. *Prev. Sci.*, 2018

⁶Henry et al. *Am. J. Drug Alcohol Abuse*, 2012





Qungasvik Team, 2019

Promoting Alaska Native Legacies of Strength and Resilience

- **With respect, acknowledgement and gratitude to the Alaska Native Elders, youth and communities and to our partners, supporters and funders, quyana tailuci!**

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