

# LITTLE SHELL VOICES

Official Little Shell Tribal Newsletter - December 2025

Aanii (Hello)!

Biboon! It is winter! As the snow and cold sets in, it is the perfect time to share stories with loved ones and reflect on the year's journey and teachings. December is the month of holiday celebrations with family. We also must not forget that December 20, 2025 marks the 6th anniversary since the federal government restored its federal recognition of our great Little Shell Tribe. This month will always be a joyous month in our Little Shell books!

The Little Shell Tribal Council is excited to provide an important update to the development of the Little Shell Tribe's first housing development - the Good Medicine Community. The Tribal Council agreed to this name for the housing community as we wanted to impart a meaningful foundation to the housing development. The Good Medicine Community will be located right below Mount Royal and we believe that this project will vastly improve the lives of so many Little Shell tribal members by providing safe and stable homes.

The Good Medicine Community is located on an 18-acre property and will feature walking paths, children's parks, picnic shelter, and access to the Tribe's Ceremonial Center and the Food Distribution Center. The current plan has 35 single family homes with a mix of two and three bedroom homes. There are 18 planned duplexes that will also feature two to three bedroom homes. Lastly, the plans includes an apartment complex with 48 apartments. When completed the Good Medicine Community will provide over 100 homes for tribal members and their families.

The Good Medicine Community project is entering into the next phase of the project. As you will see in the rendering below, the masterplan is nearly complete. This is a very large undertaking and this housing development will take several years to be completed. The Tribe will be working towards construction in phases with the aim to start moving dirt by Spring 2026.

2025 was a tremendous year of great successes for our Little Shell Tribe and the Tribal Council will ensure that next year we see continued accomplishments. The Tribal Council is incredibly grateful to the hard work of our dedicated tribal staff and allies over this past year. Our Nation continues to grow in programming and services to ensure our tribal citizens' needs are being met.

From my family to yours, I wish all of you a happy and safe holiday season.

Miigwech (Thank you), Chairman Gerald Gray



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# DECEMBER

## LITTLE SHELL CULTURE CLUB



### Dec 10th- 5pm-8pm

The Little Shell Culture Club welcomes youth and community members of all ages to come together and celebrate our heritage. Participants learn about traditional dancing, drumming, songs, language, and other important parts of Little Shell culture.

Culture Club is a place where generations connect, stories are shared, and traditions are passed down. It offers a supportive and fun environment for anyone who wants to learn, grow, and strengthen their cultural identity.

Everyone is invited to join in, whether you are learning for the first time or continuing what has been taught to you. Come be part of the rhythm, the laughter, and the teachings that keep our Little Shell culture alive.

For more information about upcoming Culture Club dates and locations, please contact the Little Shell Culture Department or watch for updates on the Tribe's Facebook page.

# EVENTS

## BINGO



### Dec 11th- 6 to 8pm

Join us for Community Bingo Nights, a fun and welcoming way to connect with friends, family, and neighbors. These gatherings are more than just games as they bring people together to laugh, share stories, and strengthen the sense of community that makes the Little Shell Tribe so special.

All ages are welcome to take part, enjoy light refreshments, and spend time in good company. Prizes, smiles, and plenty of fun are always part of the evening.

Community Bingo Nights remind us that connection is one of the strongest foundations of wellness and culture. Come play, visit, and celebrate community with us.

## NALOXONE TRAINING & DISTRIBUTION

### Free Community Service

Be Ready to Save a Life: Naloxone (Narcan) Available Through Little Shell Tribal Health.

Little Shell Tribal Health is dedicated to keeping our community safe, informed, and prepared. One of the most powerful ways we can do that is by making sure more people know how to respond to an opioid overdose.

Free naloxone (Narcan) kits and training are available to all community members, no questions asked. This quick and simple training teaches how to recognize the signs of an overdose, how to properly use and store Narcan, and how to act fast and confidently when every second counts. Opioid use disorder continues to impact Native communities, touching families, friends, and neighbors. By increasing access to Narcan and overdose response education, we are building a stronger and more connected community that looks out for one another.

If you or your department need Narcan kits, want to schedule a training, or would like to learn more, please reach out to Kasey Schindele at [k.schindele@lstclinic.org](mailto:k.schindele@lstclinic.org) or stop by the clinic.

Together, we can save lives, one act of preparedness at a time.





# WELLNESS CORNER

## DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

### 16 SIGNS OF EMOTIONAL ABUSE IN A RELATIONSHIP



No one expects to find themselves in an abusive relationship. Most relationships begin in a good way with kind words and compliments, but they can turn harmful and emotionally abusive at any time.

Emotional abuse is a type of domestic violence that often flies under the radar, but it should always be taken seriously as a form of abuse. When emotional abuse is present in a relationship, a partner will criticize, threaten or isolate their partner as a way to manipulate and control them. Emotional abuse can be degrading, humiliating and terrifying, often leaving long-lasting scars on one's spirit and self-esteem.

So, how do you know if you're in an abusive relationship? What can you do when a loved one is being emotionally abused? Let's start with recognizing the tactics of emotional abuse.

#### SIGNS OF EMOTIONAL ABUSE

In an intimate relationship, emotional abuse can look like when a partner:

- Constantly calls you hurtful or degrading names, insults you or criticizes you
- Acts extremely jealous or possessive of you
- Humiliates you in any way, or shames you
- Isolates you from your family, friends or community
- Blocks you from making new friends or joining social groups
- Ignores your presence for several hours, days or weeks
- Refuses to listen, speak or respond to you (ex. silent treatment)
- Explodes in anger toward you or is constantly angry at everything you do
- Pressures you to commit and becomes angry or sulks when you don't commit
- Threatens to hurt you or themselves, or uses weapons to scare you
- Threatens to hurt your children, family members or pets
- Threatens to take your children away from you or call child protective services (CPS) on you
- Repeatedly lies about where they are, what they're doing or who they're with
- Calls you "crazy," "too sensitive," or denies abuse is happening when confronted (ex. gaslighting)
- Cheats on you or flirts with other people to intentionally hurt you
- Accuses you of cheating in the relationship



# WELLNESS CORNER

When emotional abuse is present in a relationship, you may feel off-balance, like you're walking on eggshells, or question your judgment more than usual. This is because an abusive partner uses harmful behaviors like the tactics above to manipulate and control their partner so they feel powerless. That's why it is so important to trust your instincts when your partner does or says something that doesn't feel right to you.

Emotional abuse is extremely dangerous and detrimental to a person's wellbeing and often has lifelong psychological effects. An abusive partner's behavior is likely to escalate as time goes on, and they will often use emotional abuse in combination with other abuse types and tactics to obtain and maintain power in the relationship.

People in abusive relationships tend to blame themselves for the abuse or believe they must have done something to deserve criticism or attacks. No one ever deserves to be abused. And no matter the abusive partner's reasoning for the abuse, domestic violence goes against our traditional ways as Native people. It is never acceptable to hurt a partner or spouse in any way.

#### IS ARGUING ABUSIVE?

In every relationship, partners can expect to disagree from time to time. Arguments are a normal part of any relationship, but abusive behavior is not.

In a healthy relationship, each partner must commit to being honest, communicating, and trusting the other person. Each partner must work to maintain healthy communication and avoid hurting the other person emotionally, spiritually and physically. Above all, each partner must show respect in the relationship, especially when disagreements arise.

In an abusive relationship, any disagreement can escalate into emotionally or physically abusive behavior. Remember, there is never an excuse for abuse.

#### GETTING HELP

Recognizing the signs of emotional abuse is the first step to getting help. If you or someone you know is being hurt in a relationship, know that you are not alone. There are people who want to support you, including advocates at StrongHearts Native Helpline.

By calling StrongHearts, you can connect anonymously with an advocate who can offer a listening ear and support with whatever is happening in your relationship. You can share as much as you feel comfortable, and our advocates will listen without judgment or blame. Advocates also offer crisis intervention, assistance with finding ways to stay safe, and a connection to Native-centered resources, if needed. We can also assist concerned friends or family members with ways to help a loved one who is being abused, as well as people who are worried they might be abusing their partner.

It can also be incredibly helpful to lean on family members and your cultural roots for support. Never forget that you have the strength and courage of your ancestors, too, who dreamed of a world where every one of their relatives would live in safety, happiness, and harmony. You deserve to feel safe in your relationship, no matter what.



# WELLNESS CORNER

## DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

If you or someone you care about is experiencing domestic violence, please know that you are not alone. Help, understanding, and safety are available.

Kasey is here to support survivors with compassion and confidentiality. Whether you need help creating a safety plan, finding resources, or simply need someone to talk to, you can reach out at any time. Together, we can work toward safety, healing, and empowerment. Everyone deserves to feel safe and valued. Reaching out is a brave and important first step, and support is always available for you here at Little Shell.

For confidential support, resources, or safety planning, contact Kasey at [k.schindele@lstclinic.org](mailto:k.schindele@lstclinic.org).

## HARM REDUCTION SUPPLIES

Little Shell Tribal Health is committed to keeping our community safe, informed, and supported. Harm reduction is about compassion, understanding, and giving people the tools they need to stay alive and healthy.

Free harm reduction supplies are available, including fentanyl test strips, naloxone (Narcan), and other essential items to help prevent overdose and reduce risk. These resources are provided with no judgment and complete confidentiality.

Whether you need supplies for yourself, a loved one, or to share within the community, you can reach out for what you need. Every life matters and taking steps to stay safe is an act of strength and care.

For harm reduction supplies or information about overdose prevention, contact Kasey at [k.schindele@lstclinic.org](mailto:k.schindele@lstclinic.org)



# WELLNESS CORNER

## Domestic violence commonly targets mental health

In a survey of 2,546 callers to the National Domestic Violence Hotline:



had experienced at least one type of mental health coercion, including:



4 in 5

said their partner accused them of being "crazy"



3 in 4

said their partner deliberately did things to make them feel like they were losing their mind



1 in 2

said their partner threatened to report they were "crazy" to keep them from getting things they wanted or needed (e.g. protection order or child custody)



1 in 2

sought help due to feeling depressed or upset. Of those, half said their partner tried to prevent or discourage them from getting help or taking prescribed medications

Mental Health and Substance Use Coercion Surveys Report from the National Domestic Violence Hotline and

A photograph of a woman with dark hair tied back, wearing a green shirt, talking on a black mobile phone. She is looking slightly to the side with a thoughtful expression.

**Are you  
in a toxic  
relationship?**

[strongheartshelpline.org](https://strongheartshelpline.org)  
**1-844-762-8483**

 **STRONGHEARTS**  
Native Helpline

Let's Talk About It





## WELLNESS CORNER

### NATIVE WOMEN'S GROUP

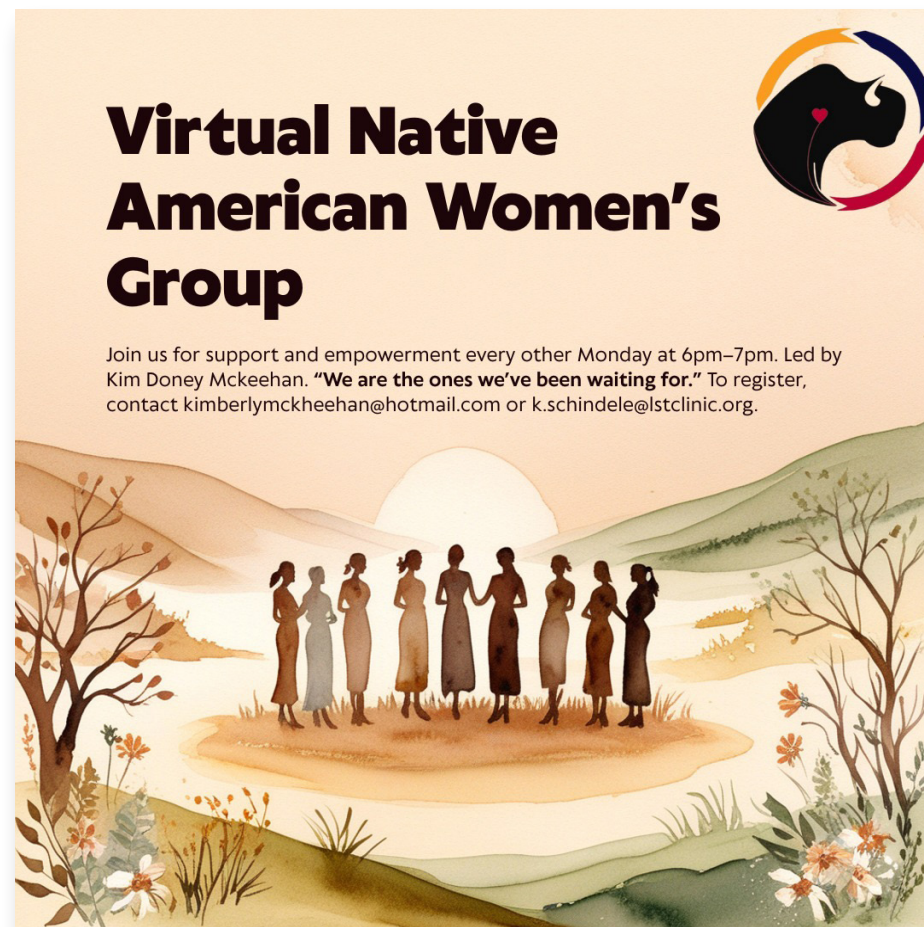
You are invited to join the Native Women's Circle, a virtual gathering created for connection, reflection, and healing.

In partnership with Kim Doney McKeegan, LCSW, this ongoing biweekly circle offers a safe and welcoming space for Native women to come together, share stories, and support one another through life's challenges and triumphs. Each session focuses on emotional wellness, cultural strength, and the power of community.

Whether you join to listen, reconnect with your spirit, or simply sit among other Native women, you will find a space of understanding, laughter, and growth. Grounded in tradition and guided by shared resilience, this circle is a reminder that wherever you are, you belong.

Upcoming gatherings: December 1 and December 15

All Native women are welcome. Your story, your presence, and your spirit matter here. To join or for more information, contact Kasey at [k.schindele@lstclinic.org](mailto:k.schindele@lstclinic.org).



## WELLNESS CORNER

### CHRONIC DISEASE AWARENESS

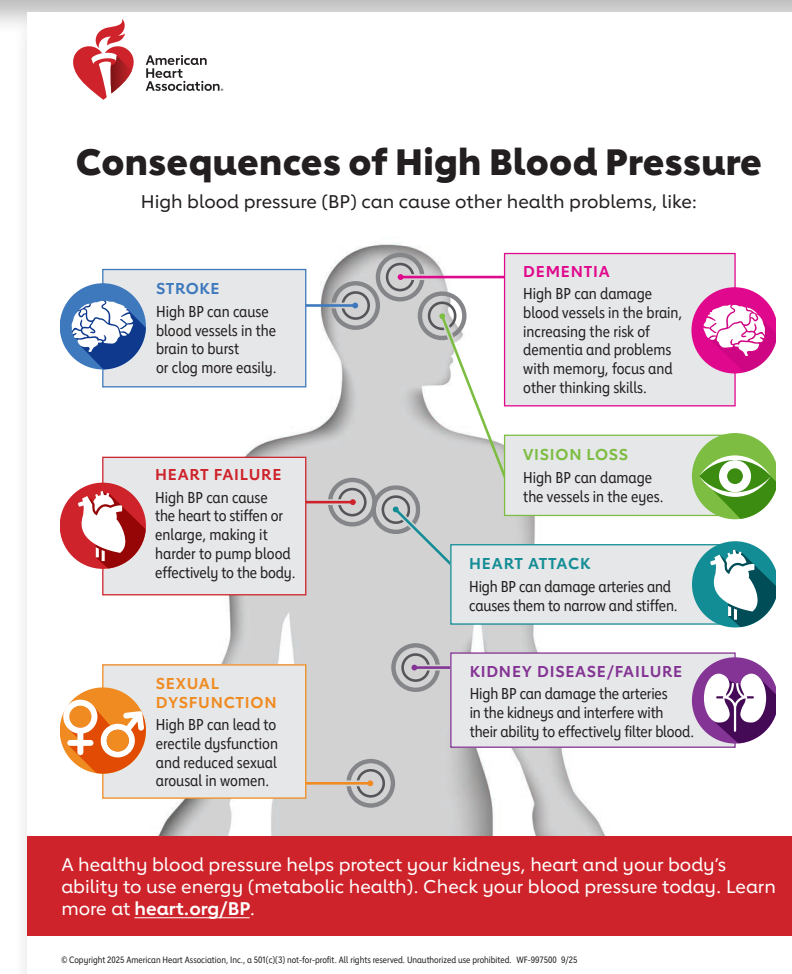
Losing a small amount of weight if you have overweight.  
Getting regular physical activity.

A small amount of weight loss means around 5% to 7% of your body weight. That's around 10 to 14 pounds for a 200-pound person. Regular physical activity means getting at least 150 minutes a week of brisk walking or a similar activity. That's 30 minutes a day, 5 days a week.

The CDC-led National Diabetes Prevention Program can help you make those changes—and make them stick. Through the program, you can lower your risk for type 2 diabetes by 58% (71% if you're over age 60).

Ask your doctor if there's a CDC-recognized National Diabetes Prevention Program offered in your community, or find a program. The best time to prevent type 2 diabetes is now.

Source- Health Threats from High Blood Pressure | American Heart Association





# COMMUNITY CORNER

## HEALTH AND FOOD DISTRIBUTION TEAM



### ROOTED IN FAMILY, CULTURE & FOOD SOVEREIGNTY

#### Food Sovereignty During the Holidays

As we gather with family this holiday season, it's a powerful time to reflect on the importance of food sovereignty – our right to access healthy, traditional, and culturally relevant foods. Through the FDPIR program, we are taking steps toward reclaiming control over our food systems, one household at a time. Every food box you receive supports not only your family's health but also our tribal community's independence, culture, and connection to our ancestors.

Let's continue to strengthen our ties to food traditions this winter and carry those values forward into the new year.

# COMMUNITY CORNER



#### Family, Food & Christmas Traditions

December is a season full of love, laughter, and shared meals. Whether you're making fry bread, wild rice dishes, or stew, food brings our families together.

Some favorite ways tribal households use FDPIR foods this time of year:

- Hearty bean soups with dried vegetables
- Homemade cornbread and baked goods
- Roasted squash or cranberry wild rice pilaf
- Cookies using oats and raisins or dried fruits

We'd love to hear your favorite food traditions – or help you plan new ones using your FDPIR items!

#### Need Food Support Over the Holidays?

Apply for FDPIR anytime online — quick and easy.  
Visit us: 1301 Stuckey Rd, Great Falls, MT Call: 406-315-2400 ext. 130  
Let us help make sure your table is full this holiday season.

#### December Notes & Reminders

- Cold Weather Tip: Store canned items in a place where they won't freeze.
- Winter Food Ideas: Stop by the office and grab a holiday meal idea sheet.
- We're Listening: Still gathering input — tell us what fruits & veggies you'd like to see in 2026.

#### From Our Hearts to Yours

This December, we celebrate the strength of our people and the beauty of tradition. May your holidays be filled with peace, nourishment, and the warmth of family.  
– Your Little Shell FDPIR Team



# COMMUNITY CORNER

## ICWA TEAM

As always, the ICWA Department is looking to assist Little Shell Citizens in becoming licensed foster parents so our children can stay within their culture. There is such a need for foster parents that can help the native children stay within their culture! Currently there are no Little Shell foster families for Little Shell Children to go to if need be. Please reach out if you are interested.

Please contact the ICWA Department to help us understand the barriers so we can work on getting them out of the way!

If anyone would like more information on ICWA please feel free to call me!  
406-315-2400 ext. 120,

### **What to know about ICWA:**

What are active efforts? Active efforts are affirmative, active, thorough, and timely efforts intended primarily to maintain or reunite an Indian child with his or her family.

### **What must active efforts involve?**

Where an agency is involved in the child custody proceeding, active efforts must involve assisting the parent(s) or Indian custodian through the steps of a case plan and with accessing or developing the resources necessary to satisfy the case plan.

### **How should Active efforts be provided?**

To the maximum extent possible, active efforts should be provided in a manner consistent with the prevailing social and cultural conditions and way of life of the Indian child's Tribe and should be conducted in partnership with the Indian child and the Indian child's parents, extended family members, Indian custodians, and Tribe.

### **Are active efforts tailored to each case?**

Yes, active efforts are to be tailored to the facts and circumstances of the case.

### **When are active efforts required?**

The active efforts requirement applies in any foster care or termination-of-parental-rights proceeding involving an "Indian child" (see 25 CFR 23). The court must conclude, prior to ordering an involuntary foster-care placement or termination of parental rights, that active efforts have been made to prevent the breakup of the Indian family and that those efforts have been unsuccessful.

### **Must active efforts be documented?**

Yes, the court will require active efforts to be documented in detail in the record.

# COMMUNITY CORNER

## LITTLE SHELL HOUSING



My name is Sidney Curnow, and I am your new Housing Director. I served as Housing Director for the Burns-Paiute and Sauk-Suiattle Indian Tribes. Also, I served as Deputy Director of Housing, Facilities, and Public Works, for the Skokomish Indian Tribe. I worked for federal and state governments for about 24 years.

I earned my Master of Business Administration (MBA) while working for the Utah Departments of Transportation and Environmental Quality. My undergraduate consists of a Bachelor of Science in Business, Finance option, with course work in engineering.

I had earned my Compliance Review Officer and STAR certifications while working for the United States Department of Agriculture and my Certified Public Manager certification while working for the Utah Department of Environmental Quality.

My professional role will include, but not limited to, responsibility for the administration, management and delivery of all tribal housing programs, and properties within the Montana Little Shell Chippewa Tribe under the terms and conditions of Housing policies, Federal and State rules and regulations, Tribal Ordinances, etc.

Some achievements, and not all inclusive, are successfully working with the Housing and Urban Development (HUD) in relation to Indian Housing Plans (IHPs), Annual Performance Reports, Healthy Homes Grant, Indian Community Development Block (ICDBG) grant, Indian Housing Block Grant Competitive, Price grant, and others. Also, I served on a Code Enforcement group for tribal safety and security. Community Economic Development has been a part of my roles and touched my niche throughout my career years.

My passion is to serve the higher purpose and to go by the platinum rule, namely, "Treat others the way they want to be treated." My personal interests include traveling, trying new foods, study of Theology, billiards, horseback riding, bowling, staying fit, etc. I am very optimistic and open to new ideas! It will be a pleasure working with you all!

Sincerely,  
Sidney (Sid) Curnow