

NATIVE NEWS



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Following news that Sarah Lee Circle Bear died of a meth overdose, Sarah Sunshine Manning reports that, yes, people can survive a meth overdose if quick action is taken.

Manning: Circle Bear Autopsy Report Released, and The Questions We Must Now Ask

Sarah Sunshine Manning • August 18, 2015

Editor's Note: On Thursday, the Associated Press reported that Sarah Lee Circle Bear, a 24-year-old Native American mother of two who was found unresponsive in her cell at the Brown County Jail in Aberdeen, South Dakota on July 5, died of a meth overdose. State Attorney General Marty Jackley told the AP that there was "acute methamphetamine and amphetamine toxicity" in Circle Bear's blood at the time of her death. Columnist Sarah Sunshine Manning first broke the news on ICTMN that Circle Bear allegedly had cried for help from her cell prior to her death because she was suffering from excruciating abdominal pain. Jailers allegedly responded to Circle Bear's pleas with "quit faking." The following is Manning's response to the autopsy report as well as the plague of addiction in Indian country:

When we say, "Native Lives Matter," we do mean all Native lives, right?

The thing about Native people today is that we struggle with addictions, mental health disparities, and shattered family structures. Tracing our history, we now understand that all of this is a direct result of historical trauma and centuries of oppressive federal Indian policies. We didn't do this ourselves, and in the words of Michelle Obama, "This didn't

Home Care

If you believe someone has taken methamphetamine and they are having bad symptoms, immediately get them medical help. Take extreme caution around them, especially if they appear to be extremely excited or paranoid.

If they are having a seizure, gently hold the back of the person's head to prevent injury. If possible, turn the head to the side in case they vomit. DO NOT try to stop their arms and legs from shaking.

Before Calling Emergency

If possible, determine the following information:

- Patient's approximate age and weight
- How much of the drug was taken?
- How was the drug taken? (For example, was it smoked or snorted?)
- How long has it been since the person took the drug?

If the patient is actively seizing, becoming violent, or having difficulty breathing, do not delay. Call your local emergency number (such as 911).

U.S. National Library of Medicine

An inmate in the cell next to Circle Bear alleges that Circle Bear pressed the panic button in her cell two separate times, at which jail staff dismissed her cries. A fellow inmate, who is allegedly white, hit the panic button a third time. At least one inmate alleges that staff neglect and harsh dismissal of Circle Bear's cries contributed to her death.

Could Sarah Lee Circle Bear still be alive today? Does her life matter, even if she had an extreme amount of meth in her system? Did jail staff look upon her as a life that mattered, a life that could be saved? Had they responded to her cries, *would* she still be alive?

While this is a difficult issue to probe into, we must ask ourselves: what happens if we *don't* ask these questions? If you are closely tied to a reservation community, you are likely connected in some way with an addict or alcoholic. Maybe the person is your sister, or brother, aunt, or uncle, mother or father, daughter or son, and maybe even your significant other. Probe into their addiction, and you *will* find pain. What if your loved one was sitting in jail, caught in a life or death situation – would you expect that jail staff should respond as their organs begin to shut down? What would you do if you observed their pain at home? Would you dare tell them to “knock it off?”

I'm going to own it: I would not, and I would be ashamed of any relative who dismissed the pain of those who suffer the most.

So, to our relatives and friends who are self-medicating deeply rooted pain to the extent that they do not even entirely understand themselves, how do we respond? How do we respond to someone dying of cancer? How do we respond to

https://www.capjournal.com/news/jackley-circle-bear-monitored-in-jail-before-she-died-of/article_a5aac0e2-5264-11e5-b6af-27483040fc16.html

Jackley: Circle Bear monitored in jail before she died of meth

By Kevin Burbach Associated Press Sep 3, 2015

SIOUX FALLS — A 24-year-old South Dakota woman who suffered a fatal methamphetamine overdose while in custody was asked repeatedly by jail staff whether she had taken any illegal drugs and was moved to a holding cell for special monitoring after her cellmate requested medical attention for her, authorities said Thursday.

Attorney General Marty Jackley, whose office conducted the state investigation, told The Associated Press that the circumstances surrounding Sarah Circle Bear's death on July 5 are unfortunate, but that "the normal jail procedures were followed."

Circle Bear's family is questioning whether the American Indian woman received adequate medical attention before she died, but jail officials in Aberdeen say they did everything they could and there was no indication she was in danger before she was found unresponsive in a holding cell.

Sarah Circle Bear called for jail staff using an emergency call button around 8 a.m. and told staff she had a stomach ache, but didn't ask for medical attention, Brown County Sheriff's deputy and jail administrator Craig Nelson told The Associated Press on Thursday.

Circle Bear's father, Terrance Circle Bear, has said an inmate who was in custody with his daughter in Aberdeen, where Sarah Circle Bear was taken the day of her arrest for ingesting a controlled substance, told him his daughter was suffering and repeatedly asked for help but was ignored.

Her cellmate pushed the help button at 8:18 a.m. and told staff that Circle Bear was acting strange, according to Brown County Sheriff Mark Milbrandt. Jail staff didn't think Circle Bear