

# Elders - Words of Wisdom Episode 1: An Introduction to the NRC Transcript

**Thomas Moore (Host):**

You're listening to Elders - Words of Wisdom, from the University of Alaska Anchorage College of Health, School of Social Work and the National Resource Center for Alaska Native Elders. My name is Thomas Moore. This episode is basically a prologue. I'll briefly detail what the series is going to be about and go over a few topics of upcoming episodes. Hopefully, by the end you'll have a better idea of what the NRC is. Today, I'll be talking to NRC Director Dr. Jordan Lewis. Dr. Lewis comes from the Bristol Bay village of Naknek, where he grew up commercial fishing. I asked him if he could tell us a little bit about his education background.

**Dr. Jordan Lewis:**

So, I got my undergraduate degree in social work from the University of Alaska Fairbanks. From there, I transitioned to Washington University in St. Louis to get my Masters in Social Work and that's when I was able to focus on my coursework in aging related topics.

**Thomas Moore (Host):**

After getting his Masters in Social Work, he returned to UAF to get his PhD, where he did an interdisciplinary studies program and a cross-cultural community psychology degree. Through his academic and professional career, Dr. Lewis familiarized himself with the NRC.

**Dr. Lewis:**

Over the years, I contributed some of my work to the NRC, had some stuff on the website, and then came back up to UAA in 2016 to teach at the med school. The past dean of the College of Health had offered to step into that role, the director then was retiring. I felt it was a good opportunity to get reengaged with the NRC and move it forward.

**Thomas Moore (Host):**

So, what is the NRC?

**Dr. Lewis:**

So, The National Resource Center for Alaska Native Elders is funded by the Administration for Community Living. There are three in the country. There's the National Resource Center for Native Aging, at the University of North Dakota. And there's Hā Kūpuna which is the National Resource Center for Native Hawaiian Elders. So we are responsible for providing resources, technical assistance, and support for Title VI Directors. Meals on Wheels, caregiver support programs, anything that supports elders for being in their community. We also partner with the Title III, which is the non-native version of Title VI. Our new vision for the NRC in Alaska is to be

the go-to NRC for Title VI resources. Thinking about, how do we translate what our Title VI directors need with the research that we're doing into training education, resources, that then can be translated or adapted for reservation communities in the Lower 48, but really seeing ourselves as the spearhead of really developing Title VI resources, moving that forward but also having a research component.

**Thomas Moore (Host):**

As Dr. Lewis said, the NRC at its core is exactly what its name suggests: a resource for Alaska Native Elders. Some of those resources are accessible right now on our website. You can find information on caregiving, resources in Anchorage, info about traditional foods and much more. If you go to [www.uaa.alaska.edu](http://www.uaa.alaska.edu) and type "NRC" in the search bar, you'll be able to find our site and tons of useful information. Not only do we have a lot of currently available resources, we'll continually be adding more in the future. Here's Dr. Lewis again, talking about some of the projects and research currently being done at the NRC.

**Dr. Lewis:**

So one project we have is focused on adapting or using a reminiscence therapy manual and adapting it for Alaska Natives and serving traditional foods, specifically targeting Alaska Natives with memory loss. So, can we use questions around traditional foods to reduce challenging behaviors. Another traditional foods focus is doing a traditional foods workshop and really targeting our small group homes across the state, exposing them to traditional foods, so whether that's whitefish or seal, moose, caribou, and providing more of like a cooking show format, where we can show them how to do very basic recipes. Also, provide them with resources that they can go home with, such as cooks books or recipes. We're also partnering with the Long Term Care Ombudsman and helping them figure out how do we get residents counsels, and nursing homes and other facilities being more indigenous, thinking about what those models look like.

We're at a turning point with the NRC. We're on our way to becoming really established and going in the direction we think we're wanting to go in terms of meeting the needs of a lot of different areas in aging, different key players

**Thomas Moore (Host):**

The NRC hopes to be a place for aging adults or those caring for aging adults to come to with questions or information on resources available. So, if you'd like to learn more about the National Resource Center for Alaska Native Elders you can go to our website, find us on Google by typing UAA Elders, or on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/UAANRC](http://www.facebook.com/UAANRC).

If you enjoyed listening to this podcast you'll definitely want to check out our Facebook or website because we'll be adding episodes on a monthly basis. A few of our upcoming topics will include traditional foods, social work and Alaska Native elders, elder justices and many more. If you're interested in getting involved with the podcast, please feel free to reach out. We'd like to

feature stories from Title VI directors, elders, community partners, and students involved in the NRC.

This podcast was brought to you by the UAA College of Health, School of Social Work, and National Resource Center for Alaska Native Elders. Until next time, I'm Thomas Moore I hope you enjoyed. Thank you for listening.