

"Incorporating Tribal Customs into Healing to Wellness Courts"



PRESENTED BY

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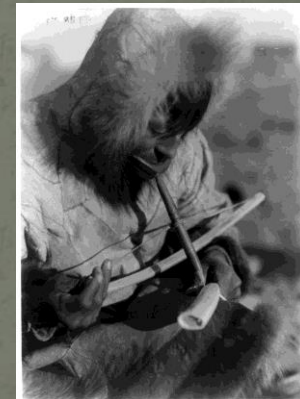
Considerations

- The following is presented with the understanding that not all Judges, participants, and tribal people support the incorporation of custom and tradition in court programs as necessary....



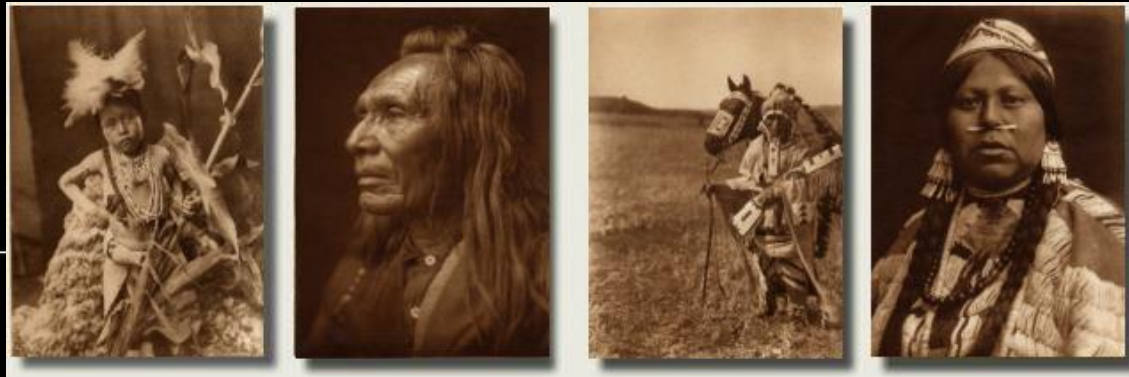
Outline

- History
- Environment & AI/AN Population
- Cultural Awareness & Sensitivity
- Trauma
- Self Awareness
- Team Exercise



Tribal People

Honor - Culture – Ceremony – Respect – Elders –
Community/Village/Camp – Rituals – Song – Story Telling - Prayer



There are over 560 Federally Recognized Tribes in the U.S.

Relocation – Inter-Tribal Relationships – Inter-Racial Relationships –
Blood Quantum – Federal Recognition



Tribal Nations

- 1500-1750 Disease
 - Small pox, Bubonic plaque, Measles, Yellow fever, Cholera,
- 1800 Decimation
 - Influenza
 - War
 - Assimilation
 - *“If the savage resists, civilization, with the ten commandments in one hand and the sword in the other, demand his immediate extermination.” Andrew Jackson The Indian Killer 1867 to Congress*
- 1900 Boarding School
 - Punishment for speaking language
 - Hair and Dress code

ASSIMILATION.....TRAUMA



Population

- Approximately 1.5% of the US population-4.1 million Americans-identity themselves as having American Indian or Alaska Native heritage
- About two-thirds live in urban, suburban or rural non-reservation areas; about one-third live on reservations. During the last 30 years, more than 1 million AI/AN's have moved to metropolitan areas off reservation.
- More likely to live in poverty; more than twice as many AI/AN's live in poverty than the total US population (26% vs 12%)



Addiction in Indian Country

- Alcohol/Drugs introduced by traders
- Cigarette Addiction - highest among all other ethnic groups
- Childhood trauma increases smoking risks
- Daily smokers are 5 times more likely to abuse alcohol
- Alcoholism remains high among native people
- Most violent crimes committed in Indian country involve alcohol/drugs on both the part of the offender and the victim



Addiction

- Tends to mask the real source of the problem
- Enhanced Low Self-Esteem
- Loss of sense of belonging or connection to the tribal community or group
 - Possibly stemming from historical trauma
 - Negative boarding school experience
 - Relocation
 - Assimilation
 - Change in identity



Defining Trauma

- Experiencing a serious injury to yourself or witnessing a serious injury to or the death of someone else
- Facing imminent threats of serious injury or death to yourself or others
- Experiencing a violation of personal physical integrity

Resulting in overwhelming feelings of terror, horror, or hopelessness.



Types of Potentially Traumatic Experiences

- Abuse and Neglect
- Accidents
- Interpersonal Violence
- Domestic Violence
- Medical Procedures
- Natural Disasters
- War or Terrorism



Impacts of Trauma

Historical traumas, including forced relocations and cultural assimilation, Numerous broken treaties and other social, economic, and political injustices, continue to affect AI/AN communities in significant ways. AIAN health disparities are inherently tied to the historical and current sociopolitical experiences of these people



Historical Trauma/Stress

- Stress experienced by an individual's ancestor may overshadow the stress experienced within a lifetime.
- These events change which genes are turned on or off by a process called methylation.
- Your ancestors lousy childhoods or excellent adventures might change your personality, anxiety or resilience by altering the epigenetic expression of genes in your brain



Responding to Trauma

- Reactive VS Receptive States
 - Know your state/self care
 - Mindfulness/breathing
 - Training



Reactive States

- A simple exercise demonstrating an immediate “felt” experience of the difference between reactive and receptive states.
- When the nervous system is reactive, it is actually in a fight-flight-freeze survival state.
- Brainstem feels a threat “no”, and it takes over.
- Not possible to connect with another person when our focus is on self-defense and/or survival.
- Our state of mind can turn even neutral comments into fighting words, distorting “what we hear” to fit “what we fear.”



Receptive States

- A different branch of the brainstem activates.
- The muscles of face and vocal cords relax, blood pressure and heart rate normalize.
- We become more open to experiencing the present moment and connecting to others.
- We experience being safe and seen.
- Your responsibility is to know your state. Ask for time or pause if you are in a reactive state.
- Exercise and Strengthen your basic ability to enter a receptive by being aware.



Treatment of Alcohol/Drug Use & Trauma Among Native American's

- Conflicts were historically addressed through customary and traditional methods
- Community vision guide native people
- Traditional native people focus on community
- Modern ways are individualized
- Mental Health, Wellness and Healing are built in as part of native culture, rituals and traditions.....
- Wellness Court process is not a new method



Cultural Sensitivity

- Cultural competency is one of the critical principals of care
- Not all Tribal customs and traditions are the same
- Not all methods of traditional healing are the same
- Not all native people will be open to cultural orientated activities
- Careful consideration in approaching culture & teaching customs
- Most Tribal Nations have healers
- & local cultural experts



Health & Wellness Challenges

- Prevention and intervention efforts must include supporting/enhancing strengths of community resources as well as individual and family clinical interventions.
- Service providers must take great care in the assessment process to consider cultural differences in symptoms and health concepts when making a specific diagnosis or drawing conclusions about the presenting problem or bio-psychological history.
- Every effort should be made to consult with local cultural advisors about symptomology and treatment options.



Self Awareness

- Emotional Intelligence/Enneagram
- Energy follows attention
- Mind Maps
 - Me-Insight to ourselves
 - You-Insight to others-empathy
 - We-Our relationships to each other-community



Feeling connected is in fact a meeting of minds and this felt sense is created by these maps.

We are hard-wired to connect to each other....



Who's Responsible?

- Courts
- Police
- Treatment Providers
- Elders
- Healers
- Community, “...it takes a village...”
- Self...



Team Exercise



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Thank You



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Tribal Law & Policy Institute



The Tribal Law and Policy Institute is a Native American non-profit corporation organized to design and deliver education, research, training, and technical assistance programs which promote the enhancement of justice in Indian country and the health, well-being, and culture of Native peoples.

www.Home.tlpi.org



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Tribal Law and Policy Institute Resources

- www.WellnessCourts.org
- Tribal Healing to Wellness Court Publication Series
 - Tribal 10 Key Components
 - Preliminary Overview
 - Program Development
- Webinars
- On- and Off-Site Technical Assistance
- Native American Indians-Surgeon General report. Mental Health disparities American Indian/Alaskan Natives
http://www.integration.samhsa.gov/workforce/mental_health_disparities_american_indian_and_alaskan_natives.pdf

