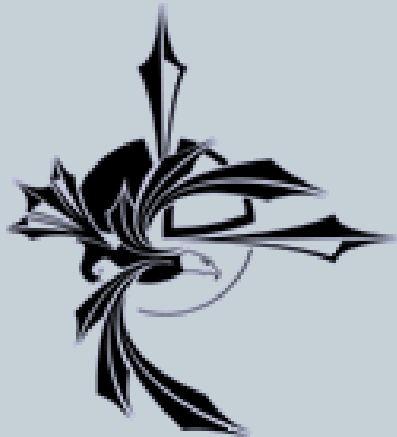


Working Effectively with Tribal Populations in State Drug Courts and Tribal Healing to Wellness Courts



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF DRUG COURT
PROFESSIONALS ANNUAL CONFERENCE

MAY, 2014



Tribal Law and Policy Institute

Presenters:

DONNA HUMETEWA KAYE

KOREY WAHWASSUCK

**DISTRICT COURT JUDGE,
*ITASCA COUNTY DISTRICT COURT***

Considerations to Building Good Cultural Awareness

American Indian/Alaska Native



- **Myths and Facts**
- **Tribal Sovereignty:**
 - 566 Federally recognized AI/AN tribes
 - Relationships between the Federal government and Indian Tribes are unique
- **Regional and Cultural Differences:**
 - Historic rivalries
 - Family or clan conflicts – local dynamics- tribal politics
 - “Tribal Politics” present challenges outsiders
 - Urban Indian communities exist in most metropolitan areas.

Considerations to Building Good Cultural Awareness

American Indian/Alaska Native



- **Cultural Customs:**
 - Tribal beliefs/rituals vary significantly, even within a single community.
- **Differences that affect relationships:**
 - General world views
 - Patterns of communication
 - Interaction

Respectful questions about cultural customs are generally welcomed, yet not always answered directly.

Sharing food may be one way to welcoming visitors, similar to offering a handshake.

Considerations to Building Good Cultural Awareness

American Indian/Alaska Native



- **Spirituality:**

- Church
- Organized religion integrated with their culture
 - ✦ NAC
- Traditional spirituality and practices integrated into AI/AN cultures and day-to-day living.
- ceremonies, prayers, and religious protocols vary

It is common practice to open and close meeting with a prayer or short ceremony.

Considerations to Building Good Cultural Awareness

American Indian/Alaska Native



- **Communication Style:**
 - Non-verbal gestures
 - Humor as a way of conveying truths or difficult messages
 - Story Telling
 - ✦ traditional teachings
 - ✦ personal stories

It is often considered unacceptable for an AI/AN person to criticize another directly.

Considerations to Building Good Cultural Awareness

American Indian/Alaska Native



- **Cultural Identity:**

- Each person has experienced their cultural connection in a unique way.
- Many AI/AN families are multicultural and adapt to their surrounding culture.

It is important to remember that most Alaska Natives do not refer to themselves as “Indians.”

Considerations to Building Good Cultural Awareness

American Indian/Alaska Native



- **Role of Elders and Veterans**
 - Elders are significant
 - Acknowledge and allow elders to speak first.
 - ✦ Ask elder's or group's permission to speak publicly, or
 - ✦ Defer to elders to offer an answer.

Veterans are also given special respect similar to that of elders for having accepted the role of protector and experienced personal sacrifice.

Considerations to Building Good Cultural Awareness

American Indian/Alaska Native



- **Health and Wellness Challenges:**
 - Prevention and intervention efforts should include supporting/enhancing strengths of community
 - ✦ Resources
 - ✦ Individual
 - ✦ Family clinical interventions.

Take 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 biopsychological history.

Every effort should be made to consult with local cultural advisors for questions about symptomology and treatment options.

Considerations to Building Good Cultural Awareness

American Indian/Alaska Native



- **Historic Distrust:**

- Building trust may be challenging
- 1800s – 1900s: Removal to Reservations;
- Boarding Schools
 - ✦ Especially poignant in Oklahoma, as many of the state's 38 tribes did not originally occupy lands within present-day Oklahoma.
- 1950s – 1960s: Federal Termination Policy and Relocation Policy

Cultural & Religious Suppression: Today, there is a diverse mix of Christian beliefs and traditional spirituality within each AI/AN community.

- **Historical Trauma:**

Cumulative emotional and psychological wounding over the lifespan and across generations.

Considerations to Building Good Cultural Awareness

American Indian/Alaska Native



- **Self Awareness and Etiquette – DO's**
 - Be honest
 - Be clear about your role and expectations and;
 - Be willing to adapt to meet the needs of the community.
 - Show respect by being open to other ways of thinking and behaving.
 - Examine your own belief system about AI/AN people related to social issues, such as:
 - poverty, mental health stigma, teen suicide, and drug or alcohol use.
 - Learn how the community refers to itself

It is acceptable to admit limited knowledge of cultures, and invite people to educate you about specific cultural protocols in their community.

Considerations to Building Good Cultural Awareness

American Indian/Alaska Native



- **Self Awareness and Etiquette – DON'Ts**
 - Avoid stereotyping based on looks, language, dress
 - Do not touch sacred items such as medicine bags, other ceremonial items, hair, jewelry, etc.
 - NEVER use any information gained by working in the community for personal presentations, case studies, research, and so on, without the expressed written consent of the Tribal government or Alaska Native Corporation.

Be careful about telling stories of distant AI/AN relatives in your genealogy as an attempt to establish rapport unless you have maintained a connection with that AI/AN community.



How to Work with Native American Participants in State (Non-Tribal) Drug Courts

Trust



- **Historical Trauma –**
 - Grieving process-strong connection with past
- **Present situation –**
 - Domination/Control
- **Law of Nature –**
 - Relations between things

Language



- Communication styles
- Word meanings
- Natives pause
 - contemplating
- Story telling

Contrasting Values



Native American

- Group (takes care of community)
- Today-is a good day!
- Time-a right time/a right place
- Age-knowledge/wisdom

Non-Native

- Self-take care of self
- Prepare for Tomorrow
- Time-use every minute
- Youth-rich, young, beautiful

Contrasting Values cont.



Native American

- Cooperate
- Be Patient
- Listen and you'll learn
- Give and share

Non-Native

- Compete
- Learn to be Aggressive
- Speak up and be heard
- Take and save

Contrasting Values cont.



Native American

- Harmony (live in harmony with all things)
- Great Mystery/Intuitive
- Humility
- Spirituality (a way of life)

Non-Native

- Conquer (nature)
- Skeptical/Logical
- Self (ego/attention)
- Religion (a part of life)

How to Work with Native American Participants in State (Non-Tribal) Drug Courts



We must become aware of these conflicting values or we can become confused, angry, frustrated and unbalanced – physically, mentally and spiritually.

How to Work with Native American Participants in State (Non-Tribal) Drug Courts



- Some Natives live in multi-family households
- Different family systems (clan systems)
- Often live in rural communities where transportation is a hardship
- Along with substance abuse, codependency is very high.

Walking on Common Ground

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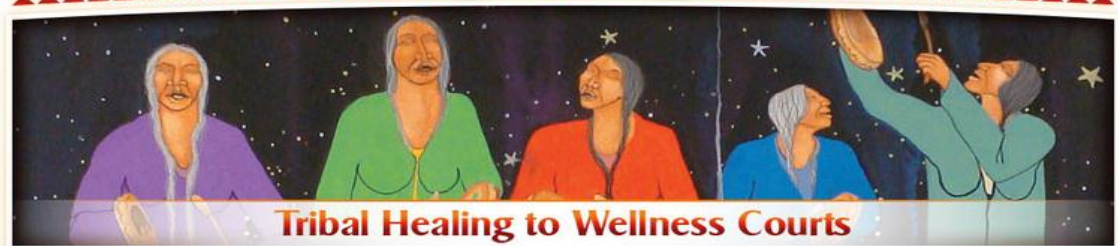
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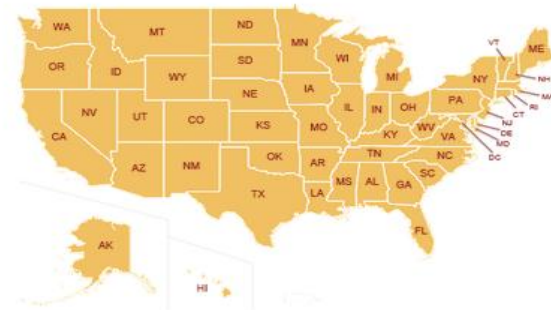
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