



# Mental and Behavioral Health Considerations for Native Transgender Individuals

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## Overview

- ▶ Current State of Transgender Mental Health
- ▶ Mental Health Statistics and Mental Health Disparities
- ▶ Barriers for Transgender Mental Health Services in Indian Country
- ▶ Hope and Change - Revision to ICD 10
- ▶ Potential Impact of ICD 11 Change on Transgender Mental Health
- ▶ White Buffalo Recovery - Wind River, WY
- ▶ National Contacts

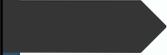


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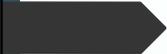
## In Brief ...

Transgender people are often overlooked and misrepresented when talking about health care. Transgender health is a complicated series of steps and is new territory for most health care providers. In order to provide comprehensive health care, transgender people must have access to mental/behavioral health. This webinar will provide health care providers additional insight into transgender mental/behavioral health and some practical tips to employ.



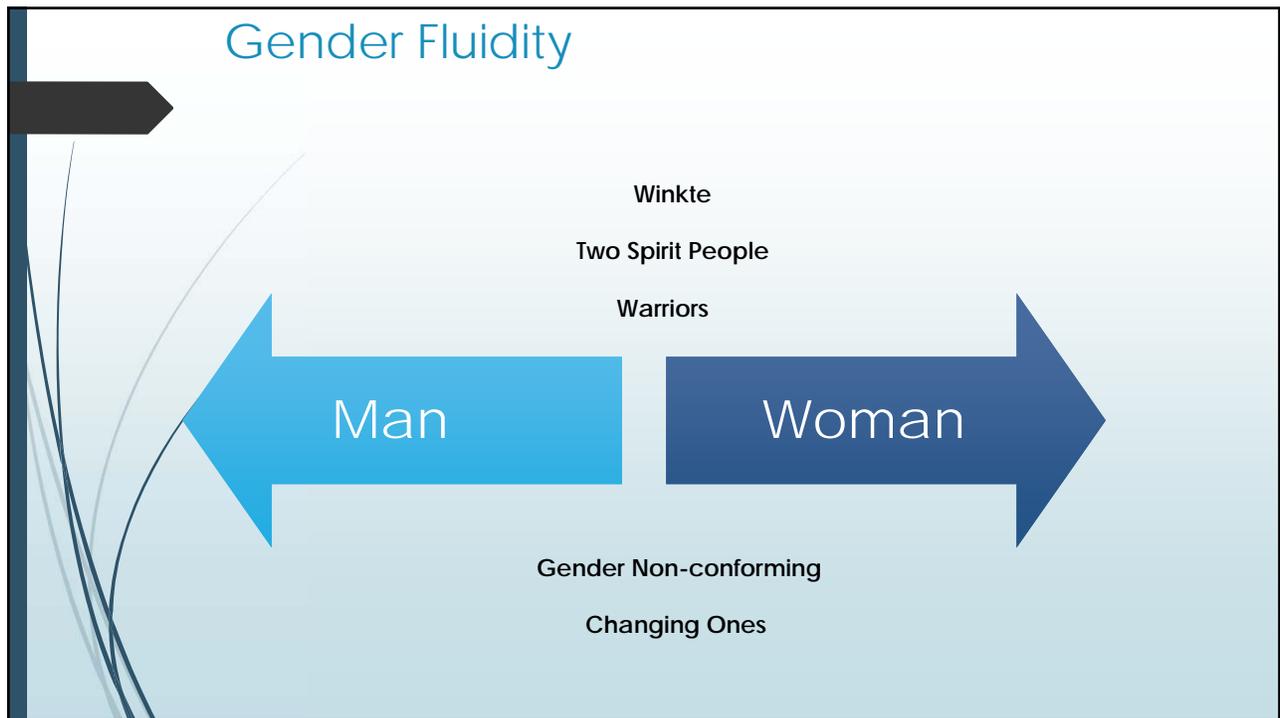
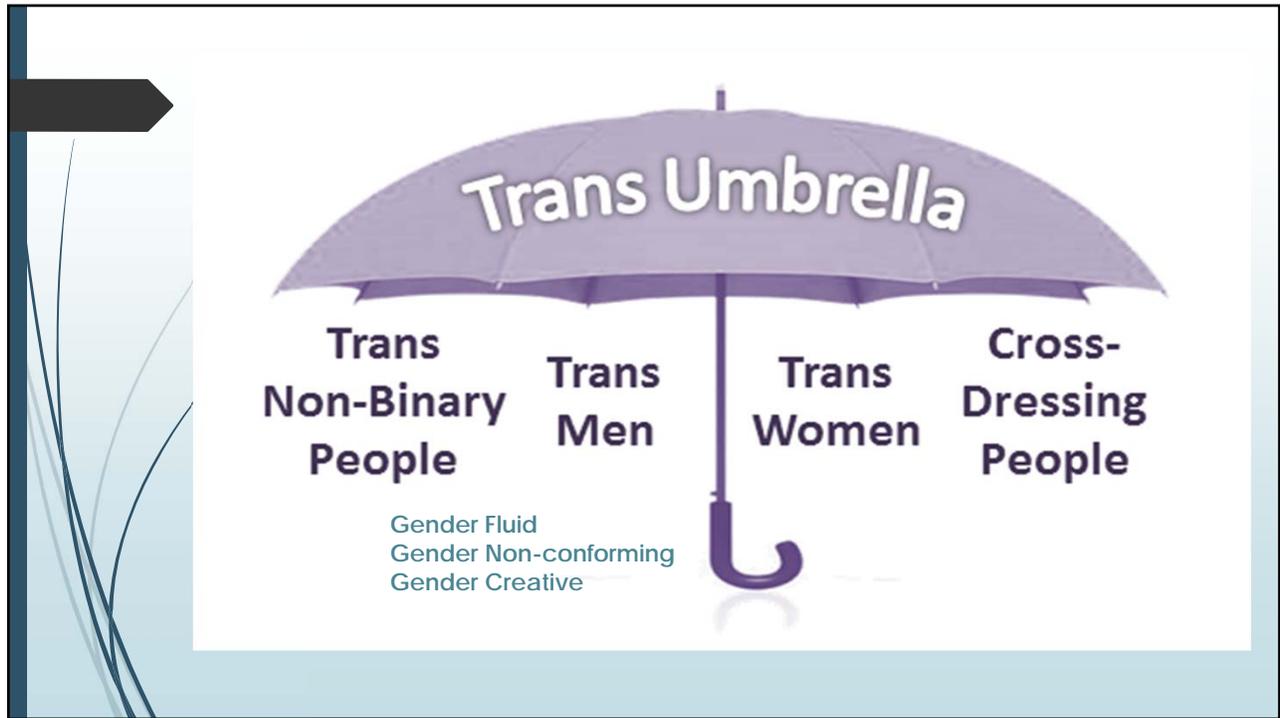
## Transgender Definition

Literally "across gender"; sometimes interpreted as "beyond gender"; a community-based term that describes a wide variety of cross-gender behaviors and identities. This is not a diagnostic term, and does not imply a medical or psychological condition. Avoid using this term as a noun: a person is not "a transgender"; they may be a transgender person.



## Transgender

Typically used as an umbrella term for a variety of people who challenge the boundaries of sex and gender. Includes **transsexuals**, **transgender individuals**, **cross dressers**, **drag queens**, and other individuals who transgress the borders placed on gender by society.



## Mental Health

- ▶ Mental health includes the following components –  
**emotional, psychological and social well-being**
- ▶ Mental health determines how we handle stress, relate to others and make choices



## Statistics on LGBTQ

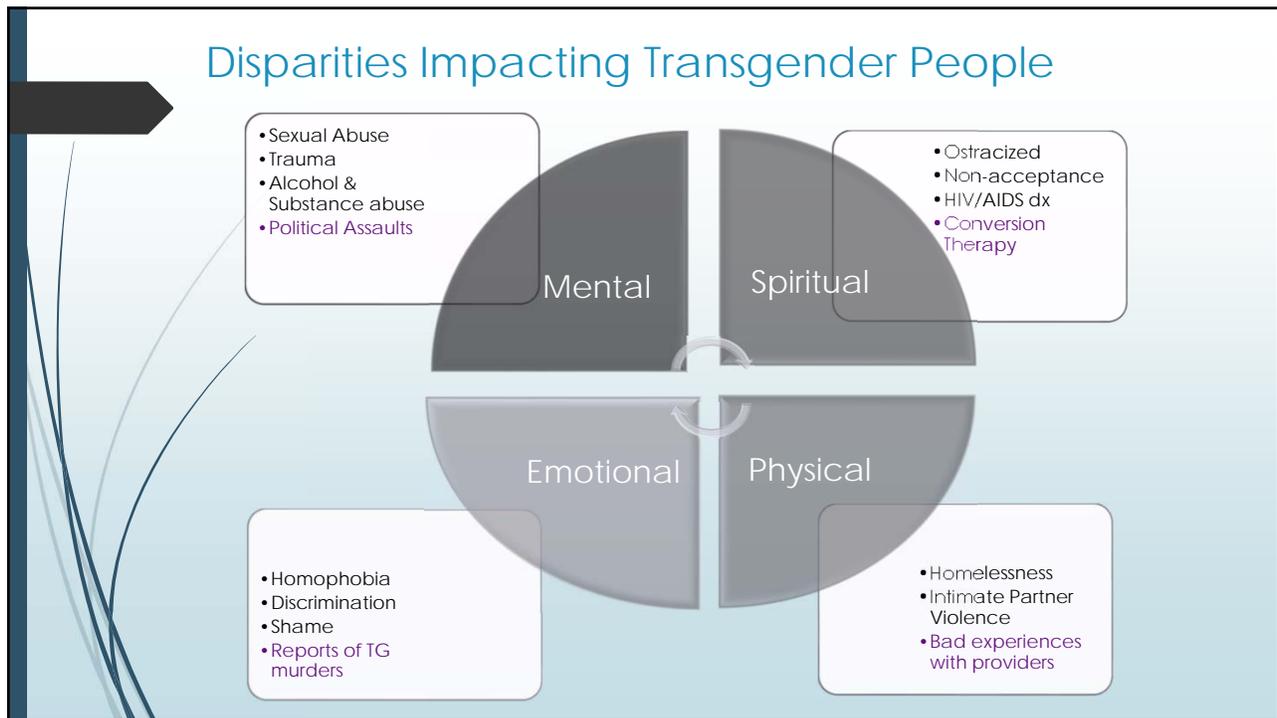
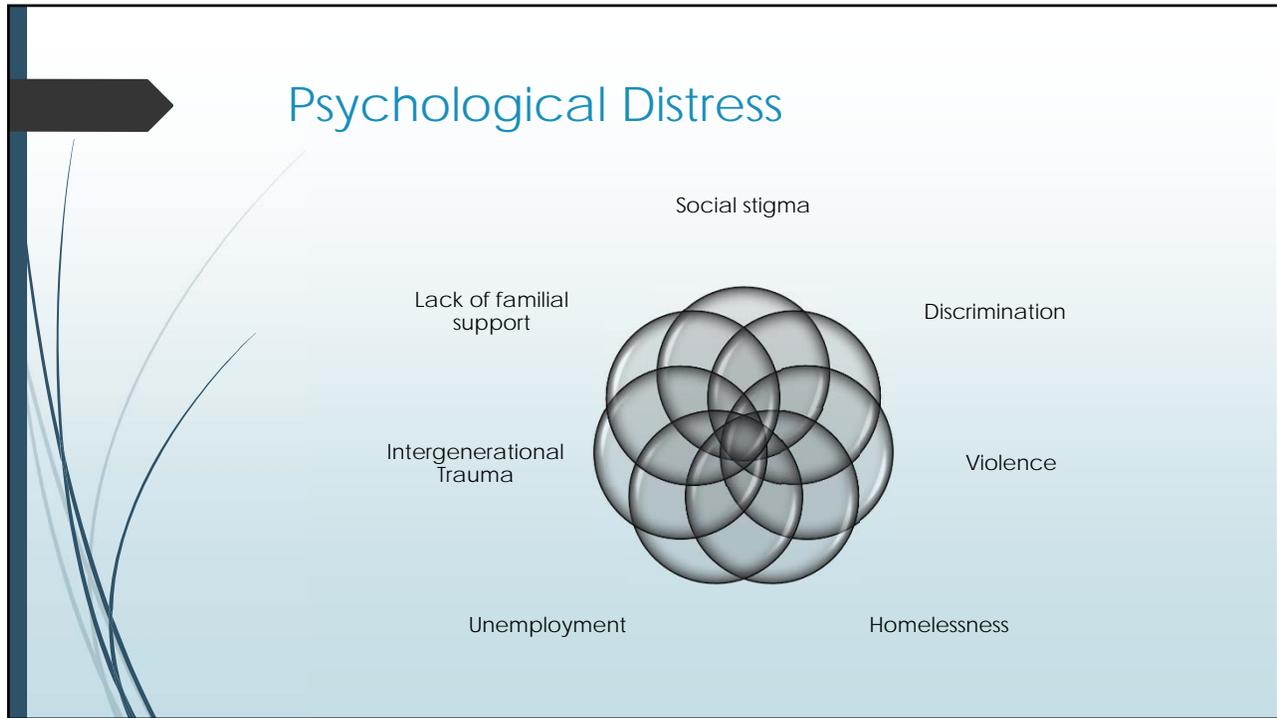
- ▶ LGBT adults are [more than twice as likely](#) as heterosexual adults to experience a mental health condition
- ▶ LGBTQ people are [at a higher risk](#) than the general population for suicidal thoughts and suicide attempts
- ▶ High school students who identify as lesbian, gay, or bisexual are almost [five times as likely](#) to attempt suicide compared to their heterosexual peers
- ▶ [48%](#) of all transgender adults report that they have considered suicide in the past 12 months, compared to 4% of the overall US population

National Alliance on Mental Illness

## American Indian Specific Statistics

- ▶ Native Americans experience serious psychological distress [1.5 times](#) more than the general population.
- ▶ Native Americans experience PTSD more than twice as often as the general population.
- ▶ Although overall suicide rates are similar to those of whites, there are significant differences among certain age groups. Suicide is the [second leading cause of death](#) among 10-34 year olds
- ▶ Native Americans use and abuse alcohol and other drugs at [younger ages, and at higher rates](#), than all other ethnic groups.

American Psychiatric Association. (2010). Mental health disparities: American Indians and Alaska Natives.





## 2015 U.S. Transgender Survey

- ▶ The 2015 U.S. Transgender Survey (USTS) is the largest survey examining the experiences of transgender people in the United States, with 27,715 respondents nationwide. The USTS was conducted by the National Center for Transgender Equality in the summer of 2015. The results provide a detailed look at the experiences of transgender people across a wide range of categories, such as education, employment, family life, health, housing, and interactions with the criminal justice system.
- ▶ report focuses on the unique experience
- ▶ findings show dramatic disparities across numerous areas of life, many of which may reflect the impact of colonialism and historical trauma that continue to affect American Indian and Alaska Native communities.



## 2015 U.S. Transgender Survey – AI/AN

- ▶ Psychological Distress **Forty-six percent (46%)** of American Indian and Alaska Native respondents experienced serious psychological distress in the month before completing the survey (based on the Kessler 6 Psychological Distress Scale). This rate was higher than that in the USTS sample overall (39%), **nine times higher** than the rate in the U.S. population (5%), and **nearly seven times higher** than the rate among American Indian and Alaska Native people in the U.S. population (7%).
- ▶ Conversion Therapy More than **one in five (21%)** reported that a professional, such as a psychologist, counselor, or religious advisor, tried to stop them from being transgender, compared to 13% in the USTS sample overall.

## 2015 U.S. Transgender Survey

- Suicidal Thoughts and Behaviors **more than one-half (57%)** of American Indian and Alaska Native respondents have attempted suicide at some point in their lives, in contrast to 40% in the USTS sample overall. This rate was more than twelve times higher than the rate in the U.S. population (4.6%).<sup>31</sup> Transgender men (68%) were substantially more likely than transgender women (52%) and non-binary people (52%) to have attempted suicide in their lifetimes.

## Research in AI/AN Communities

- Research studies about AI/AN attitudes regarding mental health and mental illness is lacking
- Research from the AI/AN worldview of **connectedness, reciprocity, balance and completeness** at the core of health and well-being.
- Such research may help lead to the recovery of the fundamental aspects of AI/AN psychological and social well-being and the mechanisms for their maintenance

## Barriers to Mental and Behavioral Health Services



## AI/AN Mental Health Treatment

- AI/AN interpretations for the origins and causes of mental illness are different
- AI/AN exhibit and express physical complaints and psychological concerns inconsistent with standard diagnostic categories
- AI/AN may consult Traditional healers and other alternative therapies for diagnosis and/or treatment of physical ailments, depression, anxiety, or substance abuse disorders
- Poverty, cultural insensitivity, negative prior encounters and rural distances are barriers for AI/AN to receiving treatment.
- Lack of awareness about mental health issues and services can prevent Native Americans from receiving treatment.

American Psychiatric Association. (2010). Mental health disparities: American Indians and Alaska Natives.

## Access

- Access to mental health services limited by the rural expanse, poverty, relatives employed at the clinic, negative prior experiences with providers
- Compared to whites, three times as many American Indians lack health insurance – 33% compared to 11%. Approximately 57% of American Indians rely on the Indian Health Service for care.

American Psychiatric Association. (2010). Mental health disparities: American Indians and Alaska Natives.

## HOPE and Change



## International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems (ICD)

- ▶ On May 25, World Health Org adopted 11<sup>th</sup> revision
- ▶ ICD 10: Gender Identity Disorder Section
- ▶ Five Diagnoses: transsexualism, dual-role transvestism, gender identity disorder of childhood, other gender identity disorders and gender identity disorder unspecified
- ▶ transsexualism was considered to be a mental disorder
- ▶ Notable: Gender Identity Disorder → Gender Incongruence

Forbes , May 2019

## ICD 11

- ▶ Gender Identity Disorders section removed
- ▶ Transgender is **no longer considered pathological** in and of itself, nor is the desire to transition physically
- ▶ Gender non-conformity as a sexual health condition included under the Gender Incongruence definition
- ▶ Three conditions noted: gender incongruence of adolescence or adulthood, gender incongruence of childhood and gender incongruence unspecified

## ICD 11 (cont'd)

- ▶ Transgender is no longer being called a 'disorder' but a 'condition,' one that might require medical intervention but is not inherently pathological
- ▶ "Gender incongruence, meanwhile, has also been removed from mental disorders in the ICD, into sexual health conditions. The rationale being that while evidence is now clear that it is not a mental disorder, and indeed classifying it in this can cause enormous stigma for people who are transgender, there remain significant health care needs that can best be met if the condition is coded under the ICD."

-WHO

## ICD 11

- ▶ Greatly reduce stigma and positively impact the provision of services for transgender individuals around the world

## LGBT and Mental Illness

- ▶ If you live with a mental health condition and identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and/or questioning (LGBTQ), it's important to **prioritize your mental health**. Not all members of the LGBTQ community will have the same experiences. However, **discrimination, prejudice, denial of civil and human rights, harassment and family rejection** are still tragically common for people with these identities.
- ▶ LGBTQ people with mental health conditions may also find themselves **fighting a double stigma**. Many will experience prejudice based on their sexual and/or gender identity as well as the stigma associated with mental illness.
- ▶ Confronting these challenges *and* mental health symptoms with an LGBTQ-inclusive therapist can lead to better outcomes, and even recovery.

## Transgender Inclusive Therapist – Human Being

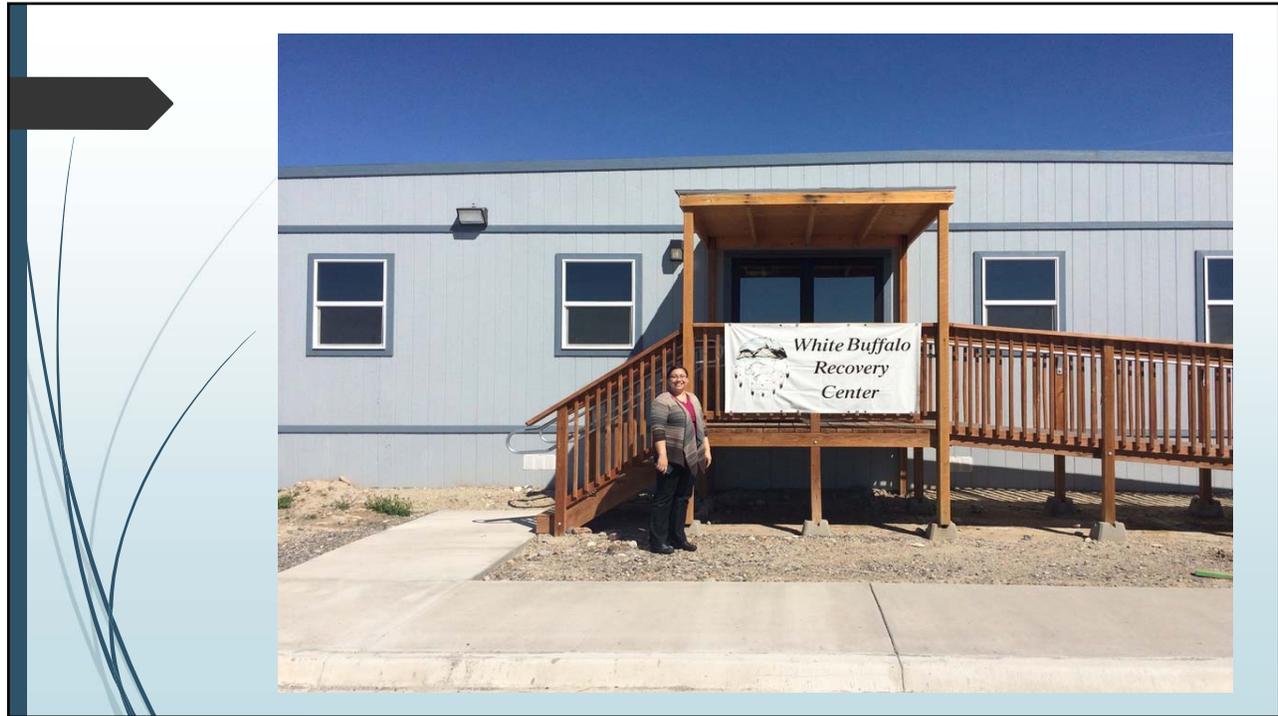
Realize the following:

1. Transgender person is born the way he/she/they are and did not have a choice
2. Judge a transgender person by the quality of their character
3. Show your acceptance, support and unconditional love; when possible

## Behavioral Health Services – White Buffalo Recovery - Wind River, WY

- ▶ Peer-Peer support services for straight and LGBTQ-2S individuals
- ▶ Clients requested a more local recovery home
- ▶ LGBTQ-2S awareness increased
- ▶ Care Delivered: trauma-informed, better understanding of client experience and avoiding trauma triggers – more compassionate and open to different paths; being aware of clientele; open and welcoming
- ▶ Tribal leadership endorsement and outside partnership required
- ▶ Specific services and inpatient facilities are needed

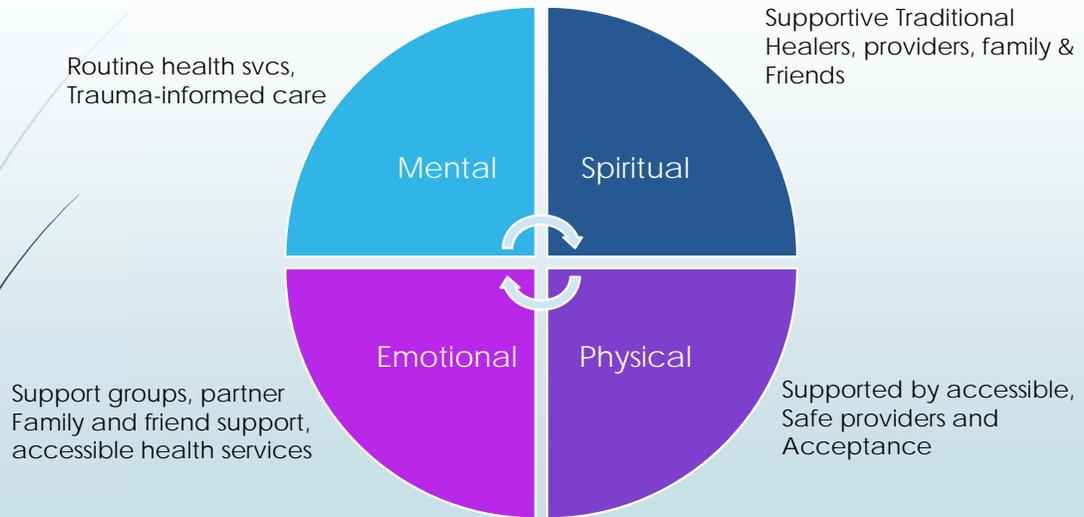




## Decolonizing Recovery

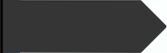
- Importance of the oral tradition
- Renewed emphasis on songs, stories, and language
- Begins when discourse on peeling back the layers of Western religion, ideology, trauma to recover pre-existing, fundamental AI/AN teachings and ushering them into this day and age

## Balance / Harmony / Hozho



## Resources

- ▶ Helplines
- ▶ [Suicide Prevention Lifeline](#)<sup>External</sup> 1-800-273-8255
- ▶ [Veterans Crisis Line](#)<sup>External</sup> 1-800-273-8255
- ▶ [Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration \(SAMHSA\) National Helpline](#)<sup>External</sup> (1-800-662-HELP (4357)
- ▶ [OK2Talk Helpline Teen Helpline](#)<sup>External</sup> 1 (800) 273-TALK
- ▶ [Crisis Text Line](#) Text SIGNS to 741741 for 24/7, anonymous, free crisis counseling



## Resources (con'td)

- ▶ Resources for Opioid and Substance Abuse
- ▶ [Local Health Centers for Substance Abuse Services](#)External
- ▶ [Buprenorphine Treatment Practitioner Locator](#)External
- ▶ [Opioid Treatment Program Directory by State Providing Medication-Assisted Treatment](#)External



## Final Considerations

- ▶ If it's an emergency in which you or someone you know is suicidal, you should immediately call the [National Suicide Prevention Lifeline](#) at 1-800-273-8255, call 911 or go to a hospital emergency room.
- ▶ If you can wait a few days, make an appointment with your primary healthcare provider or pediatrician if you think your condition is mild to moderate.
- ▶ If your symptoms are moderate to severe, make an appointment with a [specialized doctor](#) such as a psychiatrist. You may need to contact your community mental health center or primary health care provider for a referral.
- ▶ If you or your child is in school or at college, contact the school and ask about their support services.
- ▶ Seek out [support groups](#) in your community and educate yourself about your symptoms and diagnosis. Social support and knowledge can be valuable tools for coping.

## Questions

