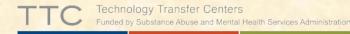
Indigenous Paths to Rez-iliency

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ATTC





My standpoint

- Arapaho Professional Counselor Educator
- Focused on making profession responsive to needs of Indigenous peoples.
- Approach both as scholar and community member.
- My dual perspective as a scholar and my experiences as an Arapaho person who lived most of my life on the Wind River Reservation, Wyoming



Charles Eastman

- "my desire is to use all that I had learned for my people's benefit"
- Shapeshifters: a continuous transformation of bridging their traditional cultures to that of mainstream society.
- Bridging evidenced in ever increasing NA's acquiring mainstream college degrees.



Trauma Exposure

- Does not lead to psychological distress
- Remarkable ability to recovery
- Flourish after exposure
- New strengths, coping mechanisms and insight (Goodman, 2013)
- Enhance appreciation for life.
- More thoughtful about life choices



Psychosocial Factors

- Optimism
- Cognitive flexibility
- Active coping skills
- Strong support network coworkers
- Attentive to physical wellbeing
- Possess personal moral compass (lacoviello & Charney, 2014)



Cultural Resilience Theory

- Peacock (2003) definition: the incorporation of traditional practices and ways of thinking as a means to overcome oppression and other negative obstacles faced by NA's.
- Strengths perspective: all people have positive attributes.
- Appropriate choice as a means to survive.



Cultural resilience factors

- Spirituality
- Family strengths/support/belonging
- Elders
- Ceremonial Rituals
- Oral traditions
- Tribal Identity: pride
- Support networks

Prayer

- Spirituality is demonstrated through prayer.
- Maintaining humbleness
- Praying about stress factors
- Gratitude for both good and bad
- Perseverance, focus, stress reduction, courage and decision making.



Cultural Connectedness

- Tribes have incredible resilience in the face of genocide, colonization, and forced relocation.
- Destruction of families though boarding schools, and aggressive removal by child welfare agencies.
- Prohibition of spiritual practices. Indian Religious Crimes Act of 1883
- American Indian Religious Freedoms Act 1978

Spirituality

- Core of survival
- Cultural teachings honor traditional values and strengthen Indigenous worldviews (Runner and Morris, 1997)
- Greater identification lower drug use and alcohol cessation.
- General well-being and positive mental health (Roman, Jervis, & Manson, 2012)

Thriving

- 55% own their own home
- 75% have a high school diploma
- 14% bachelors' degree



Native Humor

- Alive and well
- Critical function in daily interaction (Garrett et al. 2005)
- Critical part of culture at mealtimes.
- Come together around food laugh and tease
- Laughter relieves stress and creates a sense of connectedness.

Existing in a non-Native world

 "We have to dress a certain way, go by clock time, always serious at work, a place where money is all that counts with how much we earn and how we earn it...I walk a fine line and keep one foot in each world." – Mary Black Bonnet, Osage



Tribal Identity

- According to Russell (2004) 98% of Native population is tribally-mixed
- 75% racially mixed
- Indigenous speakers are valuable resources
- Arapaho language is endangered
- Native American Indigenous Languages Act of 1990



Economic Development

- Of 565 federally recognized tribes
- 40% operate casinos
- 1% of Native Americans own and operate a business (Garrett and Garrett, 2012).
- Many continue to struggle economically



Cultural Preservation

- Increased control of cultural resources preservation and maintenance.
- Programs inside and outside of schools
- Traditional arts and crafts
- Language
- Songs and chants, as well as dance
- Preservation of tribal traditions



Native Challenges

- Lowest graduation rates: Colorado (52%), Nevada (52%), Oregon (52%), Alaska (51%), Wyoming (51%), South Dakota(49%, and Minnesota (42%).
- Income: average medium \$35,192, compared to \$50,502 for entire nation
- Poverty: 30%, compared to 26% of US



Important Characteristics

- Stable peer relationships
- Problem solving skills
- Realistic future plans
- Positive sense of ability to achieve and deal with tasks
- Ability to communicate effectively
- Strong attachment to at least one adult
- Accountable for self and actions



Risk Factors Within American Indian Communities

- Intergenerational/Historical trauma associated with colonization (Manifest Destiny, Treaties, Forced Removal, Genocide, Contemporary Policy)
- Boarding school experience
- Federal state/policy
- Oppression
 - Discrimination





Protective Factors (cont'd)

- Ceremonies and Tradition
 - "...that greater engagement in the traditional culture may lead to more positive outcomes for the children" (Gonzales, Knight, Birman, & Sirolli, 2003).
- Community-centric
 - "Being a Lumbee accords members a self-reliant, interdependent identity whereby individuals care for and are cared for by one another" (Angell & Jones, 2003).
- Humor

Trauma-informed care

- "What happened to you?" not "What's wrong with you?"
- Programs must be based on tribal, not external norms.
- Draw on our ancestors' resilience and survival skills.

Mental Health

- Individuals with some college education or a college degree are less likely to be depressed than those with less education.
- Native elders maintain a positive outlook even through significant adversity.
- Elders as role models.
- Storytelling is traditional resiliency. Often includes stories of personal challenges.



Health and Balance

- 80% Native adults aged 20-74 are overweight.
- Significant implications for a variety of health issues, including diabetes, high blood pressure, respiratory problems, and cancer.
- Psychological distress and lack of familial support linked to excess weight.
- Culturally based spirituality associated with lower weight in a weight-loss program (Dill et al., 2015)



Interventions needed

- Native Americans have high rates of recreational tobacco use, obesity, and inactivity.
- Low fruit and vegetable consumption, cancer screening, seat belt compliance, along with high-fat, low-fiber diets (Cobb, Espey & King, 2014).
- High need to improve physical health.



Strengths-based approaches

- Acknowledges successful outcomes and the majority who do not have substance use problems.
- Build on individual, and cultural strengths.
- Traditional healing is effective and empowering, culturally grounded.
- Traditional cultural practices and spirituality buffer against substance misuse and mental health issues promoting prosocial behaviors.



Cultural elements

- Sense of belonging can reduce shame
- Smudging, sweat-lodge ceremonies, and prayer, talking circles.
- Culture promotes healing and wellness, and buffers against stress.
- Reflect on strength and resilience associated with survival, counteracts depression (Tucker et al., 2016).



Hope and Resilience

- Recover traditions and celebrating survival.
 Braveheart cautions against dismissing trauma. Can cause people to shut down.
- Reclaiming traditions does not mean acting a if its still 1800.
- Learn some language even if not to point of fluency, can be empowering.
- Language is power, a form of resistance and survival that counteracts cultural genocide.

Screen time

- Adults as well as youth- spend looking at screens (e.g., tv, computers, smartphones and tablets) exceeds 3.5 hours a day.
- Health concern for obesity and other health risks
- More than white people. Highest among males and overweight individuals.
- TV watching most popular, youth similar playing video games.



Substance Misuse

- Identity is often shaped through racism, impacts impact individual's sense of self and belonging.
- Numbing against cumulative stress.
- Studies show substance use is lower in native communities, but those that do drink often with a pattern of heavy episodic drinking.
- Not all NA's misuse alcohol. Unusually high abstinence rate from alcohol use.



Self-Determination & Sovereignty

- "Inclusion of traditional beliefs and cultural practices within a western institution of health equals improved health status of Indigenous Populations" (Hirch, 2011).
 - Example: <u>Nuku System of Care, South Central</u>
 Foundation, Alaska.



Self-care for helpers

- Cultivate sense of balance and nurture own needs for wellness.
- Develop own plan that makes sense & use it.
- Artistic expression can be effective to promote healing. (Herman, 2010)
- Consistent self-care is important.
- Learn to listen without taking on burden.
- Avoid compassion fatigue.



Wellness and resilience

- Balance with counter-narrative of resilience (Grayshield et al., 2015)
- Positive aspects can be passed down intergenerationally, not just trauma.
- Language, ceremonies, positive parenting, culture, and a strong sense of identity and belonging.
- Promoting return to traditional practices.



Where do we go from here?

- We still have a lot to learn from our elders.
- They are well versed in needs and strengths of the community as to what has succeeded or failed in the past.
- Helping professionals like you have the ability to make a difference.
- Narratives of continuity and resilience in the face of adversity, can help us determine where we go from here.



Remember our ancestors

- Indigenous people have always had ways of helping and restoring balance.
- Western helping professionals employ different methods but also cultivate wellness.
- Today we can benefit from both.
- Our ancestors survived many challenges while attending to the wellbeing of future generations.

Conclusions

- Defining resiliency too narrowly may result in imprecise conceptualizations and delivery approaches.
- The role humor plays in resiliency is not identified in the literature reviewed.
- The legacy of colonization in American Indian communities has implicit effects on the resiliency of individuals and communities (historical trauma).
- Implementing and improving research practices that explore community-based factors of resilience must be a priority.

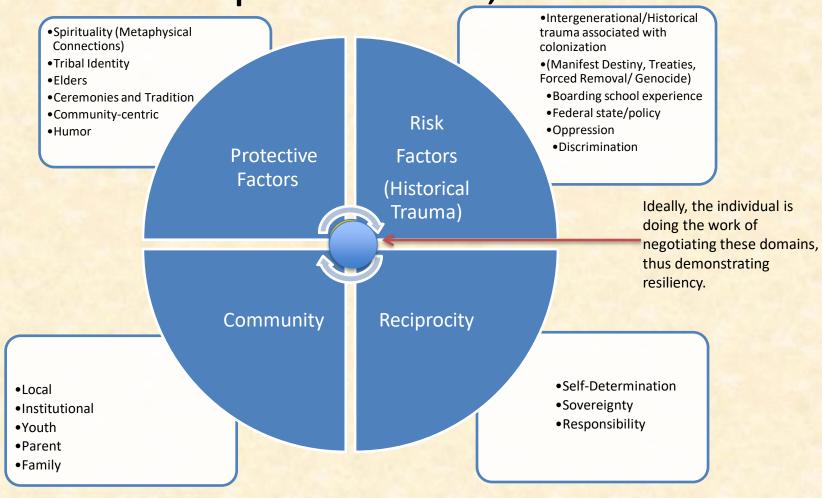


Circles within Circles

- Colors, movement, sounds, tastes and smells of the powwow understands the feeling that passes through you.
- Feeling of connection, seeing old friends and making new ones
- Laughter
- Piping hot fry-bread, stew, or Indian corn soup
- Coming together in a circle



Indigenous Resiliency Model Joseph & Hamill, 2014



Trauma and Resilience in the Lives of Contemporary Native Americans

Reclaiming our Balance, Restoring our Wellbeing



HILARY N. WEAVER

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