

**A Multi-Generational Approach to
Historical Trauma
for Native American
Indian Cultures**

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Historical Trauma

- ◆ The interpretation that I have of historical trauma is the unresolved psychological and emotional damage caused to a group of people that is passed from one generation to the next. This trauma has been caused by the effects of GENOCIDE inflicted on this group of people.
- ◆ We will look at the impact of history on the American Indian Nations, and how it has been passed down from generation to generation.

United Nations [Convention on Genocide \(UNCG\)](#)
The definitional article included in the 1948 convention stipulates:
Article II

In the present Convention, genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such:

- (a) Killing members of the group;
- (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
- (c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
- (d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;
- (e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.

[Source: S D Stein. "Genocide." In E. Cashmore (ed.). Dictionary of Race and Ethnic Relations. Fourth Edition. London: Routledge, 1996]

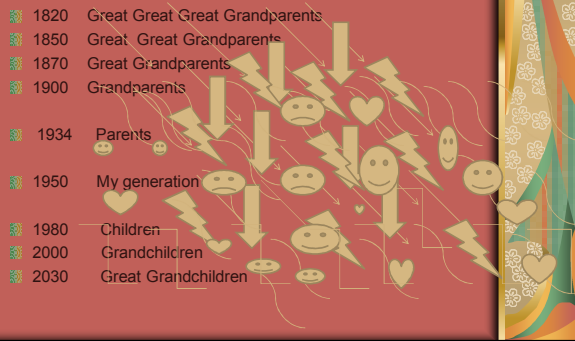
Understanding genocide

In understanding genocide and oppression/repression we can gain control over our lives and rebuild what was lost.

We are a product of our history—of the breakdown in our belief system.

We are a product of what our Grandparents/Great Grandparents learned in the boarding schools and what their ancestors learned from forced reservation and relocation living.

How is trauma passed from generation to generation?
Through behaviors, environment, and feelings; and on a spiritual and cellular level. Do you recognize the chaos?
- Danielle Rose, 2007.



HISTORY

- 1787 TO 1828 371 Treaties : gov't to gov't
- Grants Peace Plan divided the country and gave to religious groups
- 1849 BIA had full control over Native people
- 1879 Carlisle Indian School in Pennsylvania opened.
"method was to immerse the student in white ways in the hope that it would destroy this whole segregating and reservation process." Pratt 1892
- 1880 Board of Indian Commissioners policy to change Native people from "half-civilized parasites" to people who could compete with white Americans
- The Education Treaty Obligation was \$10 a month, room, board, and teaching
- 1886 St. Francis Mission in South Dakota opened
- 1885-86 S.D.C. Atkins, Commissioner of Indian Affairs directed agents, superintendents of Indian schools to replace, "their barbarous dialect"
- German nuns in the boarding schools

Trauma Treatment

Jane Middleton-Maz, "Children of Trauma": January, 1991, has described that in order to heal from trauma four (4) areas need to be addressed for resolution.

- Need for emotional **EXPRESSION** of the experience that caused trauma.
- A trusted **PERSON** to express this traumatic experience for the ventilation of feelings.
- This person allows for the **VALIDATION** of this experience, i.e. "I believe that this has happened to you."
- Need for **TIME** to allow for person to continue to express feelings regarding experience. Until the memories of experience has a lesser degree of emotional impact. For example, "time heals all wounds".

Native American Indian Communities

For many American Indian cultures the impact of Euro-American culture shock that was impressed upon them was devastating, especially boarding schools.

There was no **EXPRESSION** of the American Indian's loss of language and cultural ways or cutting of their hair @ boarding schools.

There was no **PERSON** to talk to about this as some of these children in boarding schools were not allowed to talk to each other in their own language.

There was no **VALIDATION** from anyone and consideration of their feelings that this experience was happening to them.

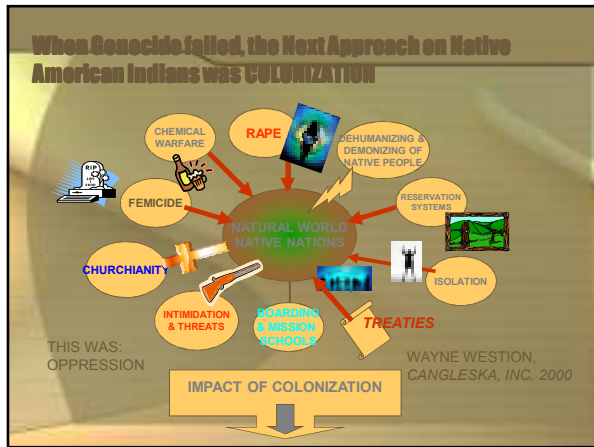
There was no **TIME** given to these children to express their feelings to a Person for the Validation.

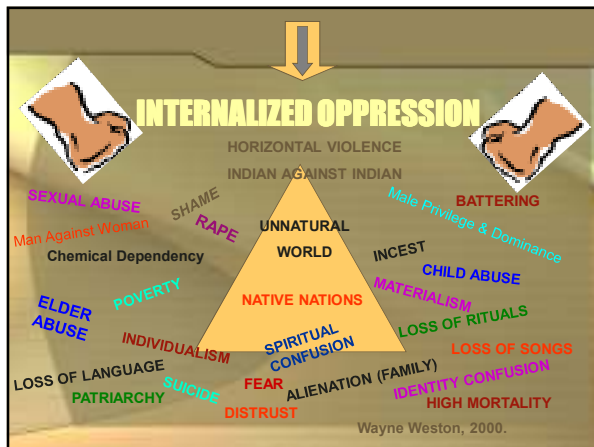
Native American Indian Communities

– Therefore, the ones that survived developed misconceptions about themselves with psychological difficulties. Message internalized was; It is not good to be an Indian. These are the message that our grandparents, great-grandparents & great-great-grandparents have lived with for the past two hundred years and more.

– Also, some Native American Indian children died of loneliness and shock from being unable to handle this transition and being so far away from home and relatives.







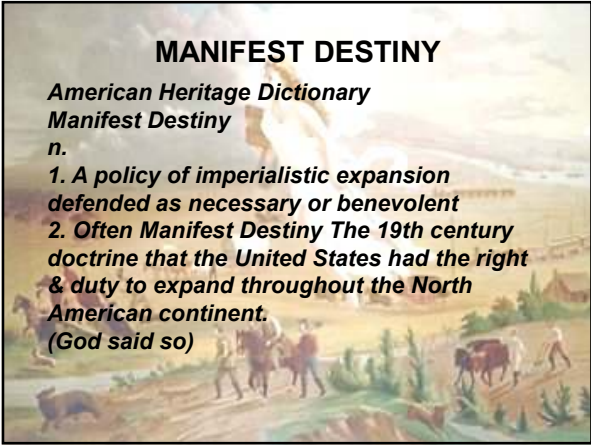
PROCESS OF EXTERNAL OPPRESSION TO INTERNAL OPPRESSION

- Unjust exercise of authority and power by one group over another. It includes imposing one group's belief system, values and life way over another group. One way this unjust exercise was justified was "Manifest Destiny".

Wayne Weston, 2000.

MANIFEST DESTINY

American Heritage Dictionary
Manifest Destiny
n.
 1. A policy of imperialistic expansion defended as necessary or benevolent
 2. Often Manifest Destiny The 19th century doctrine that the United States had the right & duty to expand throughout the North American continent.
 (God said so)



INTERNALIZED OPPRESSION

- External Oppression becomes INTERNAL OPPRESSION when we come to **believe and act** as if the oppressor's belief system, values and life way is **Reality**.
- Internal Oppression means the oppressor doesn't have to exert any more pressure, we now do it to each other and ourselves. **Divide and conquer works!**

Wayne Weston, 2000.

Historical Trauma Activity

To give an experiential example to impress the idea of trauma and loss of a way of life; we will do an interactive activity. If you do not feel comfortable in participating, it is your choice.

Many cultures have experienced loss within the United States, not only the Native American Indian cultures, but also the many different cultures that immigrated here. For many of them they had to leave parts of their culture across the ocean when they immigrated here.

INTERNALIZED OPPRESSION

“Take what is good from the White man and leave what is bad”

Sitting Bull – Tatanka Iyotaka

Impact Evident in Native American Indian Communities

As service providers to crime victims we as an Advocate Community do witness the worse that our Native American Indian people do to each other within our communities. The crime rates on our reservations are high. This is due to many factors; among the traumas that we have experienced as a people, the MOST simple and important reason being the lack of respect that we have for one another (cultural self-hate). This is directly connected to the suffering of historical trauma that is SLOWLY beginning to be addressed by our nations.

Some people believe that treatment, ceremonies, prayer, practicing some type of spiritual activity, or therapy may possibly erase some of the trauma that has been passed down. Some people even believe that it is possible to re-learn new ways or old ways that had to be put aside to assimilate. Suppose a generation began to utilize some of the above, how would that look???????????????? (D. Rose, 2007)

1820 Great Great Great Grandparents
 1850 Great Great Grandparents
 1870 Great Grandparents
 1900 Grandparents
 1934 Parents
 1950 My Generation went to treatment—left baggage there
 1970 Children went to treatment—left baggage there
 2000 Grandchildren go to treatment—leave baggage there
 2030 Great Grandchildren born emotionally healthy AND grown up in an emotionally healthy, physically stable, spiritually rich family.

Where do we go from here for healing and reconciliation?

Respect (In our culture we use relative terms to address each other).
Continue to use humor as a coping mechanism.
 Developing friendships—creating bridges
 Relating human to human
 Patience and openness
 What can we learn from each other?
 Beginning life long friendships
 Learning we are more alike than we are different.
Acknowledge & Acceptance of each others differences.
Validation of each other as separate, yet connected.

Cultural Revitalization

For many Native American Indian cultures the retention of their language and cultural social customs have been adapted to the majority society; many of them have become *acculturated* (meaning they have their old ways “cultural” and they also function very well in mainstream society). Other Native American Indian cultures have completely *assimilated* (no longer have their language or culture) into mainstream society. More than a few are on the brink of language death, language is very important to cultural identity.



In closing,

I would like to thank those individuals cited in this presentation as references. It is because of their contributions and work to this social issue that our Native American Indian nations are becoming informed and beginning to address these challenges.

Plus, with the life experiences that I have lived through and learned from - I stand for the rights of victims and the healing revitalization of our cultures. Pilamayaye (Thank you).
