

12th National Indian Nations Conference  
Justice for Victims of Crime  
December 9 – 11, 2010 Palm Springs California

## Walking in Two Worlds as Oklahoma Professional Women

### Applying a Traditional Life Concept for Victim Services around Tribal Traditions

Presented by:  
Cordelia Clapp, RN, BSN  
Helen Norris, Pawnee CASA Director

## Objectives:

- Provide a better understanding of the role American Indian/Alaska Native spirituality and traditions have in healing Victims of Crime
- Incorporating Tradition to identify challenges of child victimization
- Identify appropriate Traditional methods of mediation for families in crisis
- Cultural considerations for effective teamwork in Tribal Court
- Providing Traditional critical confidentiality in the Court System

## 562 Federally Recognized Tribes (Tremendous Diversity)

### Remember That.....

- We must not assume that victims necessarily share the values attributed to a culture just because they come from that group
- There is much diversity within a culture
- We must acknowledge commonalities as well as differences between culture

## American Indian/Alaska Natives (AI/AN) Way of Life:

- Children participate in adult activities
  - Family life includes Extended Family
  - Clock time is whenever people are ready, when everyone arrives
- VS** Adults participate in youth activities
- VS** Family includes the nuclear family
- VS** CLOCK TIME is exactly that

## AI/AN Way of Life Continued:

- Present Orientation
  - Giving, Sharing
  - Patience
  - Listening Skills
  - Myth and Legends
  - Express their ideas and feelings through actions
- VS** Future Orientation
- VS** Taking, Saving
- VS** Aggression
- VS** Verbal Skills
- VS** History
- VS** Expressing themselves to impress others through speech

## A Review of Some AI/AN Universal Pieces That Stay The Same

- Connection to the Earth
- Creator will provide
- Respect of Elders
- Circle of Life
- Sweat Lodges
- Sacred Fire
- Symbolism of berries-cedar-sage-tobacco-herbs
- Drums
- Eagle

## Religion

### A Way Of Life For The AI/AN

- Circle Of Life
- Innate Spirituality
- Closeness To Earth
- Respect Of All Things



## In The Eyes Of An AI/AN Emphasis is Placed on Elders:



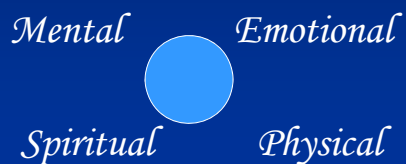
- Honor our elders
- They kept us strong over many years
- They give us our culture & traditions

### OUR ELDERS TAUGHT US:

- Why are we
- Who are we
- Where are we going

## The Definitive Goal

To Walk in Balance and Harmony  
Through Our Circle of Life!



## Dramatic Changes in Families Since 1965

- Needs of our children and families are more complicated
- Single parent families
- Parents are younger
- Increased violence, substance abuse and homelessness
- Lack of employment and education

## AI/AN - Key Demographics

- 3.1 Million total size
- 29.5 Average age
- \$34,343 median income
- 25% at poverty level
- 33% uninsured
- 76% graduate from HS
- 13% obtain 4-year degree
- 54% are living with grandparents as caregivers
- 27% under 18
- Shortest life expectancy in the U.S.

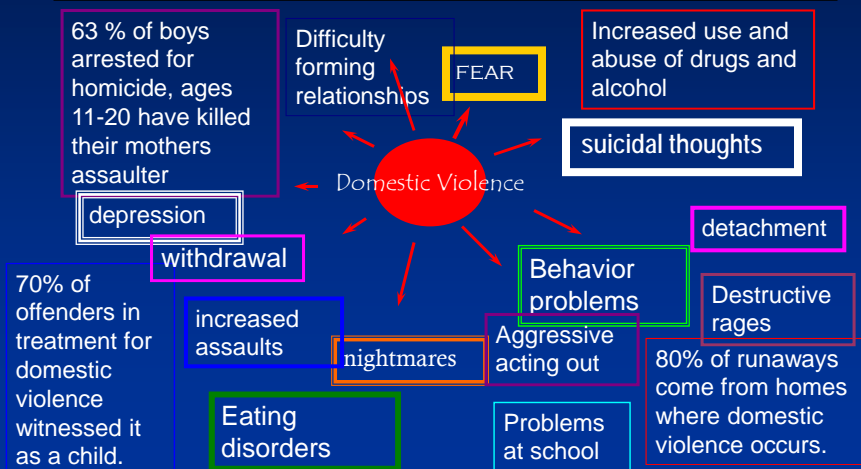
# Children are the Silent Victims



- Witnessing the two most important people in their life hurting and being hurt damages the core of the child's emotional being.

## A Cloud of Violence

### Witnessing Violence Always has an Impact on Children!



## What do the Children Experience?

*“Children from violent homes learn to believe that: It’s acceptable for men to hit women; violence is the way to get what you want; big people have power they misuse; men are bullies who push women and children around; expression of feelings signifies weakness; they shouldn’t talk about violence; and they shouldn’t feel.”*

## The Child’s Experience (cont.)

- What hurts mom, also hurts her child/children
- 60-73% of men who beat women also beat the children in the home
- 1 in 3 men who beat women also sexually abuse children in the home
- Extent to which children are affected by domestic violence ranges from behavioral difficulties to severe neglect/maltreatment



## The Child's Experience (cont.)

- Kids experience confusion & mixed feelings for mom & dad, feel shame & instability – never know when or what might happen
- Live in constant fear from the person who is supposed to care for them & keep them safe
- Often experience low self-esteem
- May affect their ability to form healthy relationships for the rest of their lives

## Effects of Children in Violent Homes

- **Infants:** frequent illness, developmental delays, difficulty sleeping, irritability – excessive crying
- **Young Children:** anxiety, withdrawal, sleeping problems, physical complaints, problems concentrating, regression, extreme separation anxiety, inadequate social skills, irritability, depression, frequent fighting with peers, threats
- **Adolescents:** School drop-out, delinquency, abusive dating relationships, substance abuse


## What do Victims Look Like?

- Like me and you – victims are of every age, gender, race, religion, ethnicity, & social class
- Low self-esteem, dependent on batterer
- Perceives violence as “normal” behavior, thereby minimizing its severity
- Often accepts responsibility for batterer’s actions
- Believes things will get better – wants to stop the violence, not end the relationship

## Spirituality a Tribal Tradition

- Counseling for Faith-Based services for Victims Of Crime in Indian Country is a fairly new social justice initiative however American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) have used faith practices to sustain their well-being and resilience and this practice has been in existence in all Tribal communities for centuries.

## Traditional Healing

- Performed by offering Traditional Spirituality to our Native people that will enhance the cultural and heritage values that Our People honor
  - AI/AN have a spiritual connection to the Creator whom gives them strength, guidance, support, wisdom, knowledge and all the things that a person cannot do by themselves
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## Goals That Need to be Accomplished for Successful Faith-Based Services

- Increase awareness within your service area and surrounding communities regarding Faith-Based services
- Establish a referral system for Victim of Crime services
- Create and maintain an Advisory Board or MDT and include your Traditional and non-Traditional Spiritual Leaders
- Increase a network of resources to enhance Victims of Crime Services

## Communication Guidance For Professional Providers

- AI/AN children need to be accepted and respected
- Not what is being told but how it is being told
- Knowledge is knowledge only when it is communicated in a “good way”

## It Is With The Heart One Sees:

- The social suffering of the AI/AN to be effective
- Emotional and Social issues
- No one pays attention when the pain is in the heart
- Scant attention is given to the importance of culture and heritage
- Done with the HEART always wins over what is done with the HEAD

## Challenges Regarding the Provider Pool for Faith-Based Services

- Bringing together Traditional Spiritual Leaders and “mainstream” Clergy
- Educating “mainstream” providers about Traditional healing and the Historical Trauma of our people
- Educating “mainstream” providers about the unique needs of Indian victims

## Cultural Challenges Were Increased When Traditional Clergy:

- Do not listen carefully
- Make assumptions and do not assess
- Do not ask culturally appropriate questions
- Do not allow the breaking down of barriers of stereotyping of the American Indian or Alaska Native

## Continued Cultural Challenges were Increased When :

- Non-Traditional Clergy are Caucasian & Middle Class
- American Indian/Alaska Natives are not aware of their own culture values
- American Indian/Alaska Natives do not live up to the person that are the clergy's expectations

## Lessons Learned Regarding Collaboration for Faith Based Services

- Assess what non-Traditional Clergy know about American Indian/Alaska Native spirituality
- Assess what non-Traditional Clergy think they need to learn
- Involve community clergy and spiritual leaders for training and education in meeting the unique needs of American Indian/Alaska Native clients

## Spiritual Tribal Tradition Collaboration Outcomes

- Initiate dialogue between Faith-Based organizations and AI/AN Spiritual and Traditional leaders with in your service area
- Dialogue would result in awareness to the Faith-Based program
- Dialogue would result in increased Spiritual providers

## The Elder's Voice Speaks.....



Our world is constantly changing . One of the strengths of Indian people has been our adaptability.

In today's world, education is what we need to survive. We need doctors, lawyers, teachers, scientists. We can become these things and still live in a cultural way.

We need to live in two worlds; the educated world and the Indian cultural world.

ARTWORK BY:  
MITCH BATTESE

Thank You

Questions?  
Comments?

Cordelia Clapp, RN,BSN  
Tribal Nurse Consultant  
(Pawnee Tribal Member)  
Ph. 620-758-2476  
[cordelia.clapp@att.net](mailto:cordelia.clapp@att.net)

