

Engaging Native Wellness; Healing Communities of Care  
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Developing a Healing Community of  
Care  
Native Nations Conference 2014



## How We Are Meant To Be

- Our Society Traditionally Existed Without Police Or Prisons
- We Were Raised In A Strict Agreement Of Respect For Family Community And Elders
- Our Place In Society Was Founded On Our Abilities To Be Good Families, Giving Of Ourselves And Our Value To The Community
- Our Beliefs Were Grounded In All The Creator Had Given Our People

## Waves Of Cultural Insults And Assaults

- Waves Of Assaults Took A Toll On Our Tribes And Nations
- The Missionary Period
- Hunting Of Our People For Bounty
- Military Attacks On Communities
- Boarding School Era, Removal From Our Culture
- Removal Of Our Children
- Elimination Of Our Rights To Protect Our Communities
- Thefts Of Our Sacred Lands And Cultural Ways

## The Removal Of Our Children

- The Removal Of Native Children Constitutes The Wholesale And Forcible Migration Of Children From One Culture To Another
- Virtually No Native Families Or Communities Were Untouched By This Tragedy

## Incidence Of Violence Committed Upon Natives

- Native Men And Women Were Victimized in crimes At A Rate Of 52.3 Per 1,000.
- This Was Twice As High As Hispanics And Whites And One And One-half Times That Of African-Americans, Six times that of Asian-Americans
- Between The Years 1993 And 2000, The Rate Among Native Americans Over The Age Of 12 Was 105 Per 1,000
- Hate Crimes Against Natives Became

## The Continuing Experiences Of Trauma In Native Communities

- American Indians And Natives Haven't Seen The Kind Of Decreases Experience By The Rest Of The Nation
- 2008 CDC Report Found That 39 % Of Native Women Reported That They Were Victims Of Intimate Partner Violence
- Almost Half Of The Rapes Reported By American Indian Women Were Committed By Intimate Partners
- AI/AN Are More Than Twice As Likely As Others To Become Victims Of Violent Crimes
- Violent Victimization Of AI/AN Children Is 20 Out Of 1000 Children Compared To 10 Out Of 1000

## The Nature of Trauma and Survivance

Trauma touches many life domains increases risk:

- Social And Behavioral Problems of Functioning
- Posttraumatic Stress Disorder,
- Depression,
- Excessive Hostility,
- Generalized Anxiety
- Substance Abuse;
- Physical Health Problems;
- Interpersonal Struggles;
- Eating Disorders;
- Suicidality

## Trauma preys on the most vulnerable among our people

- Trauma touches many areas of life not obviously or readily connected with the experience of trauma itself:
- Poverty
- Homelessness
- Severe Mental Health Problems
- Addiction To Drugs
- Developmental Delays
- Increased Risk Of Trauma

## Trauma Affects The Way People Approach Help

- Trauma affects the way people approach potentially helpful relationships.
- Often reluctant to engage in, or quickly drop out of, a variety of human services.
- Vigilant and suspicious trauma responses.
- It is more difficult for survivors to feel the safety and trust necessary to seek help relationships.

## Trauma Response

- Violent trauma is often self-perpetuating
- Victims of violence are at increased risk of becoming perpetrators themselves.
- The intergenerational transmission of violence and community violence is often built around cycles of retaliation

## The Impact Of Trauma Is Deep And Life-shaping

- Trauma can be fundamentally Family life-altering, especially for those families who have faced repeated and prolonged abuse
- Families may come to see themselves as fundamentally flawed and perceive the world as a pervasively dangerous place
- Trauma may shape a person's way of being in the world; it can deflate the spirit and trample the soul.

## Effects Of Traumatic Stress

- Alcoholism
- Drug Abuse
- Obsessive Thinking
- Compulsive Behavior
- Rigid Negativity
- Anger
- Depression

## Helping Agencies and Systems

- When we identify with the aggressor, we breed aggression
- Involuntary and coercive practices, other activities can trigger trauma reactions
- Criminal justice settings, schools and churches and hospitals frequently are places where trauma is perpetuated rather than eliminated.
- Tribes and Native Agencies are not exempt from this dynamic

## “Secondary” Or “Vicarious” Traumatization Is Common

- Stressors deeply affect administrators, clinicians, and support staff
- Direct threats to physical and emotional safety are frequent concerns.
- Being asked to do “more and more with less and less” becomes an overwhelming and pervasive theme in work experiences

## Trauma affects staff members as it does our community

- Steps to finding courage and strength
- Find a place of safety in your work
  - Share your feelings with each other,
  - Talk about your triggers,
  - Review what have you learned,
  - Center feelings, smudge yourself down,
  - Don't give up on you
  - Learn to recharge, spiritually

## Develop trauma-informed and trauma-specific services

Trauma-informed services are designed to avoid traumatizing clients or staff

- These services seek “safety first” and commit themselves to “do no harm.”
- Enhance cultural, mental health and substance abuse services.

Trauma-specific services

- Directly address trauma and its impact in trauma recovery.
- Build upon restoring the self, cultural recovery



## Risk Factors

- Historical Trauma
- Boarding School Abuse
- Not Knowing One's Culture Or Language
- Life Long Experiences Of Racism  
Marginalizing experiences
- Interruption Of Cultural Identity Formation
- Not Having A Connection To Elders
- Growing Up In a chaotic home
- New traumatizing experiences

## Protective Factors

- Active Involvement In Native Culture  
Instills Native Pride
- Participation In Traditional Ceremonies
- Having Support Of Family And Tribal  
Community
- Cultural Family Identity
- Ability to talk about process of recovery  
and cultural empowerment

## Six Directions Of Reparation

- Spirituality
- Anger Remediation
- Building Personal Strength
- Cultural Empowerment Of Healing Our People
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- Rebuilding Wellness Of Shattered Family
- Rebuilding Healthy Communities

## Preparing For The Journey

- Sobriety
- Regaining Our Spirit Through Ceremony
- Training Our Minds To Understand The Dynamics Of Oppression
- Finding Our Heart And Feelings
- Building A Community Of Care
- Rekindling A New Community / Family Of Healing

## Community of Care Self-Assessment and Planning

- Cultural empowerment
- Safety
- Trustworthiness
- Choice
- Collaboration
- Trauma Screening
- Encourage tribal and services planning to ask difficult questions of ourselves