Historical Trauma among the Native American Population: What Service Providers Need to Know

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Indian Country Child Trauma Center

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Indian Country Child Trauma Center (ICCTC)

The mission of the Indian Country Child Trauma Center is to develop culturally appropriate interventions to improve treatment and services for all children and adolescents in Indian Country who have experienced traumatic events.

Honoring Children, Making Relatives
Honoring Children, Respectful Ways
Honoring Children, Mending the Circle
Honoring Children, Honoring the Future

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National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN)

NCTSN Mission

To raise the standard of care and improve access to services for traumatized children, their families and communities throughout the United States.
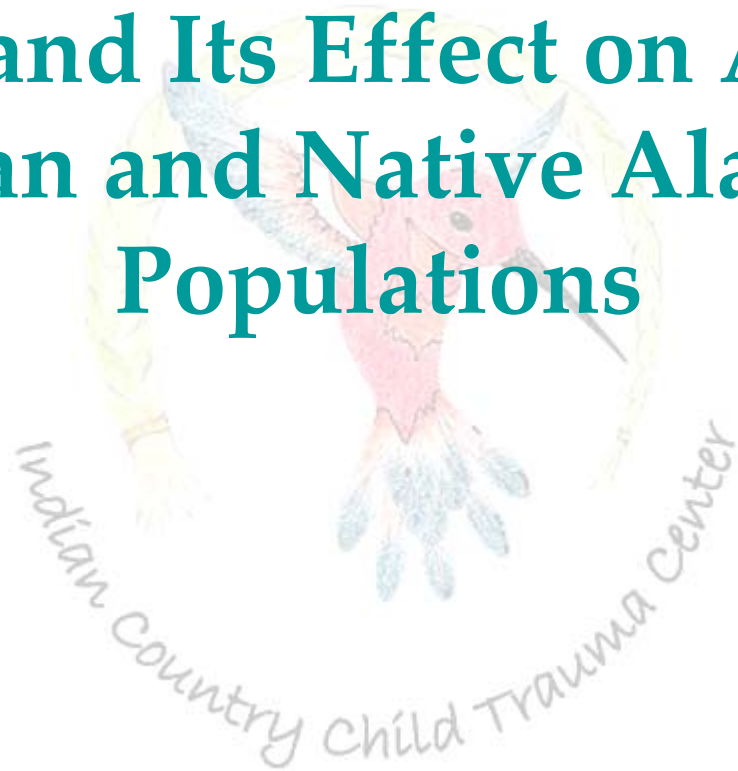
Trauma and Its Effect on American Indian and Native Alaskan Populations

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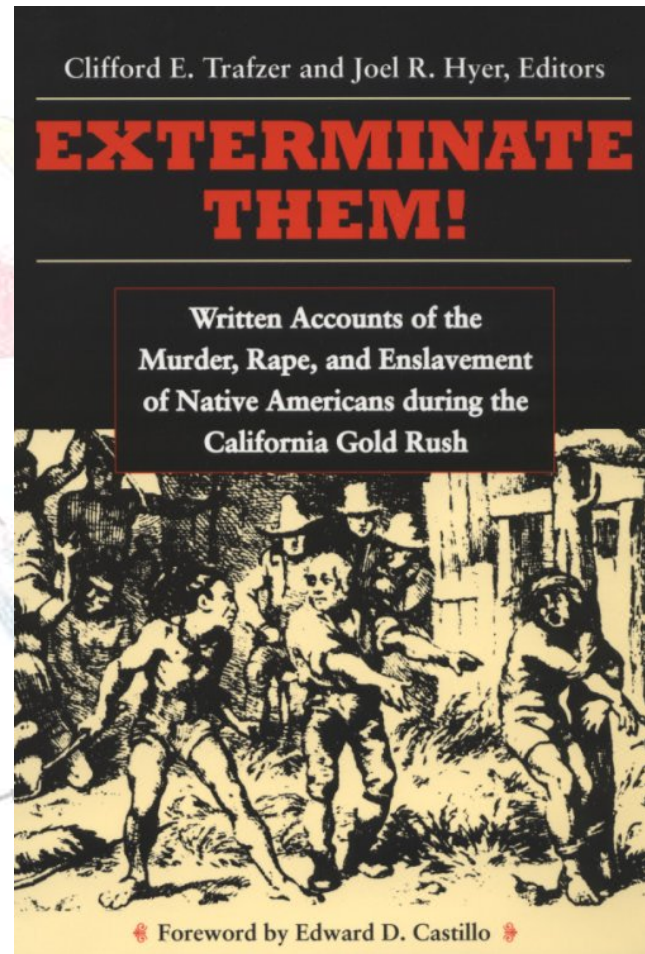
Historical Trauma

- Historical trauma = intergenerational trauma (Cole, 2006)

Clifford E. Trafzer and Joel R. Hyer, Editors

EXTERMINATE THEM!

Written Accounts of the Murder, Rape, and Enslavement of Native Americans during the California Gold Rush

Foreword by Edward D. Castillo

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• http://aistm.org/cartoons10.htm

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Holocaust

- Research on the Holocaust (Cole, 1996)

Corpses lie in one of the open railcars of the Dachau death train. The Dachau death train consisted of nearly forty cars containing the bodies of between two and three thousand prisoners transported to Dachau in the last days of the war. Dachau, Germany, April 29, 1945.

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United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/index.php?ModuleId=10006237

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- Japanese American Internees (Cole, 2006)

- Gila River Camp,Arizona. Credit: Wartime Relocation Authority obtained from   http://www.pbs.org/childofcamp/history/camps.html

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Traditional Native Families

- Historically native families used the extended network of family members to rear and guide children.

- The survival of the family/band/clan depended on the interdependent relationships among its members: relatives and non-relatives

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Events Contributing to Destruction of Many Tribal Cultures

- retaliation for forming alliances
- removal from the traditional homelands
- introduction of new diseases
- murdering of tribal people for bounties
- justification of behavior in support of westward expansion
  - discarding or destroying the native lifestyle

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Events Contributing to Destruction of Many Tribal Cultures

- emerging governmental regulations of Indian tribes and families – federal recognition criteria

- disregard for traditional leaders and tribal consensus in decisions

- encouragement of alcohol use

- confinement to limited locations with limited resources

- removal of children

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Critical Factors

- Methods employed to provide for children:
  - Education
    - *Purpose of boarding schools and missions was "to provide for the U.S. government a method to education and civilize Indian children away from the influences of their savage lifestyle and unchristian ways."*
  - Child Safety (child protection)
    - *Purpose of protection of children was to offer children an "opportunity out of poverty."*

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What Children Experienced in Boarding School

Yakima School Girls — Ft Simcoe Wn

- Schools
- Chained
- Whipped
- Beaten
- Denied medical care
- Denied contact with family
- Poor preparation for adulthood

- Used as indentured servants
- Isolated for infractions
- Lack of adequate food/clothing/shelter
- High death rate (burials without notification to parents)

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"Indian People Were Conditioned Not To Fight Back, Each Time They Fought Back, Something Was Taken Away...."

- Children
- Food
- Shelter
- Land
- Warmth
- Tools

- Religion
- Language
- Homes
- Elders
- Signature
- Teachings

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Types of Personalities Attracted to Indian Country

- Missionaries/religious individuals
  - sincere desire
  - seeking to help
  - no understanding of Indian lifestyle
  - no understanding of impact of removal of children
  - possessed the mentality of the era
  - zealous in effort to "christianize" Indians
  - rigid and punitive

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Types of Personalities Attracted to Indian Country

- Social "rejects and misfits" or non conformists
  - alienated from dominate American culture
  - high level of idiosyncratic traits/characteristics
  - high level of aberrant behavior
  - behavior less tolerated in dominate culture
  - behavior more tolerated in isolated areas
  - less likelihood of confrontation with peers
  - rigid and punitive

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Types of Personalities Attracted to Indian Country

- Ex-military/authoritarian/entrepreneurs
  - placement for former military leader/soldiers
  - "Unconquered" attitude
  - appeal of isolated, wilderness-type locations
  - valued independence
  - valued freedom to interpret law/justice
  - justice was self-serving
  - income generating
  - rigid and punitive

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Historical Overview of Federal Policies

- 1924   Granted US Citizenship
- 1928   Merriam Report
- 1930   Congressional Hearing on Status of American Indians
- 1934   92,000 Indian children enrolled in public schools
- 1934-1950   Indian reorganization (tribal constitutions, elections, BIA governance)

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Historical Overview of Federal Policies

- 1950-1960   Termination Period (200 tribes terminated)
- 1950-1968   Relocation, urban development (migration from rural to urban)
- 1953   Public Law 280: State jurisdiction
- 1954   Law Re: IHS & policy on "disallow services to competent **Indians"**

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Historical Overview of Federal Policies

- 1968   Indian Civil Rights Act (What was the conflict?)

- 1975   Indian Self-determination & Education Assistance Act (Contracting & Compacting)

- 1978   American Indian Religious Freedom Act

- 1978   Indian Child Welfare

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Historical Overview of Federal Policies

- 1981   First Annual American Indian Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect
- 1987   NANACOA
- 1989   OVC Discretionary Grant Program in Indian Country
- 1990   1.9 M population (48% <18)

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Historical Overview of Federal Policies

- 1990   Indian Child Protection and Family Violence Prevention Act
- 1990   Native American Languages Act
- 1992   Comprehensive CMHS/System of Care
- 1994   Federal Crime Control Bill
- 1998   SAMHSA/Circles of Care
- 2000   2.47 m (Census)

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Historical Overview of Federal Policies

- 2003   National Child Traumatic Stress Network/ICCTC

- 2004   SAMSHA/SOC Conference

- 2005   4.4 m population

- 2006   IHS Head Start Initiatives

- 2007   25th National American Indian Conference on Child Abuse & Neglect – OKC, April 15-18

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Effects on the Tribe (Cole, 2006)

- Emasculate tribal governments
- Vast numbers of people annihilated

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Effects on the Family (Cole, 2006)

- Misogynist beliefs
- Attachment issues
- Parenting Practices

Effects on the Individual (Cole, 2006)

- PTSD
- Depression
- Substance Abuse

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Case Study

- Anthony*, a 15 year old American Indian and Hispanic male, grew up in a home with a mother who used inhalants since he was nine years old. He was recently removed from his home by the Department of Human Services. His father, who also uses inhalants as well as alcohol, lives somewhere on the streets. His older sister lives with an abusive boyfriend and her whereabouts has been unknown for a few months. His younger brother is physically disabled and lives with his grandmother. His grandmother is sick with diabetes and had to have her left toe removed a few months ago. His uncle that he looked up to is in prison.

* Anthony is a fictional person.

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Self-Esteem

- The Social and Psychological Importance of Self-Esteem

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What is Trauma?

- According to the National Child Traumatic Stress Network trauma is a unique individual experience associated with a traumatic event or enduring conditions, which can involve an actual death or other loss, serious injury, or threat to a child's well-being (NCTSN, 2004).
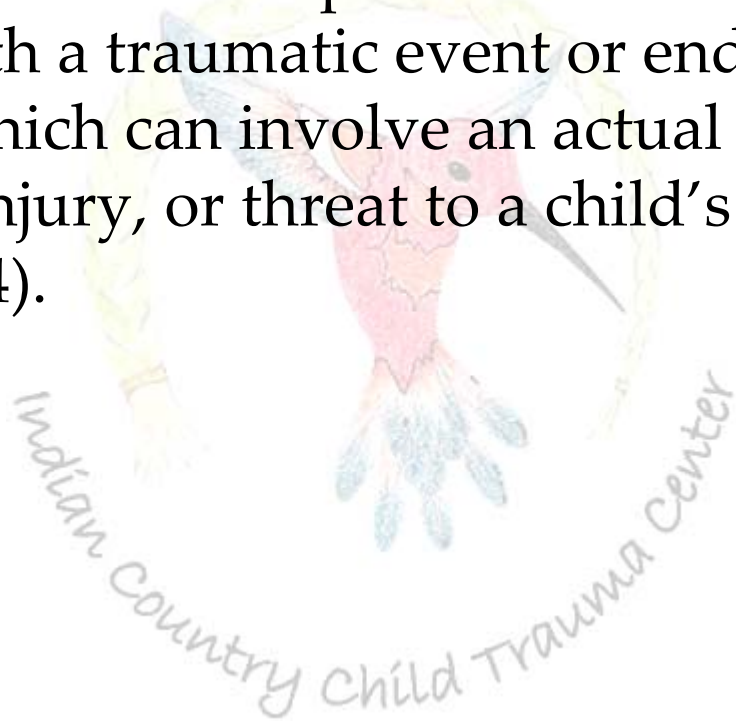
Trauma Symptoms

Cohen, Mannarino, and Deblinger (2006):

- Affective or Emotional
- Behavioral
- Cognitive
- Psychobiological

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Violence

- As a witness, victim or perpetrator of violence, each can produce various level of traumatic responses and can create community chaos.

Witness

Target (victim)

TRAUMA
(community chaos)

Perpetrator

How People Learn Violence?

- Witness to violence

- Target (victim) of violence

- Perpetrator of violence
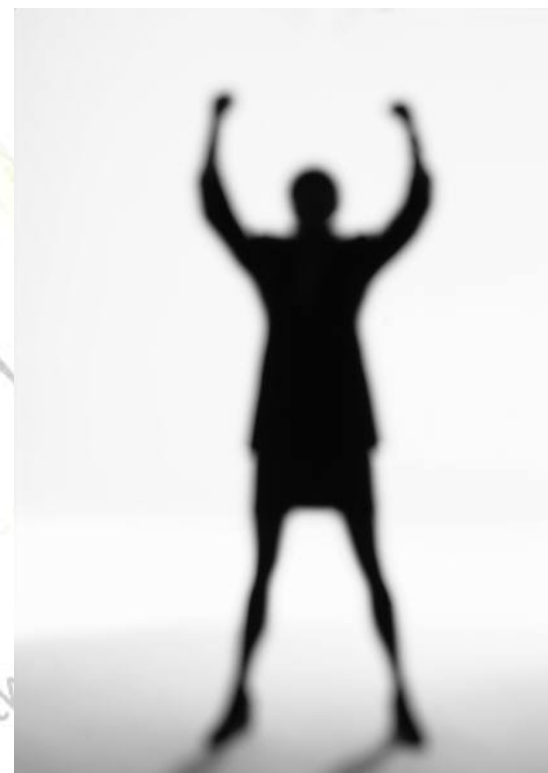
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Body Found

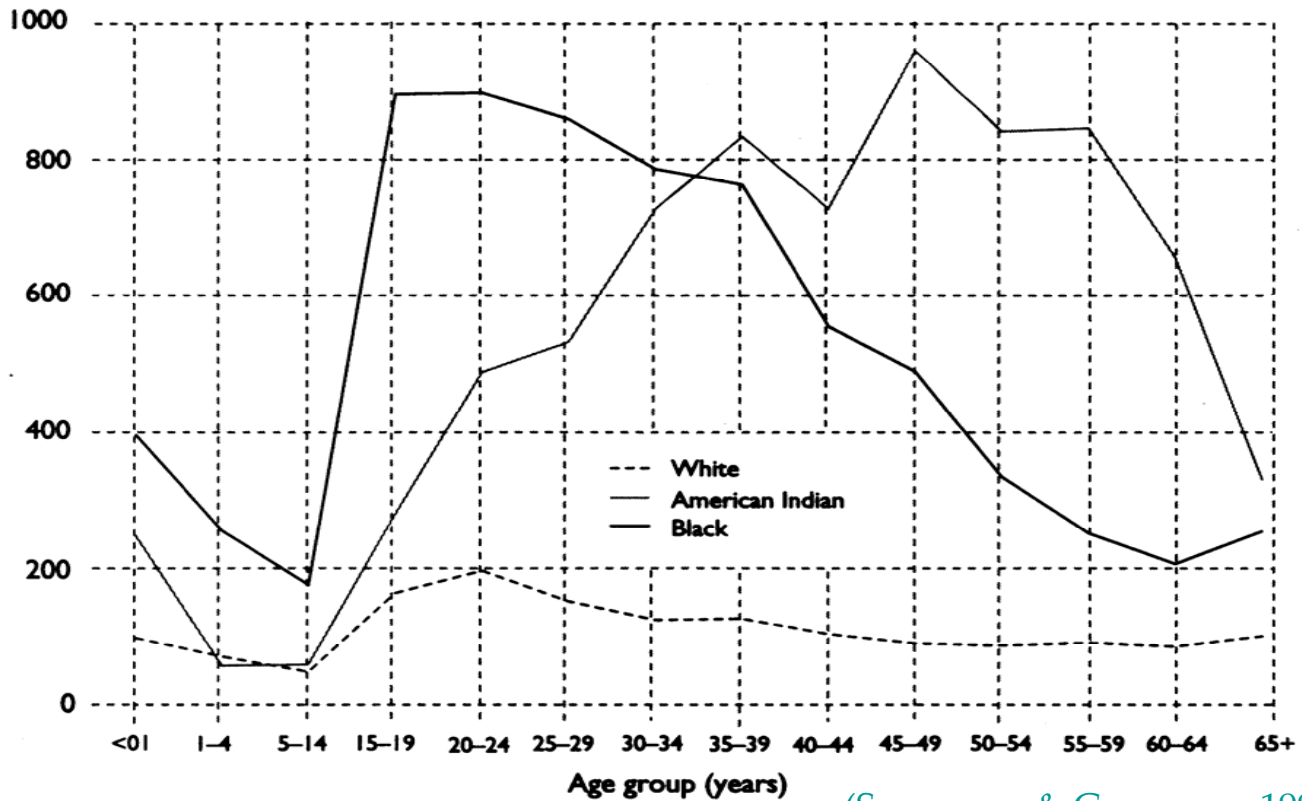- Anticipatory Grief (Casarett, Kutner, & Abrahm, 2001)

http://www.newsok.com/,
December 14, 2006

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Alarming Patterns of Injury

Age-specific annual discharge rates per 100,000 population by race, Harborview Trauma Registry, King County residents, 1986–92, Seattle, WA

Legend:
- --- White
- American Indian
- Black

Age group (years)

(Sugarman & Grossman, 1996)

- Wenzlaff and Wegner (2000) stated, "what has compelled the interest of the scientific and clinical communities is that suppression is not simply an ineffective tactic of mental control; it is counterproductive, helping assure the very state of mind one had hoped to avoid. The problem of thought suppression is aggravated by its intuitive appeal and apparent simplicity, which help mask its false promises" (p. 83).

Emotional Valence

- Emotional valence is a key variable in thought suppression. Emotional material is more difficult to suppress than is neutral information (Wenzlaff and Wegner, 2000). It has been found that a person's mood state can impact suppression.
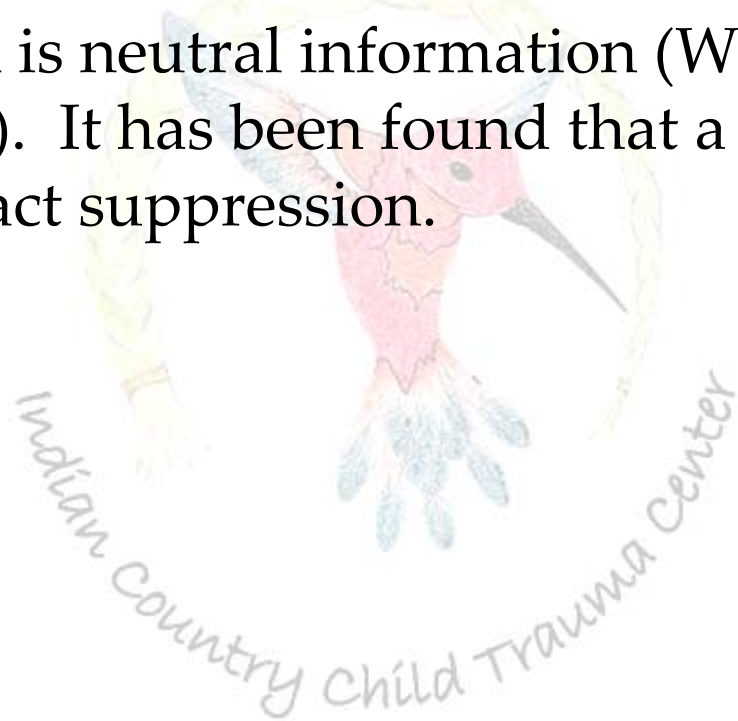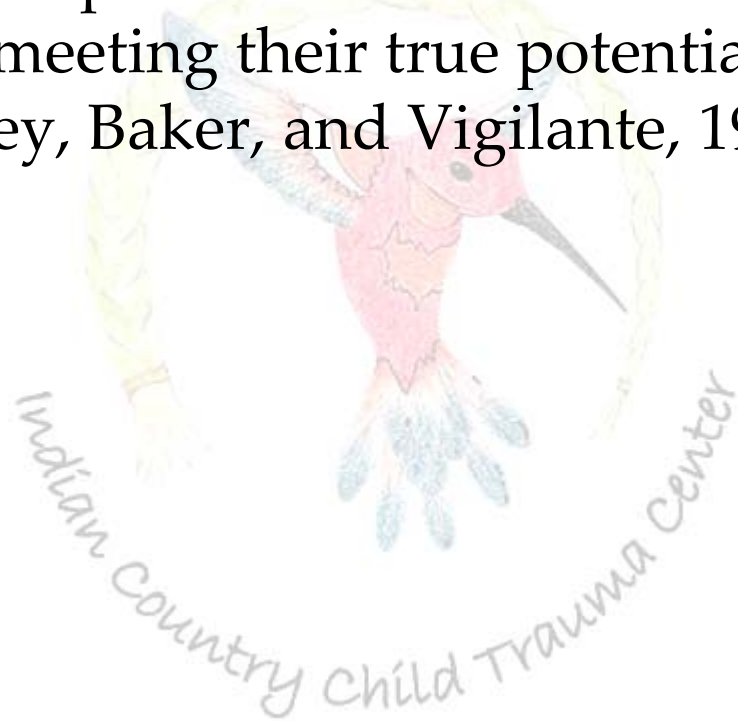
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Childhood Traumatic Grief (CTG)

- CTG refers to a condition in which both unresolved grief and PTSD symptoms are present, often accompanied by depressive symptoms as well when children lose a loved one to an unexpected, violent death or when they are exposed to graphic details such as blood, mutilated or missing body parts, or being the first person to discover the body of a loved one (Cohen, Mannarino, and Deblinger, 2006).

- Childhood traumatic grief is distinct from both depression and PTSD but can predict both depression and PTSD (Arehart-Treichel, 2004).

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- The "persistence of the destructive myth that children are resilient will prevent millions of children, and our society, from meeting their true potential" (Perry, Pollard, Blakley, Baker, and Vigilante, 1995) (p.286).

- Ehlers et al (2006) found that PTSD is associated with hyperarousal, higher attentional levels to sad stimuli, and slower processing of happy stimuli.

PTSD

- The essential feature of post-traumatic stress disorder(PTSD) is the development of characteristic symptoms following exposure to an extreme traumatic stressor involving direct personal experience of an event that involves actual or threatened death or serious injury, or other threat to one's physical integrity; or witnessing an event that involves death, injury, or a threat to the physical integrity of another person; or learning about unexpected or violent death, serious harm, or threat of death or injury experienced by a family member or other close associate (American Psychiatric Association, 2000).

Complex Posttraumatic Stress Disorder

Complex PTSD is believed to cause changes in affect regulation, consciousness, self-perception, perception of the perpetrator, relationships, and systems of meaning.

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Studies on Trauma and AIs

- Study with 247 adult members of a Southwestern tribe (Robin, Chester, Rasmussen, Jarranson, and Goldman, 1997)

Studies on Trauma and AIs

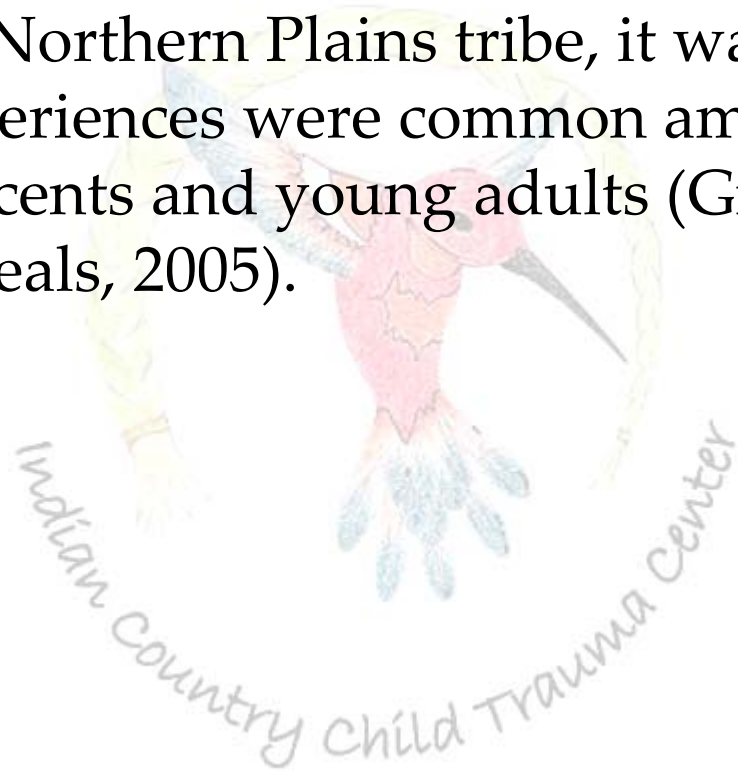- Study, 109 Northern Plains adolescents in 8th to 11th grades (Jones, Daughinais, Sack, and Somervell, 1997)

Studies on Trauma and AIs

- Study with a Northern Plains tribe, it was found that traumatic experiences were common among American Indian adolescents and young adults (Gnanadesikan, Novins and Beals, 2005).

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Studies on Trauma and AIs

- Trauma plays a role in the sexual decision-making of American Indian youth (Kaufman, 2004).
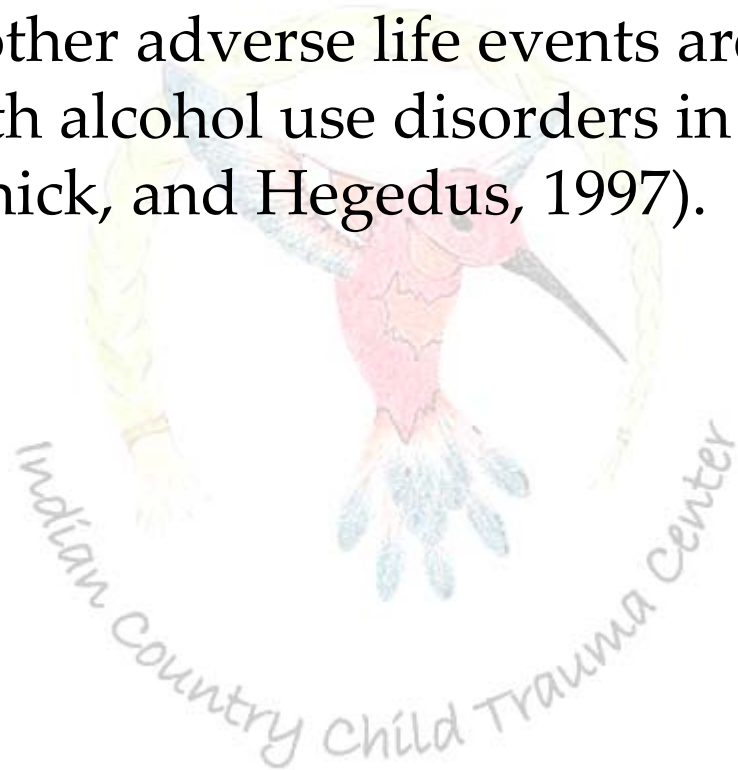
Studies on Trauma and Substance Abuse

- Trauma and other adverse life events are strongly associated with alcohol use disorders in adolescents (Duncan, Lesnick, and Hegedus, 1997).

Native American Population
(All Ages)

- Leads the nation in death caused by:

  - alcohol-related motor vehicle fatalities

  - chronic liver disease and cirrhosis

  - diabetes (infections/amputations/health complications)

  - fetal abnormalities

  - homicide

- **American Indians are an indigenous, heterogeneous population with over 500 recognized tribes, bands, or Alaskan Native villages**
- **Over half (54%) now live off reservations**
- **Rural to urban migration was given great impetus by World War II and the federal policies of the Eisenhower era**

AMERICAN INDIANS

(Kramer, 1992),
http://www.pubmedcentral.nih.gov/picrender.fcgi?artid=1011277&blobtype=pdf

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Four Leading Causes of Death

American Indian and Alaska Natives

- Ages 1-4   Accidents/Homicide

- Ages 4-15   Accidents/Homicide

- Ages 15-24   Accidents/Homicide/Suicide

- Ages 25-44   Accidents/Chronic Liver Disease & Cirrhosis/ Suicide/Homicide

(Trends in Indian Health, 1996)

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Substance Abuse & Child Abuse in AI/AN communities

- 70-90% of child abuse cases involve alcohol

- Higher frequency with females (70.4) than males (60.)

- 50-80% of child neglect involve alcohol

- Alcohol abuse less frequent in cases of sexual abuse

(NIJC,1995)

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Current Statistics:
Violence and Victimization in Indian Country

- Average annual violent crime rate among American Indians - 124 per 1,000 persons age 12 or older - approximately 2.5 times national rate

- Rates of violent victimization for both males and females are higher among American Indians than for all races.

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Violence, Crime and Victimization

- The rate of violent crime experienced by American Indian women is nearly 50% higher than that reported by Black males.

- Violent crime rate was highest for American Indians age 18 to 24.

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Violence, Crime and Victimization

American Indians experienced approximately 1 violent crime for every 8 residents age 12 or older compared to 1 violent victimization for:

- 1 for every 16 Black residents

- 1 for every 20 white residents

- 1 for every 34 Asian residents

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Effects of Family Violence

- Bullying among children

- Use of corporal punishment

- No sanctions against spousal abuse

- No sanctions against elderly abuse

- Increase use of alcohol and other drugs

- Acceptance of violent activities for entertainment, humor, and compliance

Contributing Factors
Parental Alcohol & Substance Usage

•Mental health disorder

–Masking of affect disorders (depression, anxiety)

–Substance abuse contributing to antisocial personality disorder

–Drug induced psychosis

–Organic brain disease caused by substance abuse

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Characteristics
Parental Alcohol & Substance Usage

• Increase risk for prenatal exposure to alcohol

• Produces difficult-to-parent infants and children

• Increase probability of conflict with education, law enforcement, and court system

• Family life chaotic and unpredictable

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Effects of Substance Abuse

- Violence

- Paranoia

- Anxiety

- Distrust

- Less constraints about hurting, injuring, neglecting, or molesting children

- Interference with appropriate parenting ability

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Variables Associated with Risk for Multiple Victimizations

- Research suggested that youth victims are at high risk for subsequent victimizations (Coid et al., 2001; Saunders, 2003)

- Multiply victimized youth have dramatically higher prevalence of emotional and behavioral problems than singly victimized youth (see Saunders, 2003)

- Adolescents who endorsed a history of family alcohol problems, relative to those without a history of family alcohol problems, had a risk of multiple victimization that was twice as high for girls and nearly 4 times as high for boys (Stevens, Tomika N. et al., p 219)

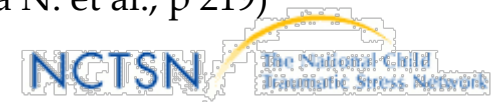# Variables Associated with Risk for Multiple Victimizations

- First, earlier age of onset was associated with increased risk of multiple victimization for both genders.

  For girls, increased likelihood of multiple victimization was associated with older age at the time of interview, chronicity, injury, and acquaintance perpetrator status.

  (Stevens, Tomika N. et al., p 219)

Variables Associated with Risk for Multiple Victimizations

- Second, family alcoholism has been linked to behavioral problems among youth.

- Victimized youth from families with alcohol problems may be left <u>unsupervised</u> or <u>unprotected</u> and, therefore, have <u>heightened vulnerability</u> to interpersonal victimization.

(Stevens, Tomika N. et al., p 219)

Research with American Indian People (Cole, 2006)

- Considerations

Essential Elements

- Shame
- Thrill and risk-taking behavior
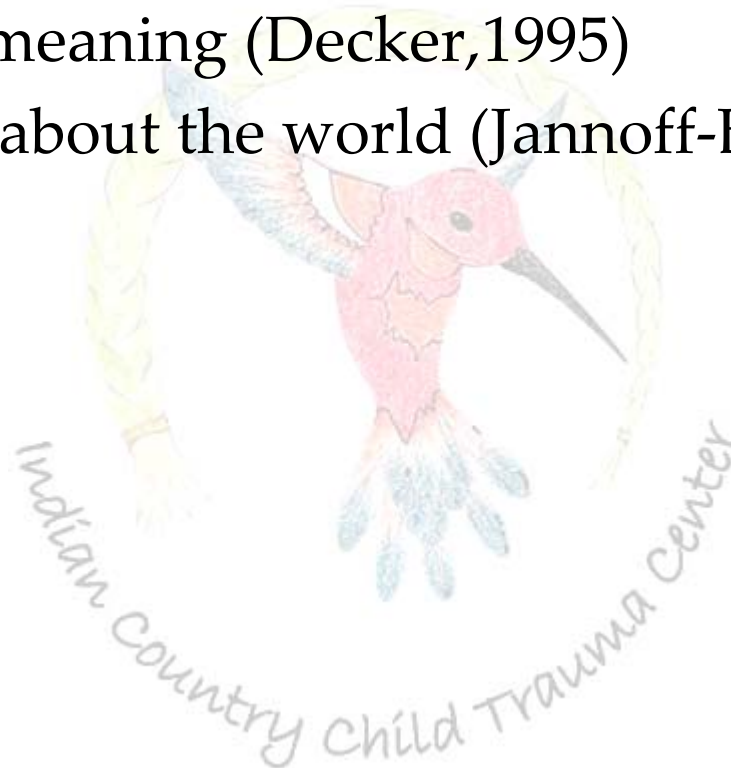
Essential Elements

- Spiritual aspects (e.g., soul wound)

Treatment of Trauma
(Cole, 2006)

- Purpose and meaning (Decker,1995)
- Assumptions about the world (Jannoff-Bulman, 1993, 1995).
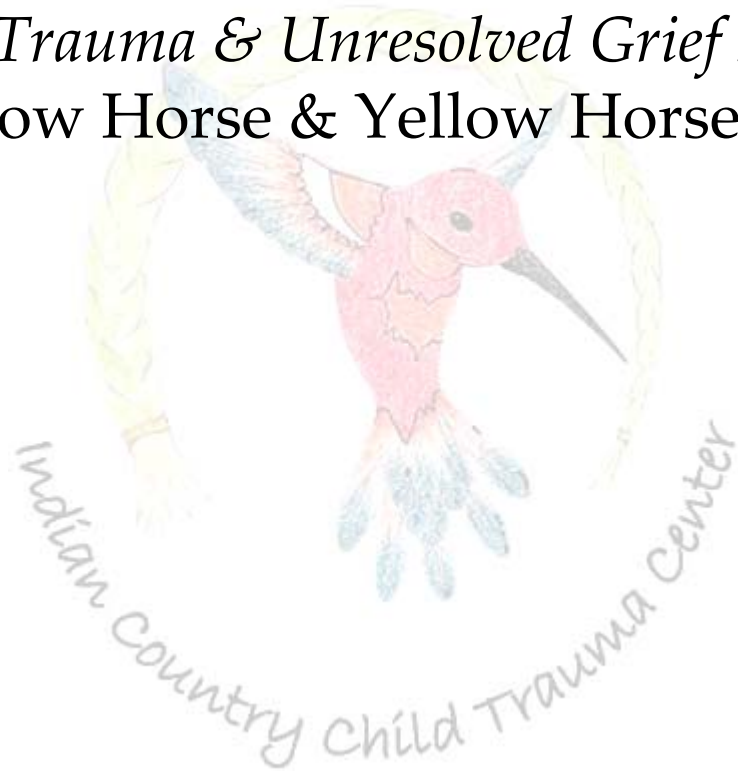
Program Recommendations (Cole, 2006)

- *The Historical Trauma & Unresolved Grief Intervention (HTUG),* (Yellow Horse & Yellow Horse Brave Heart, 2004)