Cultural Resilience:
An Indigenous Framework applied to the
Good Health and Wellness in Indian Country

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Objectives

By the end of this presentation you will be able to:

- Develop an understanding of how historical trauma influences the health status of tribal communities
- Develop an understanding of how Indigenous resilience can be used as a framework for addressing chronic diseases in tribal communities
Good Health and Wellness in Indian Country program

- Five year grant from the Center of Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
- Aims to prevent heart disease, diabetes, stroke, and associated risk factors in tribal communities by supporting efforts to implement *community-chosen* and *culturally adapted* policies, systems, and environmental (PSE) changes
- These PSE efforts will target one or more **seven** prevention areas
Seven Prevention Focus Areas

- Reduce the usage of commercial tobacco and decrease exposure to secondhand tobacco smoke;
- Increase access to and consumption of healthy food and beverages including fruits, vegetables, and water;
- Increase promotion of alternatives to less healthy foods and beverages that are in high sodium, sugars and solid fats;
- Increase support for breastfeeding;
- Increase opportunities for physical activity;
- Increase health literacy;
- Strengthen team-based care and community linkages to promote healthy communities
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Indigenous Framework Approach

Accountable:
Sovereignty, human rights, health, welfare, & cultural integrity

Responsible to community:
Collaborative community-based; partnerships based; rooted in a balanced, harmonious, and reciprocal relationship

Respectful:
Sovereignty, disparate worldviews, literatures, knowledge, political structures, and languages

Prioritizes Relationships:
Protection and strengthening of Indian sovereignty, self-determination, self-sufficiency, and human rights
• What is the Peoplehood matrix?
  – Four components that are interwoven and dependent on each other
  – Each component inform cultural protocols and practices, i.e. know the world around us and define reality.

• We are in balance when all working with each other
Process of Colonization

• Colonization is a process creating a relationship
  – Creates the Colonizer and Colonized
    • You can’t have one without the other
  – Our peoplehood is diminished, left unbalanced
  – Creates a negative environment
• In order for colonization to take place
  – One people engages another people
  – This engagement can range from non-violent to violent
    • War
    • Education
• Colonization of knowledge
  – Creating knowledges
    • What is a American Indian in western institutions?
      – Deficient
  – Where does the idea of deficient come from?
    • Academic Institutions
      – Anthropology
      – Science
• Decolonization (Healing) requires both the colonizer and colonized to break the relationship
### Process of Colonization

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Denial and Withdraw</th>
<th>Destruction, Eradication</th>
<th>Denigration, Belittlement, Insult</th>
<th>Surface Accommodation</th>
<th>Transformation, Exploitation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deny any merit &amp; withdraw from cultural practices</td>
<td>Physically destroy &amp; destroy physical representations</td>
<td>Internal Colonial institutions denigrate</td>
<td>What remains is given surface accommodation</td>
<td>What refuses to die is transformed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our way of life, our Indigenous Knowledge, how we know and do things</td>
<td>Ceremonial grounds, tradition gardens, homes, communities, kinship ties</td>
<td>Western education, Schools, Colleges, Anthropology, Science</td>
<td>Oral histories, ceremonies, spirituality</td>
<td>Pharmaceuticals, New Agers, Ceremonial practices</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Historical Trauma
Defining Historical Trauma

• What is Historical Trauma?
  – Is the cumulative emotional and psychological wounding, over the lifespan and across generations, emanating from massive group trauma experiences
  – Grounds current trauma responses in the collective traumatic past
  – Focuses on groups and not a single event

• Results from:
  – Indigenous peoples subjected to colonialism
  – Genocide
  – War Trauma
  – Internment camps
  – Residential schools
  – Boarding schools
  – Forced adoption programs
  – Bioterrorism (Smallpox)
  – Loss of traditional life-ways
  – Loss of culture
  – Loss of food subsistence
  – Forced Removal from territories
Defining Historical Trauma

• What is Historical Trauma Response?
  – Is a constellation of features perceived as related, or as a reaction, to the Historical Trauma
  – Historical unresolved grief, rapid succession of massive traumatic losses, Native grief became unresolved and impaired
  – Focuses on the collective and on the current and past events

• Examples of response:
  – Higher levels of **depression** on a community level
  – Various forms of **anxiety** within community
  – **Suicidal thoughts**
  – High rates of substance abuse
  – Chronic disease rates are high
  – Adoption of **victim identity**
  – **Hopelessness** in community
  – High rates of **internal violence** and external violence
Cultural Resilience
Process of Decolonization

- Decolonization is a process recreating the relationship
  - Recreates the Colonizer and Colonized to people
    - You can’t have one without the other
  - Our peoplehood is nourished, **balance** is being restored
  - Creates a positive environment
  - Emphasizes the legitimacy of Indigenous knowledge

- Decolonization (Healing) requires both the colonizer and colonized to break the relationship
<table>
<thead>
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<th>Process of Decolonization</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rediscovery and Recovery</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Rediscovery history and recover culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Understand why cultural knowledge was taken and the different ways it has been diminished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mourning</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Lament what has been lost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Mourn what was lost, ie. language, cultural/ceremonial sites, ceremonies, land, oral history, creation stories, knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dreaming</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Explore the whole panorama of what could be</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What would it feel like to speak the language fluently, sing songs, tell oral history...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Commitment</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Commit to a single direction in which to move society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Learn cultural protocols, activities, kinship responsibilities</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Action</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Proactive step based on consensus of community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Practice cultural protocols, adhere to cultural ethics</td>
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</table>
Healing Historical Trauma

• **Resilience**
  – The *ability to overcome* stress and *regaining health and well being* after experiencing adversity
  – Outcome of coping skills, social support that promote positive adaptations to extreme circumstances of adversity

• **Survivance**: Native people’s individual and collective abilities to persist despite the enormous adversity imposed by colonialism
  – Moves *beyond victimhood, powerlessness* to being empowered and having agency
Healing Historical Trauma

• Community Resilience
  – Emphasizes how people overcome adversity by drawing from the social and cultural networks and practices of the community
  – Moves beyond the individual to emphasizing the systemic and structural issues that may be causes of or solutions to personal and community suffering
  – Ongoing maintenance of balance for self and community

• Emphasizes:
  – Importance of historical context
  – Extended family roles and relationships
  – Oral traditions
  – The connection to land and the environment
  – Traditional healing practices
  – Spirituality
  – Political activism
Indigenous Framework Approach
Community Based Action Plan

Conventional Framework
GHWIC
- CHA
- PSE Assessment

Outcomes
- Community gardens
- Clinical linkages
- Healthy food availability

Spectrum of activities depends on:
- Conventional Framework
- Indigenous Framework Approach

Indigenous Framework Approach
Hozho
- CHA – Health defined by Hozho
- PSE Assessment – Cultural and inherent sovereignty

Outcomes
- Traditional gardening
- Linkages via kinship
- Traditional food availability
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Community Based Action Plan

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Defining culturally adapted and community based depends on:
- Community Health Assessment
- PSE Assessment
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**Indigenous Framework Approach**

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- **Prioritizes Relationships:** Protection and strengthening of Indian sovereignty, self-determination, self-sufficiency, and human rights
- **Responsible to Community:** Collaborative community-based; partnerships based; rooted in a balanced, harmonious, and reciprocal relationship
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Works Cited

Question and Answer
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