



Trauma Informed Therapy

Part 6 –

Colonialism, Indigenous Trauma and Healing

Avis Garcia, PhD, LAT, LPC, NCC,
Northern Arapaho

Wednesday, July 14th, 2021

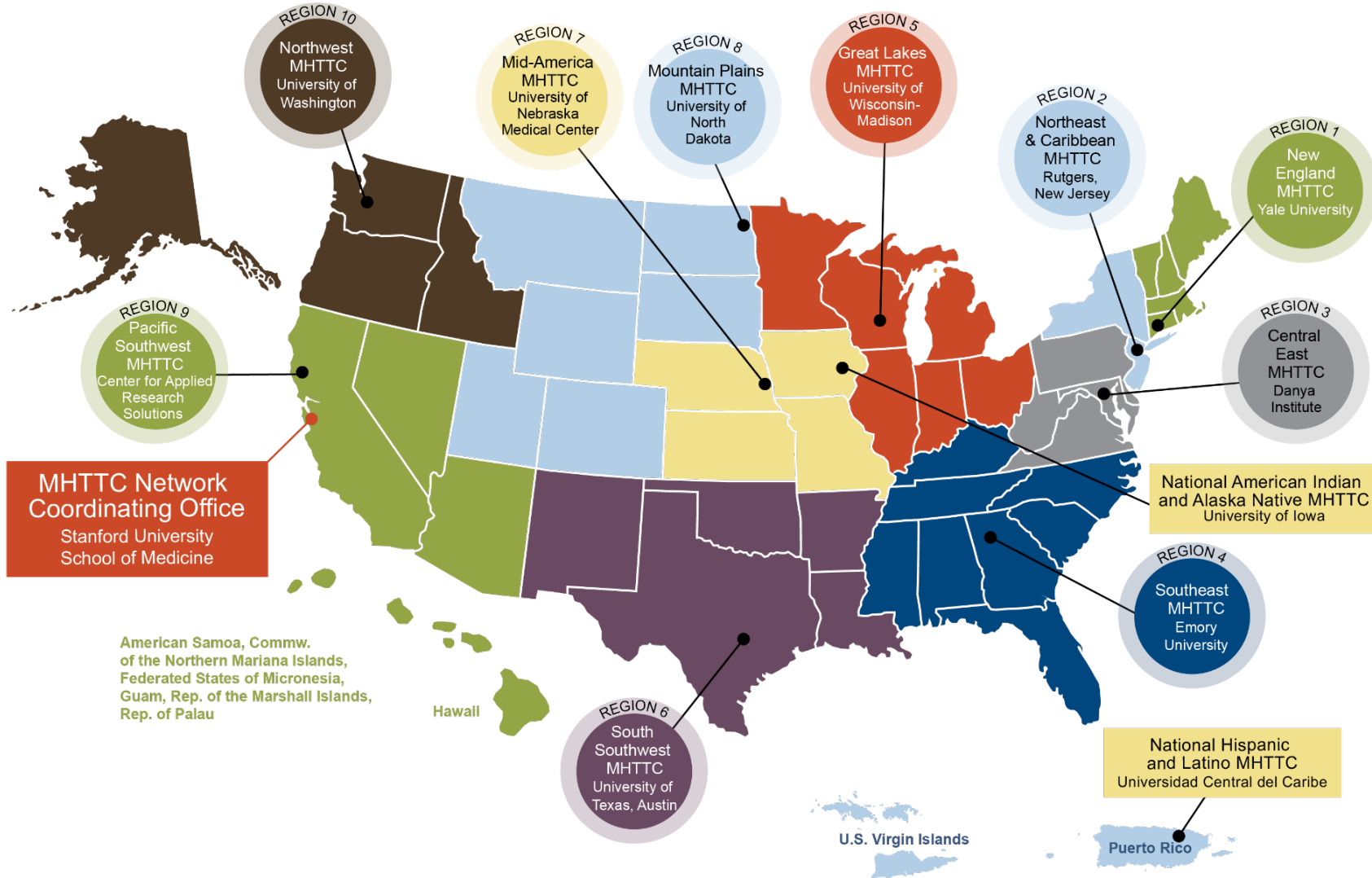


MHTTC

Mental Health Technology Transfer Center Network
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MHTTC Network

American Indian & Alaska Native Mental Health Technology Transfer Center





Substance Abuse and Mental Health
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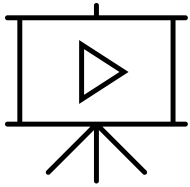
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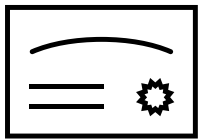


Follow-up

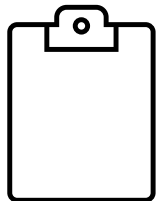
Following today's event, you will receive a follow up email, which will include:



Links to the presentation slides and recording, if applicable



Information about how to request and receive CEUs



Link to our evaluation survey (GPRA)

Land Acknowledgement

We would like to take this time to acknowledge the land and pay respect to the Indigenous Nations whose homelands were forcibly taken over and inhabited.

Past and present, we want to honor the land itself and the people who have stewarded it throughout the generations.

This calls us to commit to forever learn how to be better stewards of these lands through action, advocacy, support, and education.

We acknowledge the painful history of genocide and forced occupation of Native American territories, and we respect the many diverse indigenous people connected to this land on which we gather from time immemorial.

While injustices are still being committed against Indigenous people on Turtle Island, today we say thank you to those that stand with Indigenous peoples and acknowledge that land reparations must be made to allow healing for our Indigenous peoples and to mother earth, herself.

Dekibaota, Elleh Driscoll, Meskwaki and Winnebago Nations

Ttakimaweakwe, Keely Driscoll, Meskwaki and Winnebago Nations

Keokuk, Sean A. Bear, 1st. Meskwaki Nation



Today's Speaker

Avis Garcia, PhD, LAT, LPC, NCC is an enrolled member of the Northern Arapaho Nation and affiliated with the Eastern Shoshone Tribe of Wyoming. She earned a doctorate in counselor education and supervision at the University of Wyoming, and is also a Licensed Professional Counselor, and Licensed Addictions Therapist. For nineteen years she has been a mental health provider in the treatment of Native American youth and families. She is also an advocate of education in Indian Country, a resource provider for promoting cultural enhancement of evidence-based practices and practice-based evidence of treatment approaches for Native American children and their families exposed to trauma. Avis Garcia has more than nineteen years of experience and is knowledgeable about the concerns of implementation and adaptation of evidenced-based practices being introduced into Indian country. Avis is currently employed as an executive director of a nonprofit substance abuse treatment center in Cheyenne, Wyoming.



Avis Garcia, PhD
NAIAN Mental Health Technology Transfer Center
July 14, 2021

Colonialism, Indigenous Trauma and Healing



Objectives



- History
- Culture
- Implications for Substance Abuse
- Suicide
- Historical Trauma Theory
- Epigenetics
- ACE Study
- Forced Acculturation
- Boarding Schools



Objectives's Cont....

- Boarding Schools
- Addiction and Trauma
- How to Help
- Prevention & Healing
- Cultural Considerations

History



- Unlike many other ethnic minorities, Native Americans had resources and means to survive.
- 567 federally recognized tribes with 175 languages.
- European's introduced disease that decreased native populations to 10% of what they were at the end of the 18th century.

History continued . . .



- In 1887, U. S. Government judged that the Natives couldn't manage the land, so they placed the property in a trust.
- By removing land and forming reservations, families were displaced and separated.
- Existing literature points to the importance of non-Native practitioners understanding the unique history of Native people.



American Indians are not considered racial minority groups, but rather members of sovereign nations which are separate and distinct political entities.

Dual Citizenship

Formal Tribal Government Leadership
Structure and protocols.

Nations



Warfare/Genocide



Removal/Relocation



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Historical Trauma in Native Nations

Removing Food Sources



Conditions on the Reservations



Culture and Society



- 50% High School graduates
- 3x poverty rate of rest of population
- 50% NA's on or near reservation are unemployed
- Median family income is \$40,360
- 31% live below poverty
- Many drop out of high school and do not finish college
- Households headed by females



Implications for Substance Abuse

- Acculturation stress and decreased economic and educational opportunities on reservation, have been implicated in understanding increased risk for substance abuse among tribal youth.
- Recognition of differences in cultural values.

Alcohol & Drugs



- Alcohol-related motor vehicle fatalities are higher 68.1%
- Attitudes toward drinking vary, those on reservation more likely to binge drink
- NA's 6x more likely to die of alcohol related causes
- Cirrhosis is the 6th leading cause of death
- 62% of violent offenses involve alcohol, compared to 42% of other races.
- Violent crimes experienced by NA's 48% involved alcohol, 9% drugs, 14% both.

Suicide



- NA's are 2x more likely to attempt and complete suicide than the general population
- Low self-esteem, cultural identity conflicts, lack of positive role models, abuse history, social pressures to use substances, hopelessness and breakdown in the family are contributors to substance use that lead to increased suicidality and engagement in risky behaviors.



Health Disparities in Wyoming

Life Expectancy – Average Age of Death	Years
General Population	78.7
Native Americans in United States	71.1
Native Americans in Wyoming	53.1

Wyo Vital Stats

Mortality Rates/100,000 Population	Native Americans	Non-Natives
Cancer	185.70	173.10
Heart Disease	170.28	164.07
Accidents and Adverse Effects	121.01	61.75
Diabetes	90.01	23.20
Chronic Liver Disease	87.00	9.85
Infant Mortality/100	14.00	6.00

Causes of Deaths for Wyoming's Tribal Population 2001-10/11

Theory of HT

- Considered clinically applicable to Native American individuals by counselors, psychologists, and psychiatrists.
- NA's subjected to traumas that are specific historical losses of population, land, family, and culture. Resulting in historical loss symptoms related to social-environmental and psychological functioning that continue today. (Whitbeck, et al, 2004)
- As a result, subsequent generations left with feelings of shame, powerlessness, and subordination.



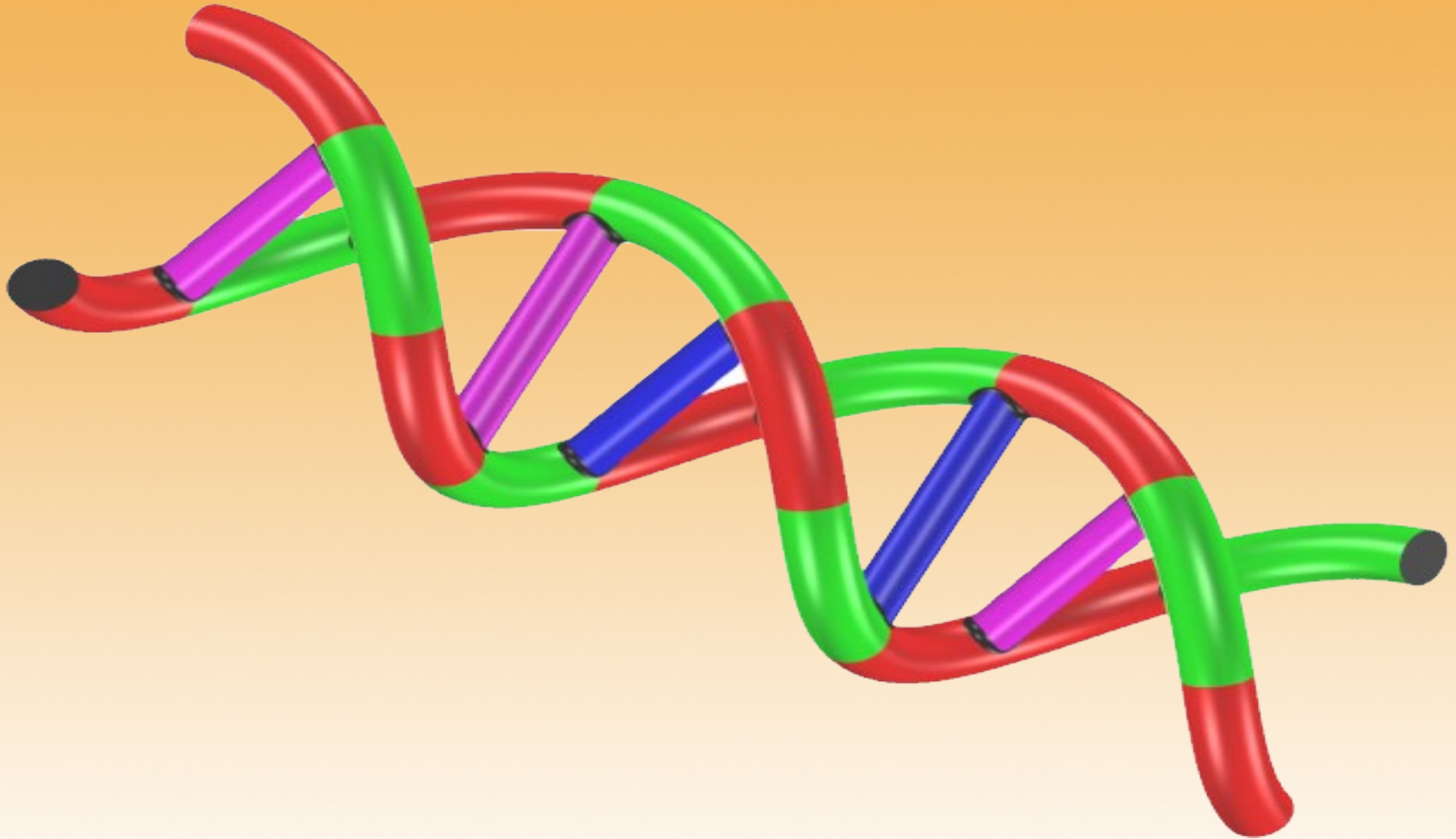
Historical Trauma (HT)

- Dr. Maria Yellow Horse Brave Heart defines *historical trauma* as “the cumulative emotional and psychological wounding over one’s lifetime and from generation to generation following loss of lives, land and vital aspects of culture.” (2003, p.7)
- The poverty, violence, poor health, suicide, unemployment, addiction, and hopelessness in many Native communities are clear symptoms of unresolved grief and pain due to genocide.

HT cont...

- Literature on PTSD of Jewish Holocaust
- US has not acknowledged responsibility for the holocaust of Native Americans
- Mental health professionals and educators often lack knowledge of tribe's history
- Oppression is prevalent throughout history
- Terms throughout: cultural identity crisis, forced acculturation, and Intergenerational Trauma are unfamiliar concepts of most MH professionals and non-Native educators.

Passed Through Generations



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Epigenetics

- How Biology Contributes to Cycles of Trauma
- How can one live with pain that you didn't personally experience?
- Evidence at the cellular level that powerful stressful environmental conditions can leave an imprint or "mark" on the epigenome (cellular genetic material) that can be carried into future generations with devastating consequences.
- Babies can be born with a predisposition to PTSD, and addictive behaviors due to environmental factors

DNA articles



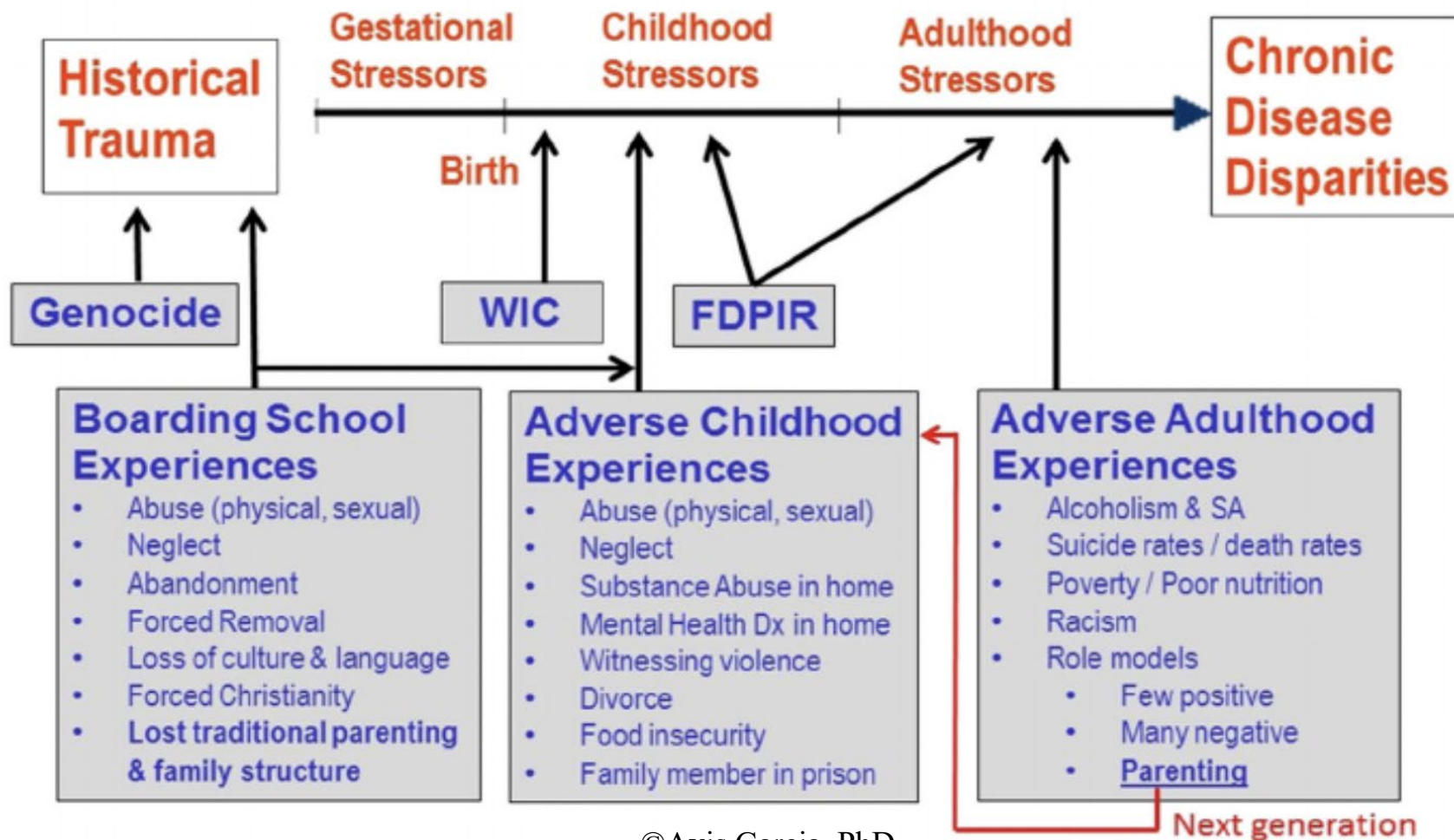
- Scientists have found that memories may be passed down through generations in our DNA. (Taken from *The Mind Unleashed*)
- Childhood trauma leaves a mark on DNA of some victims: Gene-environment interaction causes lifelong dysregulation of stress hormones. Max-Planck-Gesellschaft.

Articles

- Physical Transmission of Trauma
- <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/study-finds-ptsd-effects-may-linger-body-chemistry-next-generation>
- <https://newsmaven.io/indiancountrytoday/archive/trauma-may-be-woven-into-dna-of-native-americans-CbiAxpzar0WkMALhjrcGVQ/>

ACE study

Inter-Generational Basis for Chronic Disease Disparities Among American Indians and Alaska Natives



**Relationship
between early
childhood
trauma and
health and
well-being
problems
later in life.**

**Source: World Health
Organization**

Death



Birth



Understanding

- Existing literature on practice points to the importance of understanding the unique history of Native people and the impact of this history on contemporary realities.
- All points to the legacy of HT and the related unresolved grief (Braveheart-Jordan & DeBruyn, 1995).



Crazy Native Fact

Native Americans weren't allowed US citizenship until June 2, 1924

Let that sink in. We lived here first... for thousands of years. And less than a hundred years ago we were finally given citizenship.



Federal Law Denial

Denial of NA's to properly mourn their losses. Mourning practices disrupted in 1883 when Federal Law prohibited NA's from practicing traditional ceremonies. This disenfranchised grief has resulted in NA's not being able to carry out traditional grief practices (BraveHeart, et. al, 2011)

In 1978, American Indian Religious Freedom Act.

Northern Arapaho

- The right to vote governed by state law; until 1957.
- Important that the non-Native look at the history of the tribe first, to begin to understand the struggles of the people.
- Multicultural competence is an ethical mandate in accordance with ACA (2015)

History cont...

- Historical evidence in and out of the Rocky Mountains of Colorado
- Followed the buffalo
- Gold rusk in 1860's, disrupted life and pushed north, camped at Medicine Bow
- Several trails in Laramie mountains
- Beautiful Estes park region for generations
- Nov. 30, 1864 – Sand Creek Massacre under Col. John Chivington. Chief Black Kettle and Little Antelope.



**Damn any man who sympathizes with the
Indians. I have come to kill Indians and believe it
is right and honorable to use any means under
God's Heaven to kill them.**

**Colonel John Milton Chivington
U.S. Army**

Forced Acculturation



- 1878 military escort to Wind River Rez
- Shoshone there first, on-going strife. Traditional enemy of the Arapaho.
- Boarding School: 1900's denied practice of cultural and spiritual ways, families ripped apart, children taken, many children died.



Boarding Schools

“Kill the Indian, save the man” was the motto of Richard Henry Pratt, the most prominent Indian educator of the late 1800s.

Progressive reformers like Pratt believed it was essential to get Indian children away from their families and nations in order to prevent parents from raising the children in their own cultures. So the reformers founded boarding schools where children could be isolated from Indian languages, values, and traditions. Cultural erasure was the stated goal.

Stolen Children

These are actual tiny child handcuffs used by the U.S. government to restrain captured Native American children and drag them away from their families to send them to the Indian boarding schools where their identities, cultures and their rights to speak their Native languages were forcefully stripped away from them.



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General Richard Pratt

“A great general has said that the only good Indian is a dead one [...] In a sense, I agree with a sentiment but only this: that all Indian there is in the race should be dead. Kill the Indian in him, and save the man.” – paper read by Carlisle Indian School Founder, 1892



R.H. Pratt
Brig. Genl. U.S.A.

Boarding Schools



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CARLISLE INDIAN SCHOOL 1890



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Carlisle



A REPRESENTATIVE FIRST PARTY.

Avis Garcia, PhD

FORCED ASSIMILATION



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At Carlisle

There were 10,000
Indian children
between 1879-1918.

There are 186 graves
that are marked with
tombstones, an
unknown number
buried without



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The Children of Carlisle

- <https://visionmakermedia.org/home-from-school/>

NATIONS

Foster Care/Adoption Era (1957-1967)



Indian Relocation Act 1956


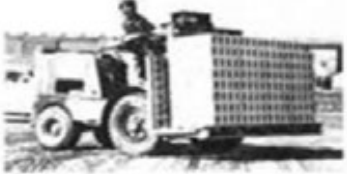
COME TO DENVER
THE CHANCE OF YOUR LIFETIME !

Good Jobs
Retail Trade
Manufacturing
Government—Federal, State, Local
Wholesale Trade
Construction of Buildings, Etc.

Happy Homes
Beautiful Houses
Many Churches
Exciting Community Life
Over Half of Homes Owned by Residents
Convenient Stores—Shopping Centers

Training
Vocational Training
Auto Mech., Beauty Shop, Drafting,
Nursing, Office Work, Watchmaking
Adult Education
Evening High School, Arts and Crafts
Job Improvement, Home-making

Beautiful Colorado
“Tallest” State, 48 Mt. Peaks Over 14,000 Ft.
350 Days Sunshine, Mild Winters
Zoo, Museums, Mountain Parks, Drives
Picnic Areas, Lakes, Amusement Parks
Big Game—Hunting, Trout Fishing, Camping



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DISTRUST IN SCHOOLS



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Outcomes of it all

- Loss of language
- Sense of guilt or language not being passed on
- Language loss tied to boarding school
- Sense of hopelessness
- Erosion of traditional family and community-loss of safety and caring for one another
- Loss of land and broken treaties
- Strong sense of loss and despair regarding violence, drug and alcohol loss

Elder interviews: (Journal of Psychology, Vol. 33, June 2004)

Unresolved Trauma and Social Outcomes

- “80% Correlation between trauma and addiction.” (Linda A Curran).
- 2/3 in recovery for addiction have experienced 1+ ACEs
- Research evidence consistently finds elevated rates of trauma among incarcerated individuals. (Wolf, N. & Shi, J. 2012)
- 75-93% of 93,000 children incarcerated have 1+ ACEs *Healing Invisible Wounds: Why Investing in Trauma-Informed Care for Children Makes Sense*

Addiction & Trauma



- Experience of trauma increases likelihood of turning to substances to cope.
- Self-medication
- Escape painful emotions and therefore control them
- Regulate and relieve intense feelings
- Suppress painful memories
- Find relief
- Gain sense of control

Substance use

- Reenactment of trauma
- Expression of self-blame, self-hate
- Self-soothe
- Maintain sense of self if feeling threatened with loss of identity
- Escape perceived rejection - substance is loyal friend
- Express ownership – “It’s my body”
- To connect with others



Substances Functions

- Initial impulse to self-medicate appears to help
- Stability – expectations from substances can appear reliable compared to human relationships
- Alcohol- lowers agitation, initially sedates a spiking cortisol reaction from traumatic event, sleep disturbances, nightmares, and other intrusive symptoms.
- Opioids – calm feelings of rage and aggression
- Cocaine/Methamphetamine – anti-depressant impact



REAL IMPACTS

- Compounds original symptoms
- Exacerbate discomfort
- Increases alienation from others and self
- Promotes greater dysfunction
- Keeps survivor from finding healthy ways to cope
- Prevents from getting needs met
- Takes away control – leads to loss of control in life
- Prevents healing



Learned Helplessness

- The individual **CANNOT** process their own way back to normal response patterns.
- The longer an individual is in an uncontrollable situation, the greater the number of times they will have practices inappropriate responses.
- Days...Months...Years...Decades...Generations...of building highly practiced inappropriate response.
Such as ...Drinking, drugs, violence, breaking the law, other addictions (Process addictions)



How to help Native Americans

- Culturally Based Care (CBC) or Culturally Based Treatment (CBT): Traditional practices of Western models of care adapted for NA's.
- Involve community, family and emphasizing relationships and respect, and open-door policy as foundation for culturally relevant interventions.
- Difference in communication patterns. Including ability to tolerate silence and listen to honor communication norms of NAs as with storytelling.
- Understand humor and be patient.

Treatment/Prevention



Native American/AA

- Uncritical attitude
- Cooperation
- Sharing
- Humble presentation
- Happiness
- Honor Elders
- Silence
- Tribal values
- Cultural healing
- Unity with nature

Traditional AA

- Critical attitude
- Competition
- Ownership
- Outgoing/self-righteous
- Success
- Honor self
- Verbalism/outspoken
- Individualism
- Synthetic drugs
- Separateness with nature



Healing Journey

- Joseph Gone (2009) Community-Based Treatment for Native Americans Historical Trauma: Prospects for Evidence-based Practice.
- 4 themes emerged from the data:
 1. Emotional Burdens “ Carrying the Pain”
 2. Cathartic Disclosure- Confess & purge influence
 3. Self-As-Project Reflexivity- Lifelong process
 4. Impact of Colonization: Reclamation of Indigenous Heritage, Identity, and Spirituality



Healing Journey

Three links central to the healing process

- Culture – Relearn traditional practices, Language
- History- Reconceptualization of life experience in context of European Colonization.
- Identity – more robust post-colonial Indigenous identity by reclaiming cultural and spiritual practices.

Native Hope



- Coming to Terms with the Past and our People's History
- One's own story and own past.
- Not our fault.
- Begin to truly heal and step into greater freedom, greater hope, greater responsibility to live differently than before.

Hope & Courage



Through fully embracing our stories and our pasts, we can choose to end cycles of grief and trauma in order to offer a better life for the next generation. We can let go of bad patterns, let the cycles of abuse and addiction die.

- There are strong Native men and women finding healing.
- We believe stories have healing power (science backs this up) Narrative therapy.
- Sharing stories of hope and healing.



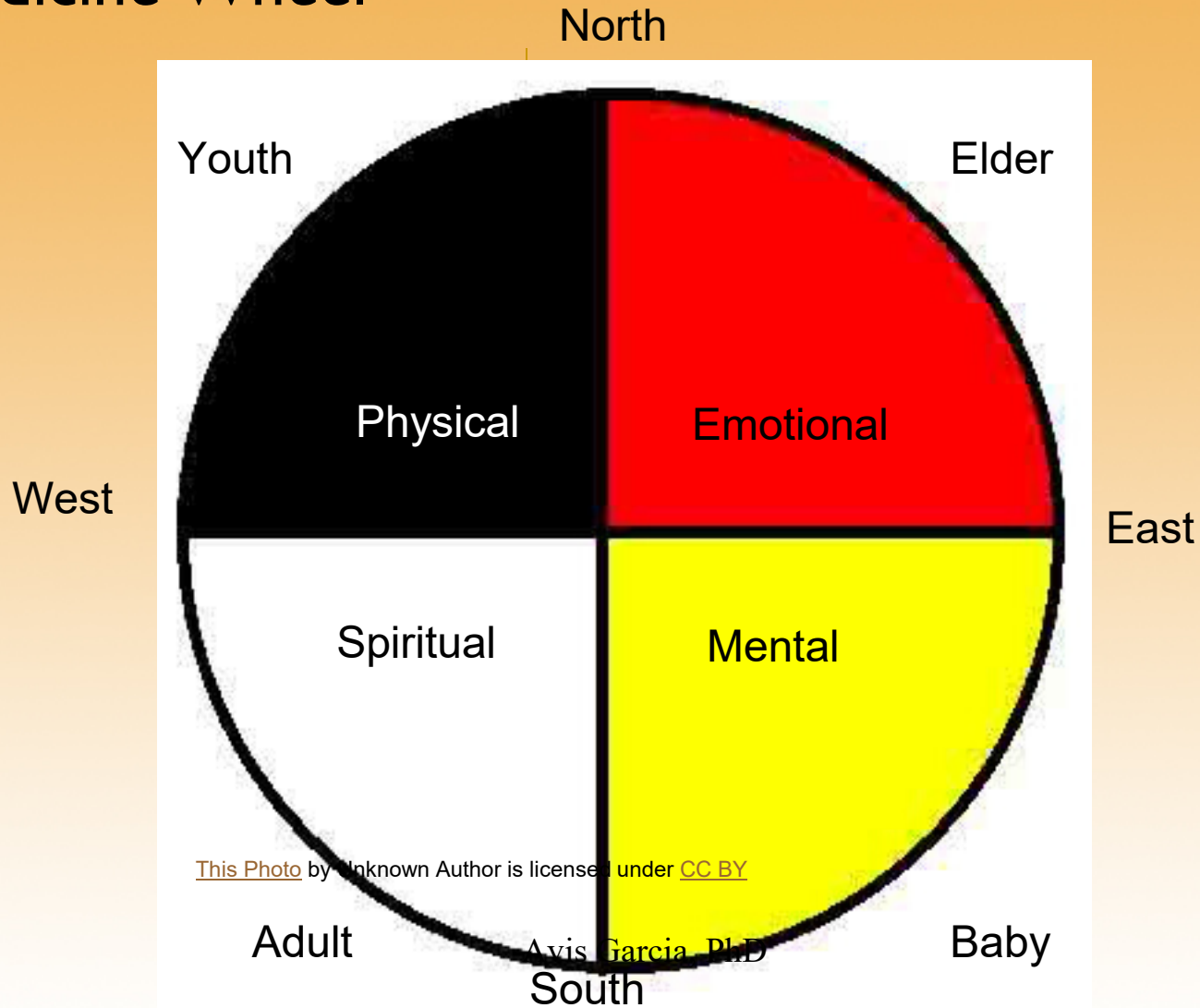
Cultural Constructs

- Include family
- Respect
- Spirituality
- Traditionalism

Integrated into treatment & prevention in order to gain acceptance from NA help seekers.

Wellness

- Medicine Wheel



Manageable



- As with other diseases “addicts are not responsible for their disease, but they are responsible for what they do about their disease” and “they are fully responsible for their behaviors at every stage of healing.”
- Women do get better if treatment addresses both addiction and trauma

Self-management



- Mindfulness – meditation, spirituality, prayer, self-talk
- Movement - Dance, exercise, walking, CrossFit, hiking, yoga, running, sports
- Rhythm – Music, singing, drumming
- Art/Creativity- beading, sewing, drawing, painting, crafting

Sweat Lodge



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Riding the Wave



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Individual Capabilities

- Strengths Based
- Positive View
- Self-Efficacy
- Self-Regulation



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Treatment/Prevention Continued

- NA cultures contain all the necessary knowledge to socialize mentally, healthy, substance-free youth. This knowledge need not be replaced with information or socialization derived from European culture.
- Cultural ways and knowledge must be viewed as equal to social science prevention and TX knowledge.
- There exist within NA cultures developmental risk and protective factors.
- Treatment must be culturally specific to be successful.



Cultural Considerations

- Sharing stories as way of education
- Keep session informal in nature and conduct in a comfortable setting, as well as allowing for flexible start and end time.
- I learned from personal experience NAs populations prefer to work without time pressures or constraints. “Indian Time”

Culture & Spirituality



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Storytelling





NATIVE PRIDE

- <https://www.nativeprideus.org>
- Dr. Clayton Small
 - “The Good Road of Life” adults
 - “Native H.O.P.E. (Helping Our People Endure) Youth



Ha Hou!

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