



# AI/AN Mental Health: The Role of Spirituality

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Dine'

Behavioral Health Consultant

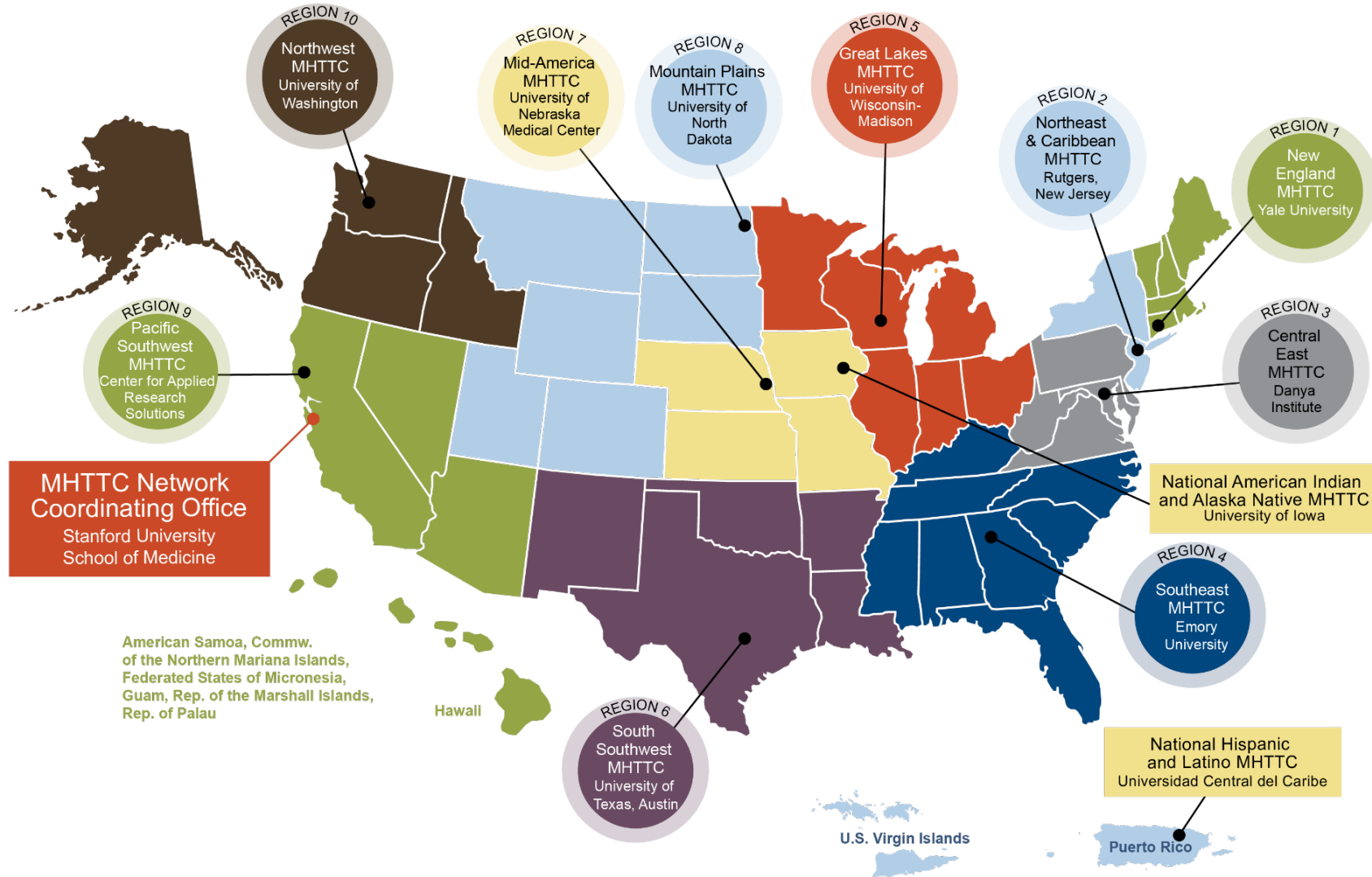


**MHTTC**

**Mental Health Technology Transfer Center Network**  
Funded by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

**MHTTC Network**

# American Indian & Alaska Native Mental Health Technology Transfer Center





Substance Abuse and Mental Health  
Services Administration

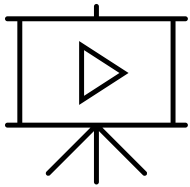
The National American Indian and Alaska Native Mental Health Technology Transfer Center is supported by a grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).

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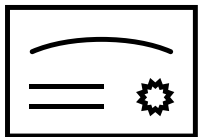


# Follow-up

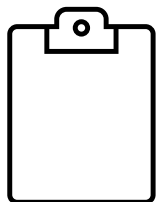
Following today's event, you will receive a follow up email, which will include:



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, 1<sup>st</sup>. Meskwaki Nation

# Today's Speaker

- I am Dine' (Navajo) From New Mexico. I'm currently a Native American behavioral health consultant. My career has been largely within and around the Navajo Nation, Native non-profits and most recently in rural Alaska, in both inpatient and outpatient settings. My work in behavioral health has been heavily towards developing Native trauma-appropriate approaches that are healing and effective in tribal behavioral health prevention, Intervention, and treatment services.
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- My work includes extensive experience as a consultant with SAMHSA in program development and evaluation, culturally-based prevention and intervention services, public policy, grant reviewing, and American Indian/Alaskan Native modalities. I'm also trainer in motivational interviewing and historical trauma.





# Webinar Objectives

*1. Define and describe mental health.*

*2. Describe eurocentric approaches to spirituality and mental health*

*3. Describe Native approaches to spirituality and mental health*

*4. Describe the Dine'-centric perspective on mental wellbeing*

What is your perspective?

What is a  
mental  
health  
disorder?

What is your perspective?

What is a  
mental  
health  
disorder?



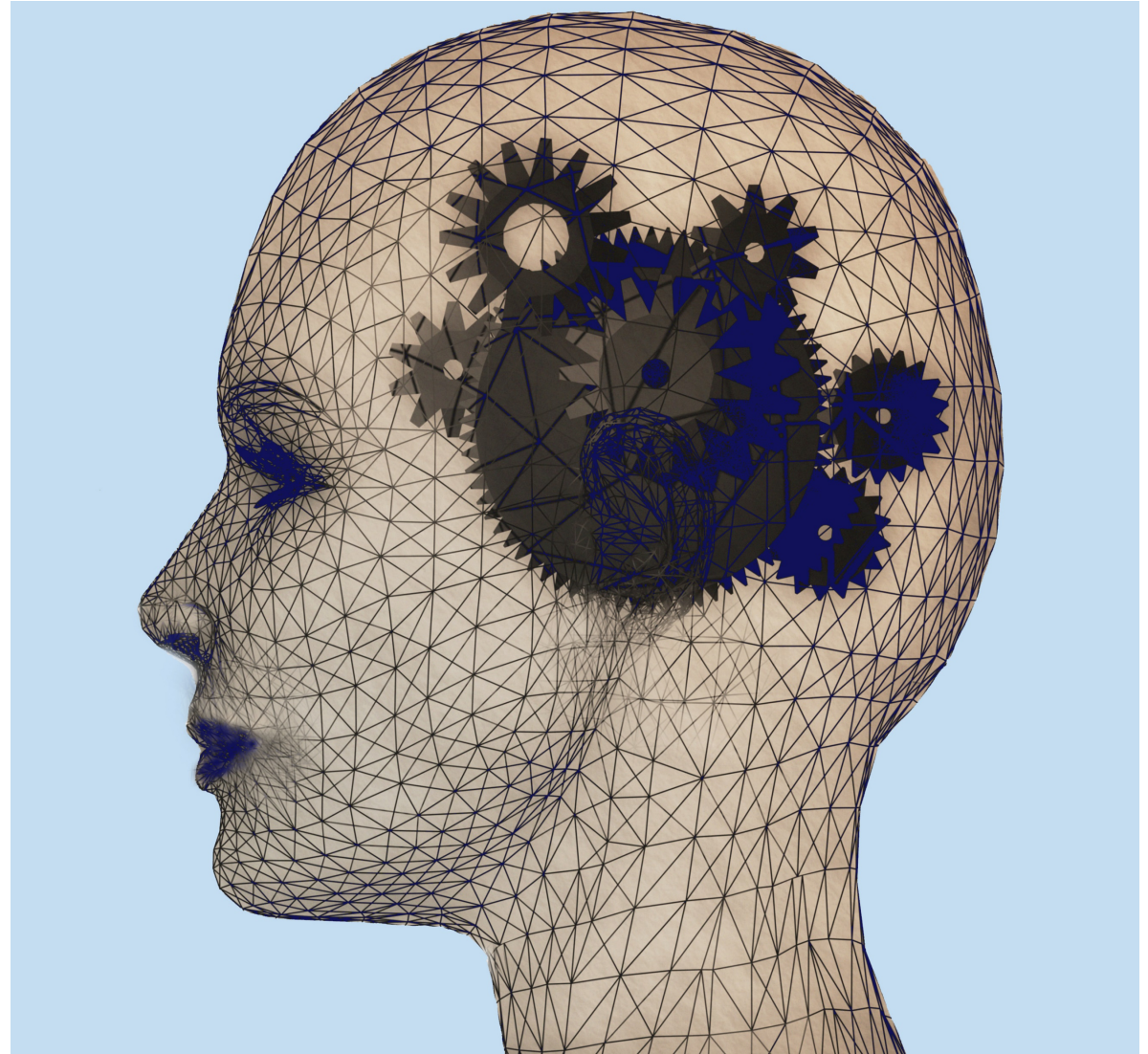


# Indian Health Services

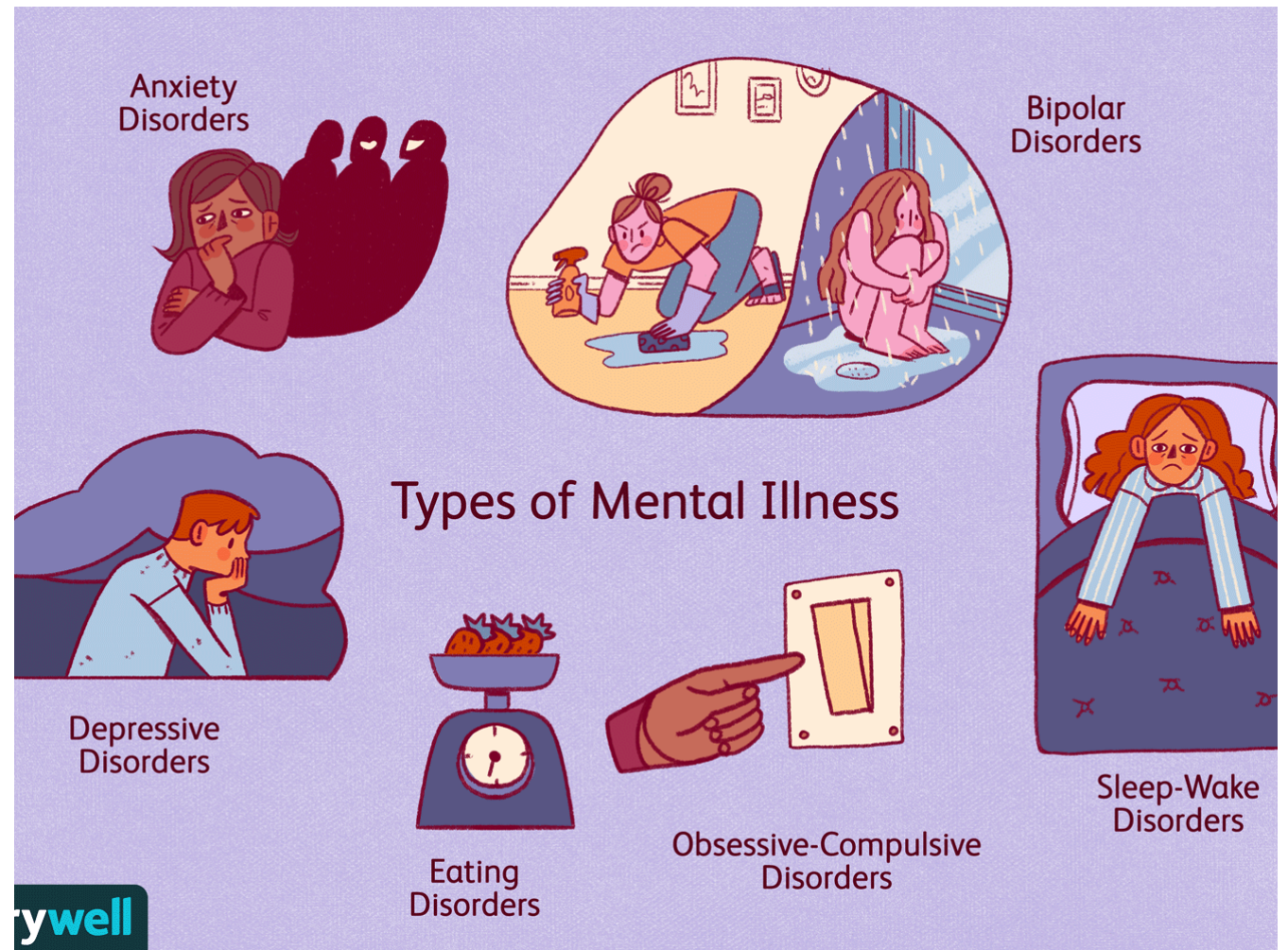
## What is Mental Health?

Mental health is important to every person's overall health and well-being. While physical health relates to our whole body's condition, mental health is about how our mind deals with feelings, such as stress, happiness, or sadness, and the actions and choices we make.

Just like our overall health, we can be born with or develop diseases and conditions that influence our mental health. Mental illnesses and disorders are conditions that specifically affect a person's thinking, feelings, mood, or behavior. People can be born with a disorder such as Autism, develop a life-long disease, such as bipolar disorder, as an adult, or experience short or long periods of depression.



List, in chat,  
two mental  
health  
disorders you  
think have the  
most negative  
impact on  
Native  
Americans?







# AI/AN Mental Health Disorders

## Psychological Effects

- Higher prevalence of depression, anxiety, eating disorders, suicide attempts among children whose parents misuse alcohol than their peers
- Low self esteem, tension, anxiety, depressed feelings, acting out behaviour are often reflections of insecurity due to a difficult home environment

- High depression rates
- High anxiety rates
- High substance use disorder rates



# Some adverse health conditions

.Suicide rates for AI/AN people are 1.6 times higher than the U.S. all-races rate

AI/AN communities are significantly more likely to report past-year alcohol and substance use disorders than any other race

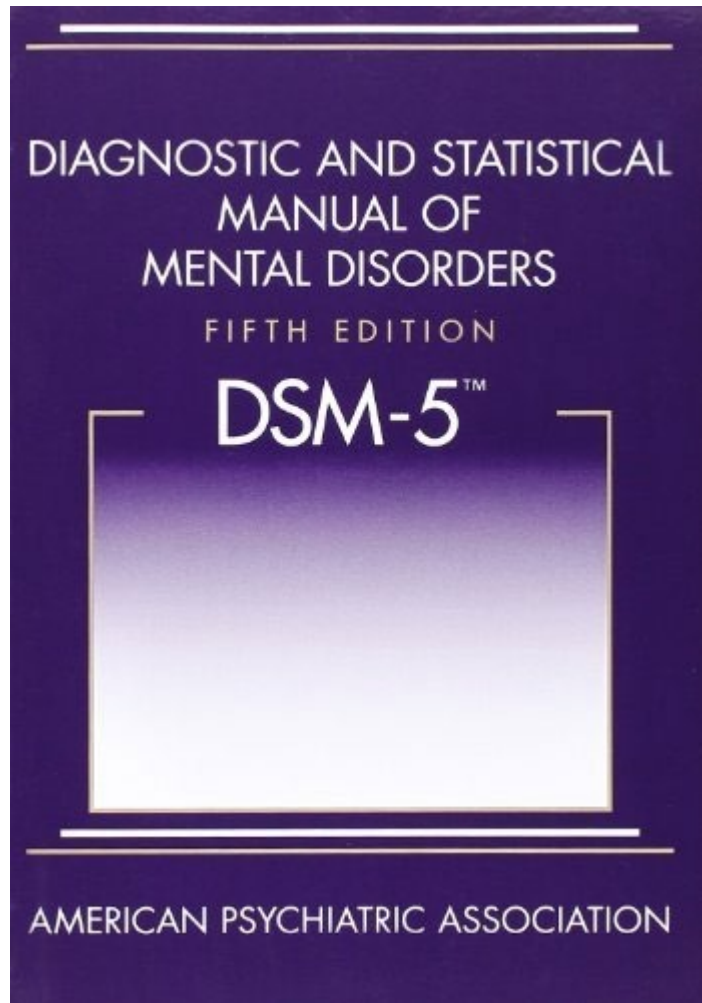
AI/AN women are reported as having among the highest rates of sexual assault and intimate partner violence victimization

Highest male mortality rate than any other race



Social impact of mental illness

# Mental Health: Euro-American &/OR Native American





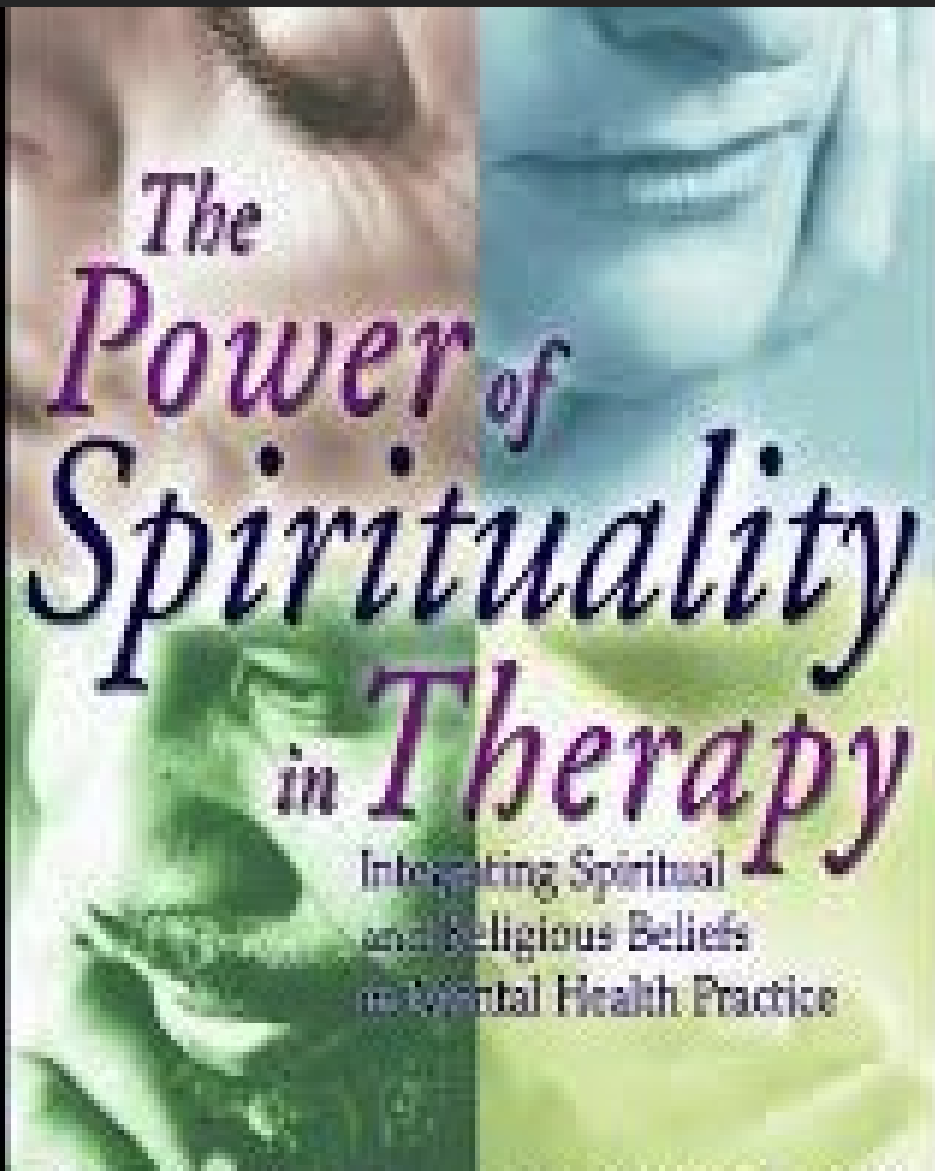
# INTEGRATING SPIRITUALITY INTO TREATMENT



RESOURCES FOR PRACTITIONERS

EDITED BY WILLIAM K. MILLER





# SPIRITUALITY, MENTAL HEALTH, AND SOCIAL SUPPORT

A COMMUNITY APPROACH

*Edited by Beate Jakob and Birgit Weyel*

STUDIES IN SPIRITUAL CARE

# and Mental Health

*Journals for the Journey*

Edited by  
Mary Ellen Goyko  
Peter Gilbert  
and Vicky Nichols

Foreword by John D. Sarno

# Spirituality and Mental Health

*Clinical Applications*

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Gary W. Hartz, PhD

# Serenity Prayer

God, grant me the serenity  
To accept the things I cannot Change;  
The courage to change the things I can;  
And the wisdom to know the difference



# American Indian & Alaskan Native Spirituality

- “The Lakota culture had specific rituals and practices for grieving that allowed for a year of publicly expressed mourning, followed by a ceremony to heal that grief. U.S. policies outlawing native ceremonies interrupted the process of grieving over events such as the Wounded Knee Massacre of 1890, in which the U.S. Army killed between 150 and 300 Lakota men, women, and children.”

**TIP 61, Behavioral Health Services for  
American Indians and Alaska Natives, page  
20**



## TIP 61, page 46

- Behaviors that mainstream providers might label as symptoms of mental illness may be seen among American Indians and Alaska Natives as the expression of special gifts (e.g., hallucinations, manic symptoms). Native peoples may also perceive physical conditions as sacred; for example, dementia may be viewed as a process or sign that the person's spirit has already crossed over into the next world. Although the body has remained behind as it prepares to leave, the person's spirit is already communicating in the spirit world, making it difficult for those left behind to understand the person's language and behavior. Therefore, caring for individuals who are transitioning may be perceived as sacred work.

What Native-centric approaches to recovery, healing, or wellness are there?



How do you refer  
to God/Creator,  
Higher Power in  
our language?

Put your  
response in chat



# Dine' Way of Being

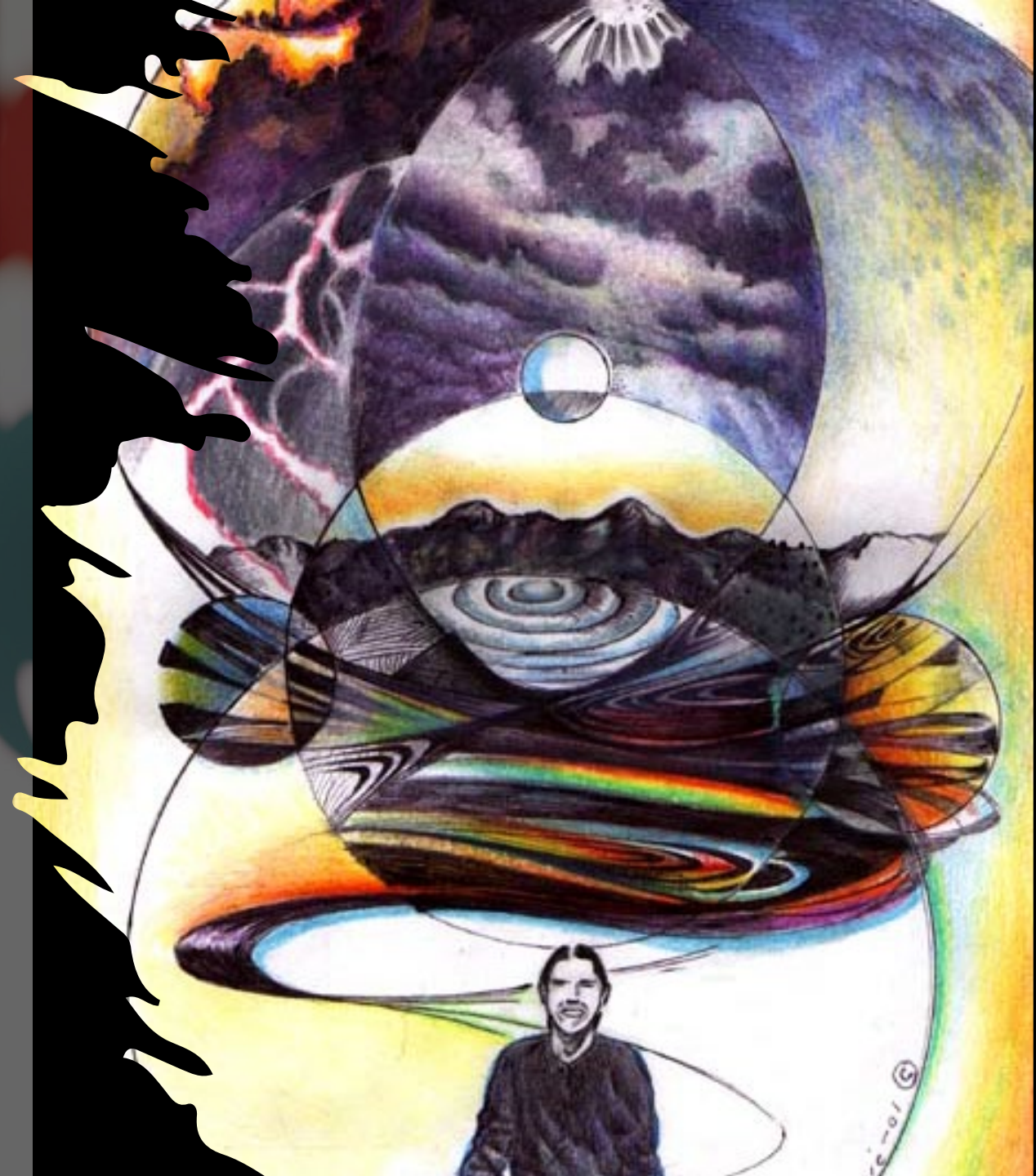
Identity; who one is

Thoughts; positive/negative

Feelings; positive/negative

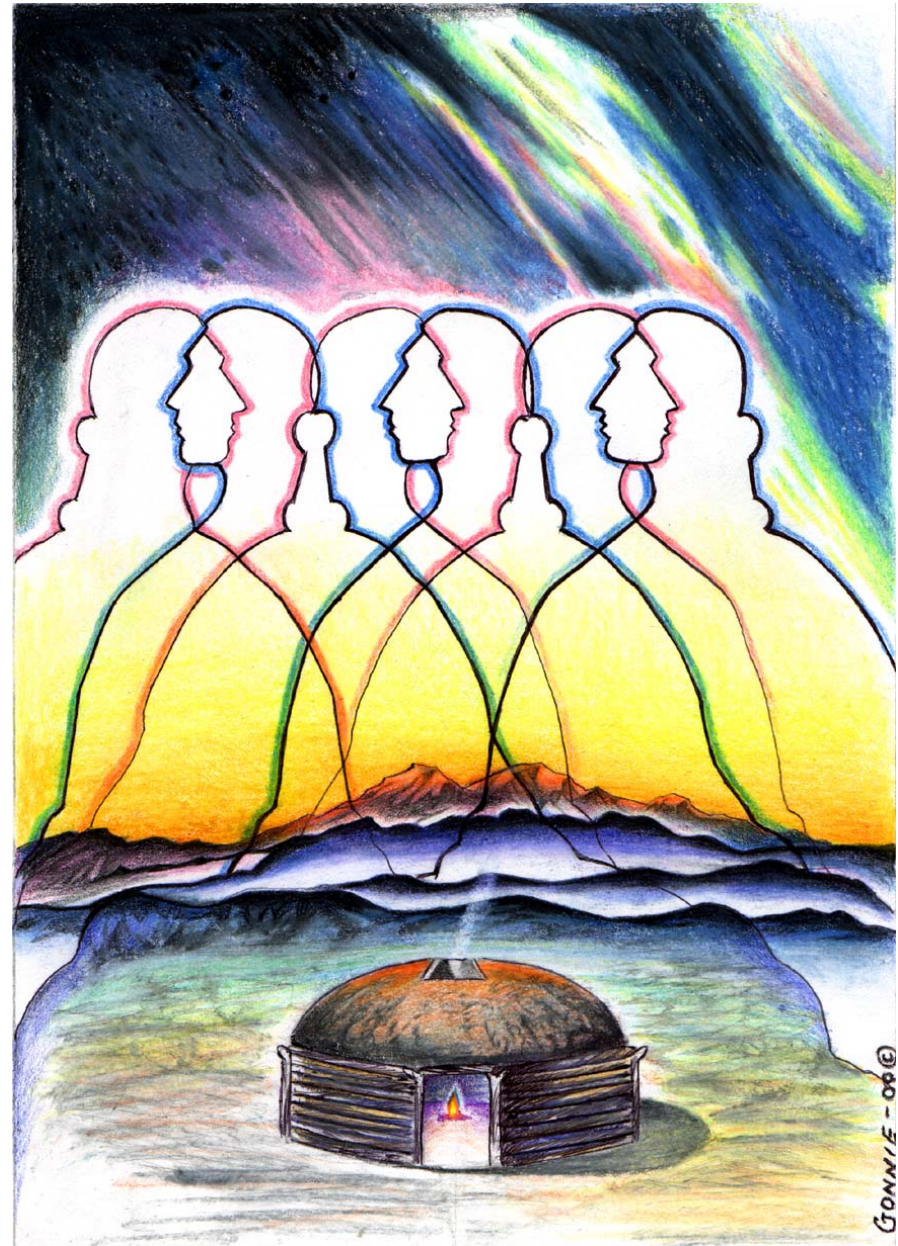
Being; to have form and exist

Behavior; healthy or harmful





Being a  
sacred  
person,  
persons,  
people



Identity  
“who am  
I?”

Kinyaa'áanii

*nishíí*

Tł'ízi Łání

*báshishchíin*

Tsi'naajinii

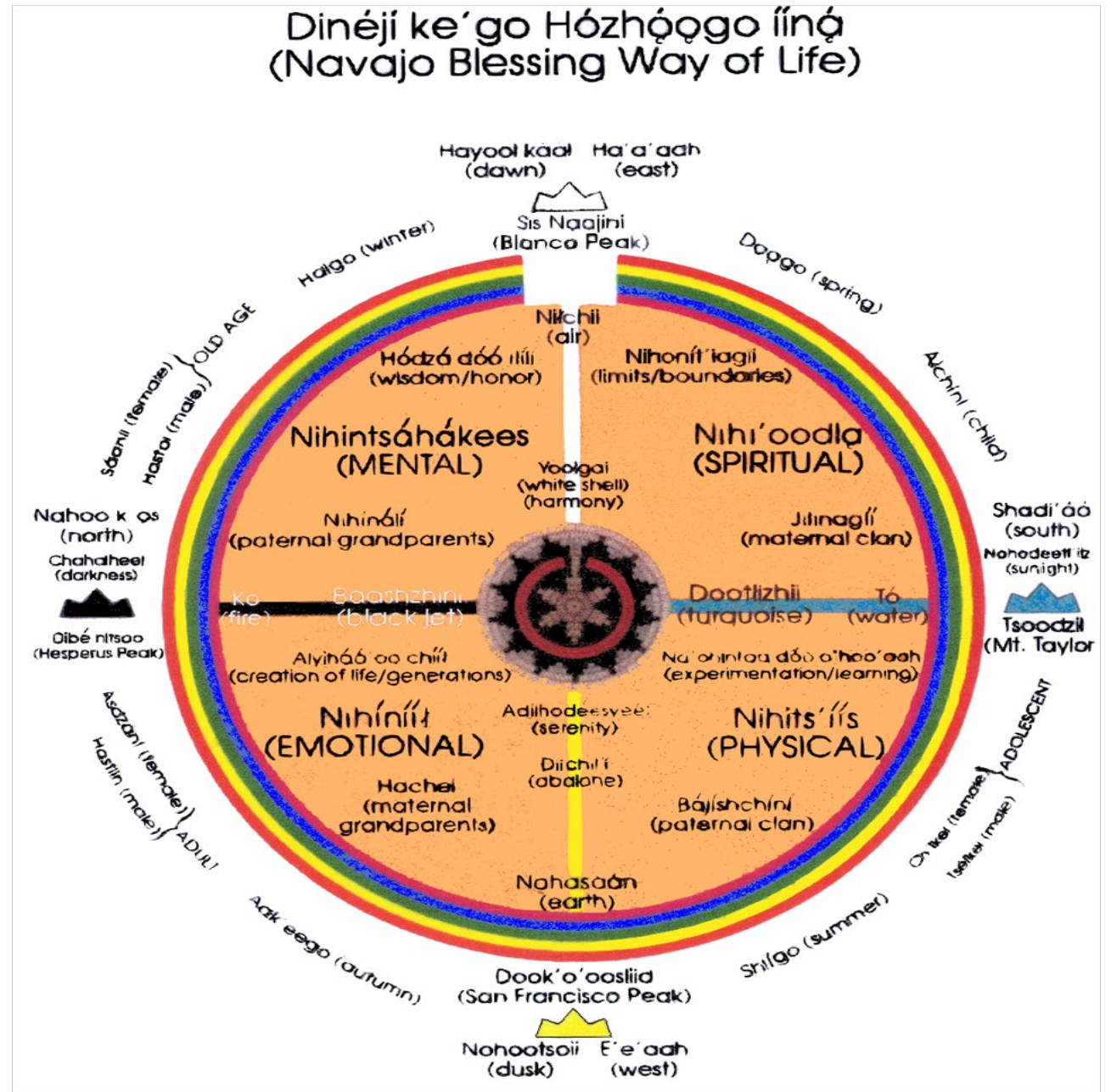
*dashicheii*

Tódich'íí'níi

*dashinali*



All have purpose  
and order





Respect

Attentiveness

Relating





# Contact information



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