

HISTORICAL TRAUMA

Ray Daw, MA

Credit: Maria Yellowhorse Braveheart, PhD

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INTRODUCTION

- Historical trauma is a model developed by Maria Yellowhorse Braveheart in the mid-1980's. This Native-centric model has become the premier approach towards understanding how colonization has, in most cases, adversely impacted native populations. But, most importantly, addresses ways to adopt healing modalities that are healthy and sustained.
-
- This presentation will be focused on boarding school trauma; confronting the trauma, understanding the trauma, releasing the pain, and transcending the trauma.

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WHAT IS HISTORICAL TRAUMA?

- **Historical trauma** is cumulative emotional and psychological wounding over the lifespan and across generations, emanating from massive group trauma
- *Historical unresolved grief* is the grief that accompanies the trauma.

(Brave Heart, 1995, 1998, 1999, 2000)

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WHAT IS HISTORICAL TRAUMA (CON'T)?

- The **historical trauma response** is a constellation of features in reaction to massive group trauma
- This response is observed among Lakota and other Native populations, Jewish Holocaust survivors and descendants, Japanese American internment camp survivors and descendants.

(Brave Heart, 1998, 1999, 2000)

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HISTORICAL TRAUMA

- 1. Isn't about trauma only
- 2. Is about healing from grief
- 3. Is about being resilient

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THE DEVELOPMENT OF HISTORICAL TRAUMA THEORY AND INTERVENTIONS

- ▣ 1985-1988 – Developed terms *historical trauma*, *historical unresolved grief*, and *historical trauma response*; began preliminary historical trauma intervention development; continued national presentations; overwhelmingly positive response to HT concept from Native communities across the country
- ▣ 1992 – Implemented & evaluated first Native *historical trauma* intervention (dissertation research); founded TN; joined faculty at University of Denver GSSW; worked on completing dissertation

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HT: BUILDING A CASE FOR BP

- HTUG training has been delivered now to several tribes across the country
- Over 150 HT presentations & workshops
- Over 20 journal articles & book chapters in print
- HT theory & TN now nationally known
- Research & evaluation, publication, grant reviews, grant writing, marketing, & knowledge dissemination through the video & conferences
- Simultaneously working at local and national levels

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NEED FOR HT THEORY & INTERVENTIONS

- ▣ American Indians may have a higher trauma threshold, due to severe and chronic trauma exposure, and may not meet PTSD criteria
- ▣ Probability of cultural bias in PTSD assessment
- ▣ 2/3 of American Indian youth affirm multiple traumas yet do not meet PTSD criteria; AI incidence is 22%
- ▣ Need to incorporate cumulative trauma including genocide, racism, and oppression as communal trauma adding to complex individual trauma

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(Brave Heart & DeBruyn, 1998; Manson et al., 1996, Robin et al., 1996)

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HISTORICAL TRAUMA RESPONSE FEATURES

- Identification with the dead
- Depression
- Attempts to numb the pain through substance abuse
- Suicidal ideation and gestures

(HTR is similar to Survivor's Child Complex – see Kestenberg, Fogelman, & Others)

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HISTORICAL TRAUMA RESPONSE FEATURES

- ▣ Hypervigilance
- ▣ Fixation to trauma
- ▣ Somatic symptoms
- ▣ Survivor guilt
- ▣ Anger
- ▣ Psychic numbing

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HISTORICAL TRAUMA RESPONSE FEATURES(CON'T)

- Loyalty to ancestral suffering & the deceased
- Death wishes – to join deceased ancestors
- Difficulty modulating/ regulating affect
- Low self-esteem
- Victim Identity

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HISTORICAL TRAUMA RESPONSE FEATURES

- ▣ **Vitality in own life seen as a betrayal to ancestors who suffered so much**
- ▣ **Compensatory fantasies**
- ▣ **Parental boarding school trauma passed to offspring – impaired parenting**

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EXERCISE

- How many have parents who were in boarding school?
- How many have grandparents who were in boarding school?
- How many have great-grandparents who were in boarding school?

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HISTORICAL TRAUMA INTERVENTION: FOUR MAJOR INTERVENTION COMPONENTS

• Confronting historical trauma

- Understanding the trauma
- Releasing our pain
- Transcending the trauma

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THE NATIVE AMERICAN EXPERIENCE

Colonization and
forced migration
of tribes

Internment of
tribes after
conquest

Repression of
indigenous
practices,
beliefs,
language, and
identity



Paternalism by governmental
institutions, religious organizations, and
reorganization of established governance.

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CARLISE

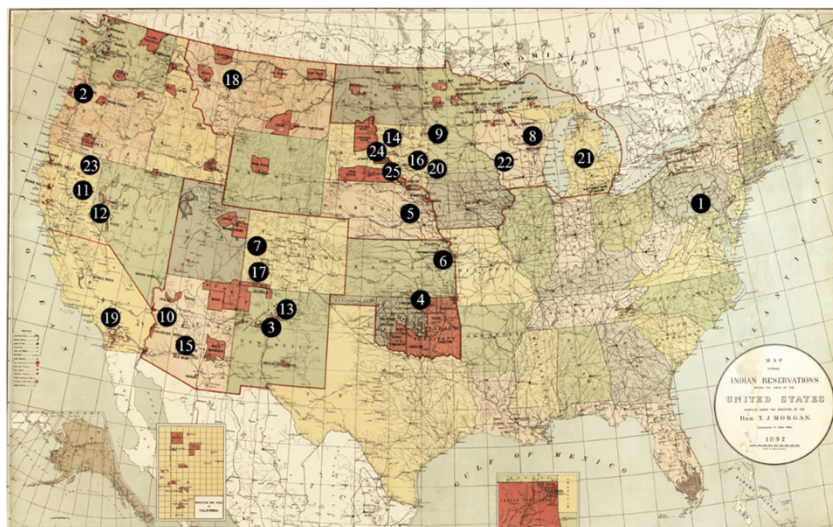
- “Kill the Indian, save the man.”, William Pratt
- 1879 to 1918
- more than 10,000 Native children from every U.S. tribe forcibly brought there
- Upon arrival, they were forbidden to speak their native languages and severely punished if they did. Their long hair was cut and they received Euro-American names and uniforms.

2018 Eastern Pennsylvania Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church

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560 FEDERAL TRIBES & 200 STATE TRIBES

Locations of Indian Boarding Schools throughout the United States

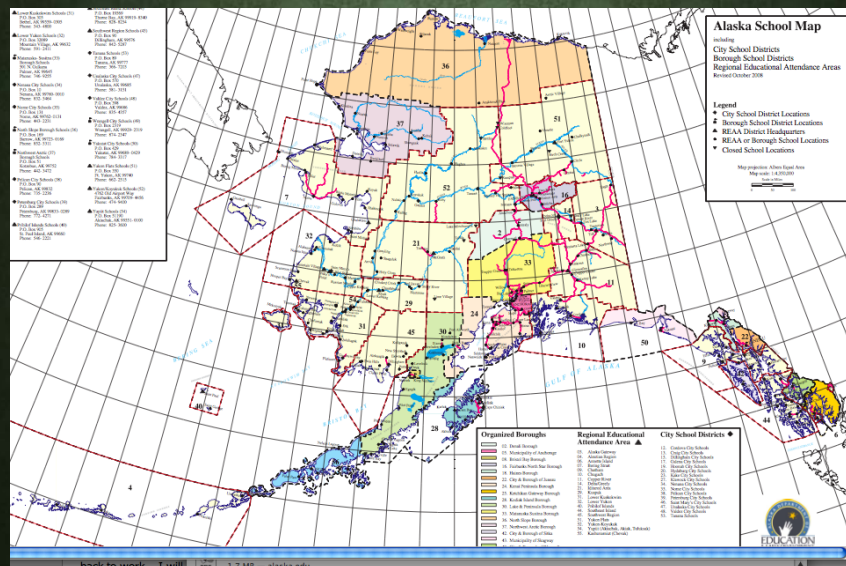


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BOARDING SCHOOL HISTORY

- By 1885, 106 [Indian Schools] had been established, many of them on abandoned military installations" using military personnel and Indian prisoners Native American boarding schools
- In 1973, 60,000 American Indian children were estimated to be living in boarding school dormitories (Brown Quarterly, 4(3))
- 45 on-reservation boarding schools, seven off-reservation boarding schools, and 14 peripheral dormitories (Carla Many Bear, American Indian Boarding Schools Haunt Many", NPR
- From 1879 to the present day, it is estimated that hundreds of thousands of Native Americans as children attended Indian boarding schools

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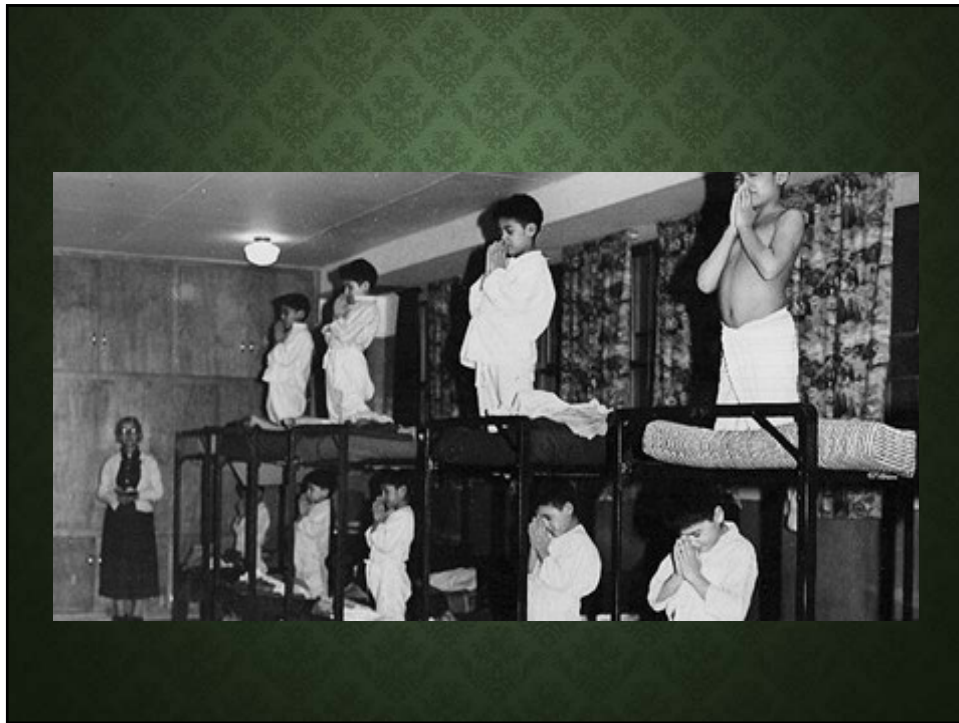


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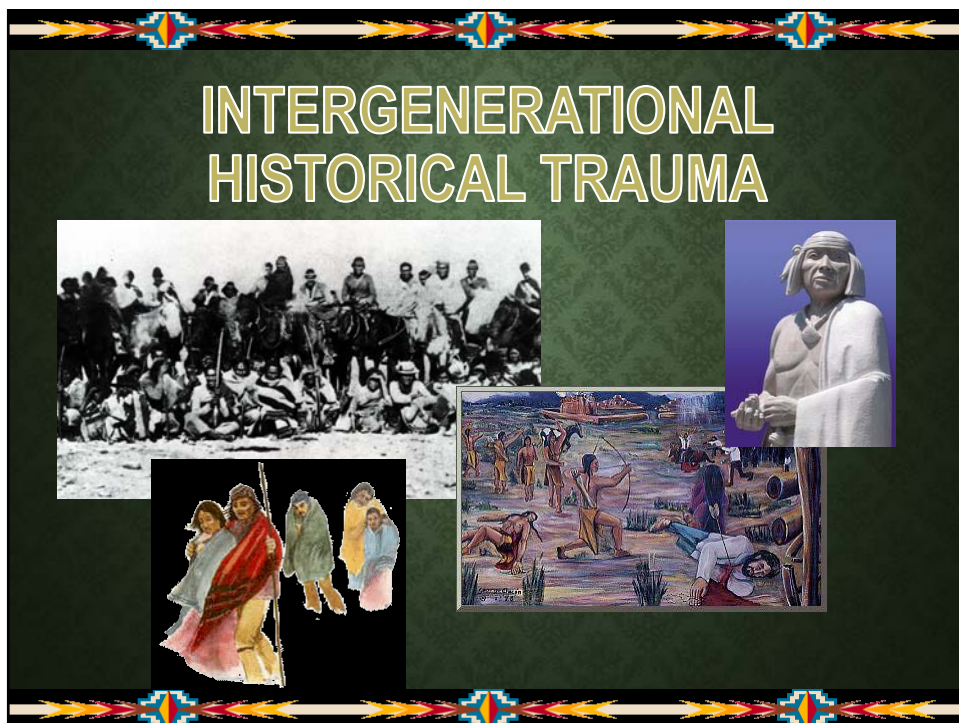
BOARDING SCHOOL CONDITIONS

- Family separation
- Sexual abuse
- Physical abuse
- Non-Native meals
- Non-Native practices
- Christian teachings
- Emotional abuse
- Bullying
- Regimented standards
- Non-Native clothing
- No Native language
- Isolation as punishment

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HISTORICAL TRAUMA INTERVENTION: FOUR MAJOR INTERVENTION COMPONENTS

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• Understanding the trauma

- Releasing our pain
- Transcending the trauma

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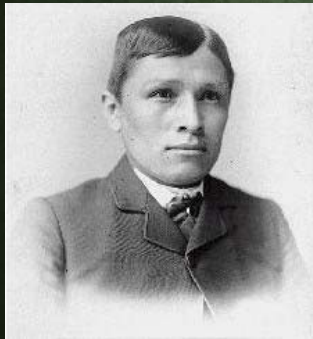
DEFINING TRAUMA

- **Cultural Trauma** – is an attack on the fabric of a society, affecting the essence of the community and its members
- **Historical Trauma** – cumulative exposure of traumatic events that affect an individual and continues to affect subsequent generations
- **Intergenerational Trauma** – occurs when trauma is not resolved, subsequently internalized, and passed from one generation to the next
- **Present Trauma** – What vulnerability, Native peoples are experiencing on a daily basis
 - (Bigfoot, 2007)

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FORCED ACCULTURATION

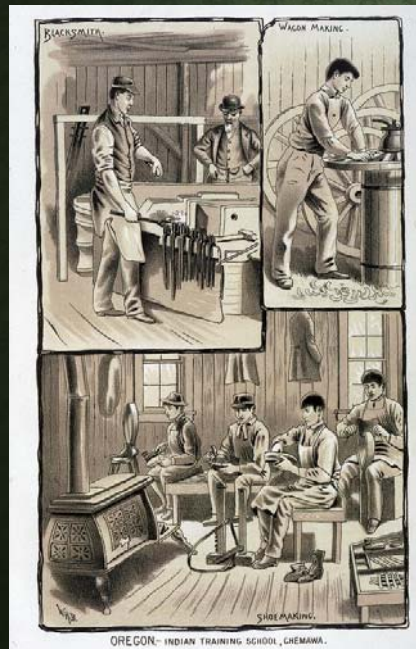
Eurocentric



Indigenous



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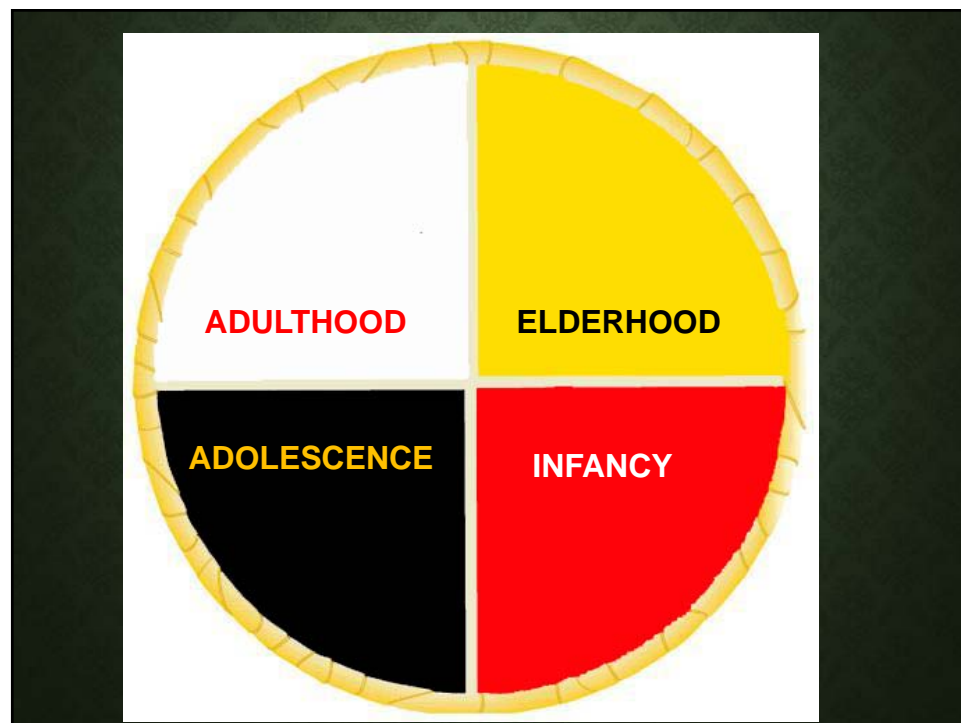


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CULTURAL DISSONANCE

- Children in education systems experience cultural dissonance, thus cultural dissonance can have a profound and negative effect on academic achievement and the personal development of students.
- Cultural dissonance may provoke the tendency either to resort to ethnocentrism, or to abandon inherent cultural values and adopt those of the school culture, in order to achieve success.
- Cultural dissonance may also lead to erroneous interpretations of parent behaviors, creating misunderstandings between home and school
- Source: Teacher Training Resource Bank, Glossary, Cultural Dissonance

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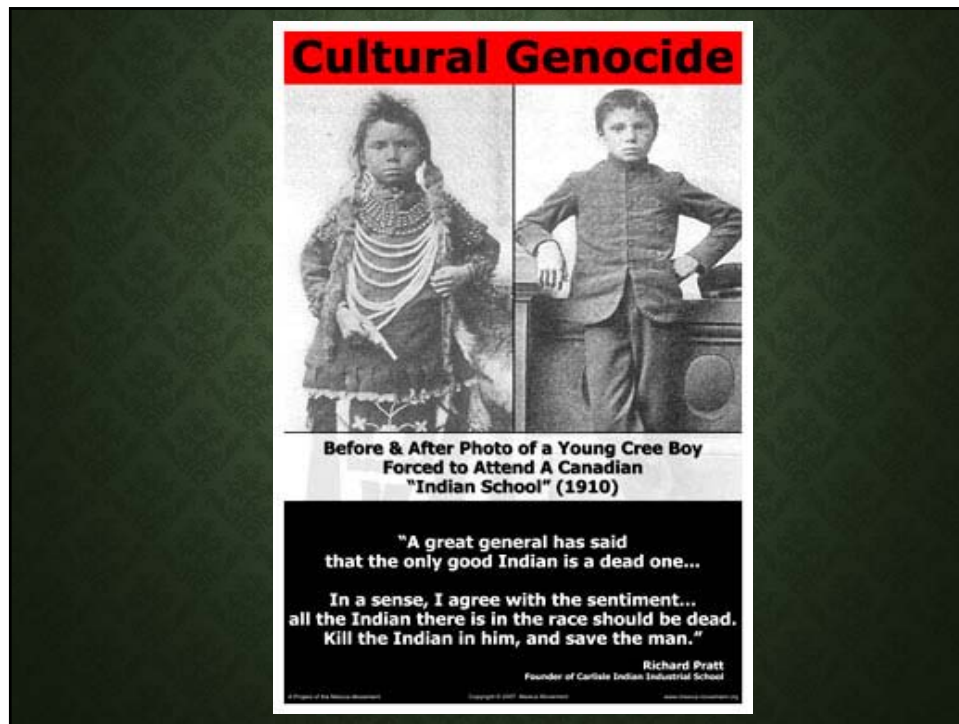
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**“Tradition is
Enemy of
Progress”**

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IMPACT OF BOARDING SCHOOLS

- **Individuals**

- Loss of identity
- Low self esteem
- No sense of safety
- Institutionalized
- Difficulty forming healthy relationships

- **Families**

- Loss of parental power
- Near destruction of extended family system

***National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition**

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IMPACT OF BOARDING SCHOOLS

- **Tribal Communities**
 - Loss of sense of community
 - Loss of language
 - Loss of tribal traditions and ceremonies
- **Tribal Nations**
 - Weakened nations structure
 - Depleted numbers for enrollment

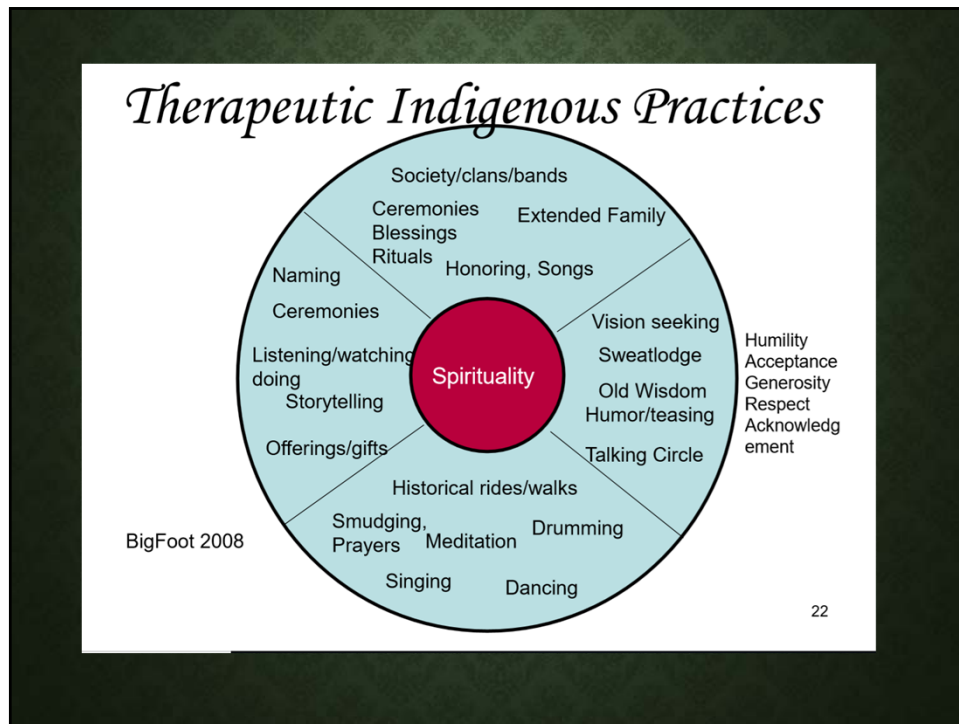
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HISTORICAL TRAUMA INTERVENTION: FOUR MAJOR INTERVENTION COMPONENTS

- Confronting historical trauma
- Understanding the trauma
- **Releasing our pain**
- Transcending the trauma

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HOW TO BE CULTURALLY RESONATE

- Find an elder/spiritual leader in the Native culture and find a mentor/instructor in the eurocentric culture, spend time with and learn from both of them.
- Step into history: participate in tribal ceremonies, beliefs, & practices
- Learn as much as possible about both of the languages (Tribal and non-tribal).
- Learn as much as you can about great thinking and thoughts - read source material if possible - look for great themes and myths embedded in literature EVERYTHING works by these principles
- Be as good as you can be at what you do in the larger society

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TYPES OF THERAPY

- | | | |
|---|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| ▪ <u>adventure therapy</u> | ▪ <u>equine-assisted therapy</u> | • <u>occupational therapy</u> |
| ▪ <u>agoratherapy</u> | ▪ <u>family therapy</u> | • <u>pharmacotherapy</u> |
| ▪ <u>animal-assisted therapy</u> | ▪ <u>grief therapy</u> | • <u>play therapy</u> |
| ▪ <u>aromatherapy</u> | ▪ <u>hippotherapy</u> | • <u>psychotherapy</u> |
| ▪ <u>art therapy</u> | ▪ <u>hypnotherapy</u> | • <u>psychosis therapy</u> |
| ▪ <u>chemotherapy</u> | ▪ <u>information therapy</u> | • <u>Gestalt therapy</u> |
| ▪ <u>cognitive analytic therapy</u> | ▪ <u>interpersonal therapy</u> | • <u>group therapy</u> |
| ▪ <u>cognitive therapy</u> | ▪ <u>life enrichment therapy</u> | • <u>recreational therapy</u> |
| ▪ <u>coherence therapy</u> | ▪ <u>light therapy</u> | • <u>sand tray therapy</u> |
| ▪ <u>colour therapy</u> | ▪ <u>logotherapy</u> | • <u>self help therapy</u> |
| ▪ <u>craniosacral therapy</u> | ▪ <u>manual therapy</u> | • <u>sex therapy</u> |
| ▪ <u>dialectical behavioral therapy</u> | ▪ <u>martial arts therapy</u> | • <u>shock therapy</u> |
| ▪ <u>diversional therapy</u> | ▪ <u>massage therapy</u> | • <u>electroconvulsive therapy</u> |
| ▪ <u>Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy</u> | ▪ <u>drug therapy</u> | • <u>sociotherapy</u> |
| ▪ <u>electroconvulsive therapy</u> | ▪ <u>music therapy</u> | |
| | ▪ <u>neurosis therapy</u> | |

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INDIGENOUS INTERVENTIONS

- | | |
|------------------|-----------------|
| • Sweatlodge | Smudging |
| • Group | |
| • Individual | -individual |
| • family | |
| • Talking Circle | -group |
| • Group | |
| • family | -family |
| • Tobacco | Herbal medicine |
| • Individual | -individual |
| • Family | -group |
| • group | -family |

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- a **treatment** (providing substance abuse services such as counseling, psychoeducation, trauma-informed therapies, medication treatment (pharmacotherapies) as well as alternative treatments such as equine therapy and acupuncture)
- b **recovery** (providing services that are consistent with 12-step programs and philosophies such as AA, Wellbriety, and the Minnesota Model as well as recovery support services such as housing and transportation).
- c **healing** (providing services that are based on indigenous beliefs such as Inipi (sweats), tobacco ceremonies, smudging, and cultural activities as well as non-indigenous religious practices such as referral to pastoral counseling)

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HISTORICAL TRAUMA INTERVENTION: FOUR MAJOR INTERVENTION COMPONENTS

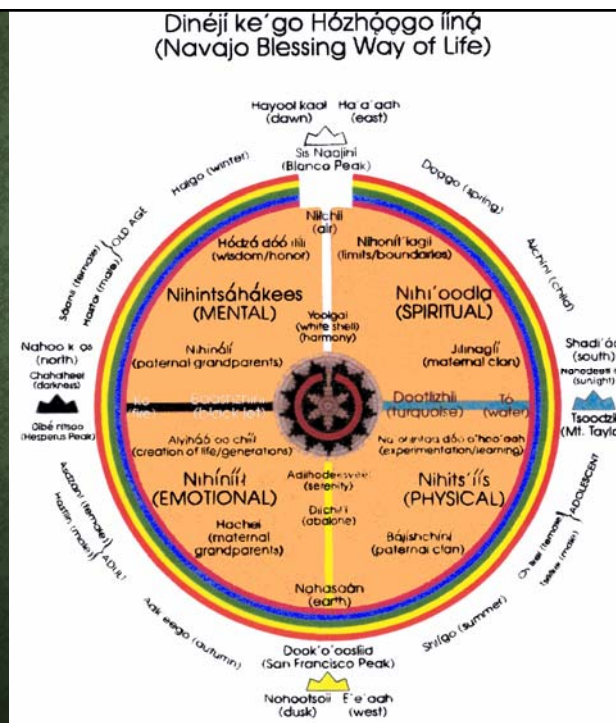
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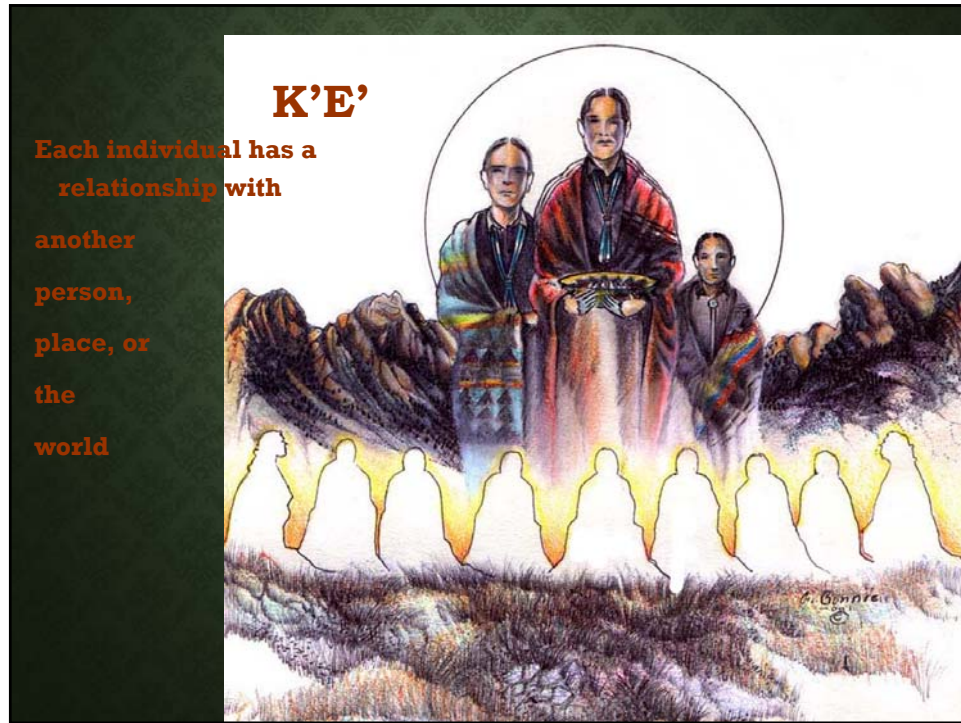
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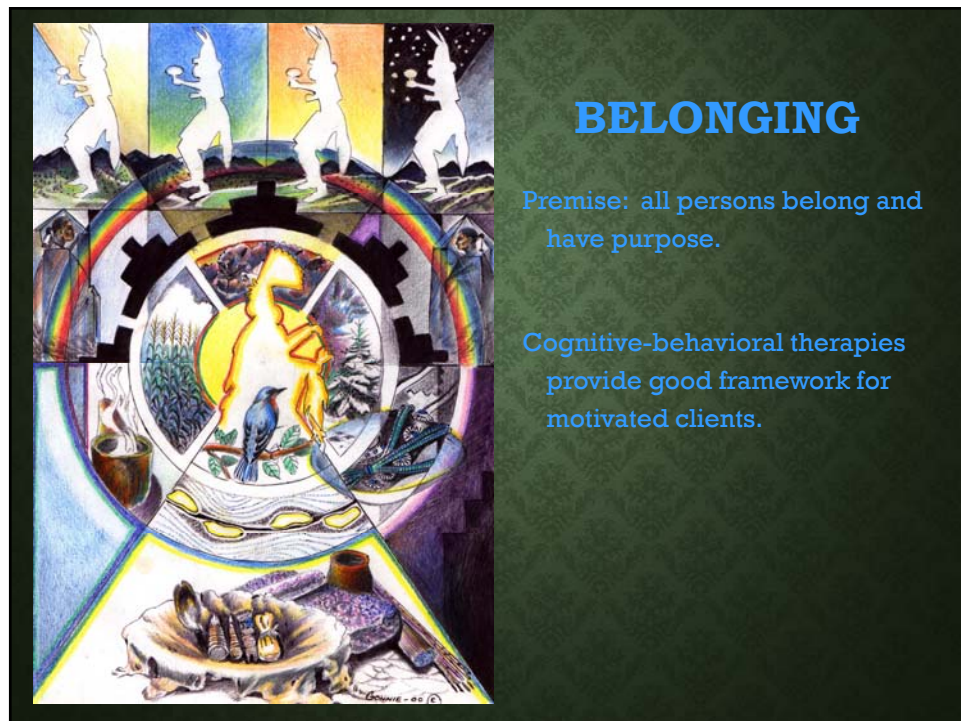
DINE' MEDICINE WHEEL



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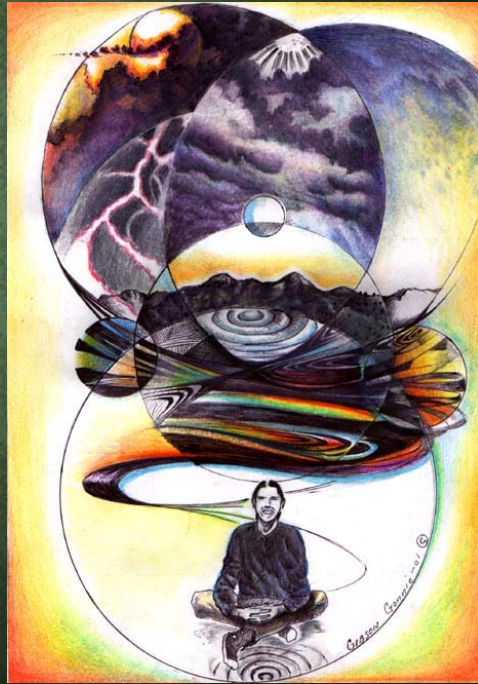
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LISTENING

Listen, before talking.
Think, before, talking.

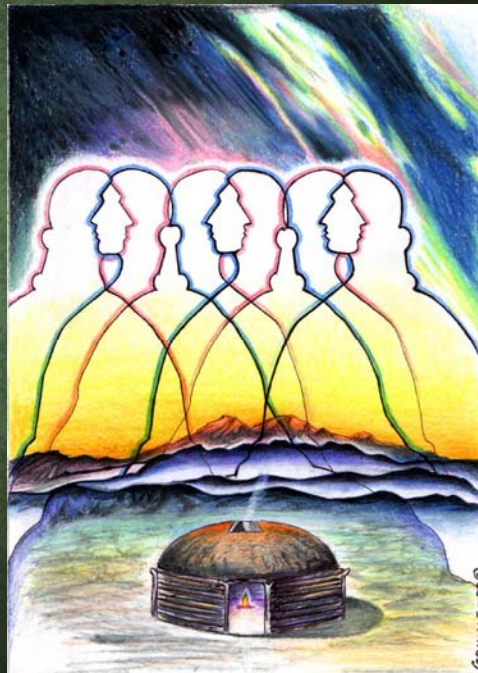


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SPIRITUALITY

*Indigenous Understanding of
Balance*

- *ach'qh sodizin*: protective blessing
- *Hozho ji*: celebratory blessing



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SERENITY PRAYER

**God grant me the serenity to
accept the things I cannot
change; courage to change
the things I can; and wisdom
to know the difference.**

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RESILIENCE

**TOH' THAI
KAI**

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CONTACT INFO

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- FB: Native Elder Stories & Teachings
- FB: Dinetah Sunrises & Sunsets