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THE PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT OF HISTORICAL TRAUMA ON THE NATIVE  
AMERICAN PEOPLE

by

Tammy R. Barker

A Research Project Presentation in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Arts  
Specialization: Psychology

REGIS UNIVERSITY  
November, 2013

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## ABSTRACT

### The Psychological Impact of Historical Trauma on Native American People

Native American historical trauma is similar to other massive generational group traumas. Past examples include the Jewish holocaust, slavery of the African people in the United States, and treatment of the Japanese Americans in the U.S. during World War II. Understanding the history of Native Americans allows for the design of culturally specific preventative and therapeutic interventions. Contrary to what is taught in modern history books, Native Americans were an advanced culture deeply immersed in their environments. From the invasion by the Spanish in the 1400s to the scorched earth extermination policies of the United States in the 1800s, Native Americans endured attempted genocide, forced relocation and confinement to reservations and forced assimilation. Historical trauma is generational and dwells deep in the souls of Native American individuals and communities all across the United States. For any healing to take place, one must take a close look at the root cause of historical trauma for the Native American people. The focus of this paper is to explore and develop ideas that will assist Native Americans in accessing which old ways are too biologically ingrained to do away with, and what new ways must be taken on to come to terms with such a massively different environment.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
1. WHO WERE THE NATIVE AMERICAN PEOPLE.....	7
Children of Mother Earth.....	8
Societal Structure.....	10
Women.....	11
Men.....	12
Tribal leaders.....	14
Medicine men/women.....	15
Rituals and Ceremonies.....	17
Drumming.....	19
Story Telling.....	20
Sun Dance.....	20
Spirituality.....	22
Quantum mechanics connection.....	22
2. HISTORICAL TRAUMA.....	25
Soul Wounding.....	25
Genocide.....	25

Slavery.....	26
Invasion.....	27
Disease.....	30
Extermination.....	31
Indian Wars of 1600's .....	32
Indian Wars of 1700's .....	32
Indian Wars of 1800's .....	34
3. RELOCATION .....	36
Treaties.....	36
Land Cessions .....	38
Dawes Act. ....	40
Removal .....	41
Reservations .....	44
4. ASSIMILATION.....	46
Boarding Schools .....	46
Breakdown of spiritual life. ....	47
Adoption Project.....	48
Urbanization.....	52
5. WHO ARE THE NATIVE AMERICAN PEOPLE .....	54
Present Day Challenges .....	54

Biological Needs of Native Youth .....	56
Complications on the Healing Processes .....	58
Addiction.....	59
6. HEALING TREATMENTS .....	62
Pacific Northwest Canoe Journey .....	62
White Bison Wellbriety Program .....	64
Drum-Assisted Recovery Therapy for Native Americans .....	65
Traditional Dancing .....	66
Sweat Lodge.....	67
Smudging .....	68
Mental Health Therapy Models .....	69
7. RESILIENCY OF THE NATIVE AMERICAN PEOPLE .....	72
Higher Education .....	72
Preserving Tribal Language .....	73
From Anger to Positive Action .....	74



## Chapter 1

### 1. WHO WERE THE NATIVE AMERICAN PEOPLE

To understand the Native American people it is important to have an understanding of the environment in which they live, know their history, and know how this history has shaped them. It is equally important to understand and respect their worldview, which describes the thought process of a people or a culture. Native Americans were displaced from their traditional lands, their sacred sites were excavated, and their sacred objects were placed in private collections and museums. Their dead were exhumed from their traditional burial sites to make room for ranching and industry. Their artwork, which was never seen as separate from their culture, was commercially reproduced and modified for Western tastes. Traditional ceremonies and stories were depicted, usually inaccurately, in novels, movies, and on television. Their way of life was disrupted and they were forced to accept religious institutions whose dogmas were often in conflict with Native American values.

A variety of terms have been used interchangeably to refer to America's indigenous populations – “Indians,” “Native Americans,” “American Indians,” Native peoples.” The problem of terminology began with Columbus. He was lost. The people he met were not Indians because he was not in India, but for six centuries these peoples have been called “Indians.” They are in fact many different peoples and many different nations with many different languages. To justify the use of “Indians”, which some scholars find offensive, I refer to Sherman Alexie's remark during a reading in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, March 1993: “The white man tried to take our land, our sovereignty, and our languages. He gave us the word “Indian.” Now he wants to

take the word “Indian” away from us too. Well, he can’t have it.” Throughout this paper all these terms have been used interchangeably to best reflect the subject being discussed.

### **Children of Mother Earth**

The earliest human record in North America is hearth charcoal found on Santa Rosa Island off the California coast, dated to 28,000 B.C. Archaeologists have uncovered Stone Age (12,000 B.C.) sites throughout North America in all the areas not covered by glaciers. Human fossil remains have been found in Mexico City dated to 10,000 B.C. At the same time the Sumerians were growing barley in Mesopotamia, around 3000 B.C., people in Mexico were growing maize and squash and had evolved a sophisticated horticulture with extensive irrigation canals. Poverty Point, located off highway 65 in Louisiana, has several complex Native American ceremonial mounds believed to have been first built sometime around 3000 B.C. and the area is now a National Monument. Cotton was grown in Peru around 2,500 B.C. and when Coronado arrived in Arizona in 1540, he was greeted by people in the area of the present-day pueblos wearing woven cotton (Nies, 1996).

“Mesoamerica” is the term applied to Mexico and the Pre-Columbian cultures that radiated out from Mexico. The American Southwest; Texas, New Mexico, Arizona and Southern California, was part of Mesoamerica. In addition, recent scholarly research holds that the peoples of the Mississippian cultures, who settled on the Mississippi river and throughout the tributary rivers of the Mississippi in the states now called Louisiana, Mississippi, Arkansas, Missouri, and Ohio, were also directly connected with the great sites of early Mexico, either through migration or direct colonization (Nies, 1996).

The same year as Jesus Christ's arrival the city of Teotihuacán rose to prominence in Mexico. With a population of 125,000 and the largest pyramids of the Americas, it became the center of a great civilization. By the year 300 A.D. peoples called the Hohokaam, the Anasazi, and the Mogollon had settled thousands of sites in the U.S. Southwest and by 500 A.D. they had left identifiable remains of their presence in architecture, canals, and pottery. In the year 600 A.D. Cahokia, the great center of the Mississippian culture, was founded at the confluence of the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers in what is today Illinois. Around the year 800 A.D. the Mississippi Valley showed widespread corn cultivation, using a variety of improved maize that previously had only been grown in Mexico. With a population that grew to 40,000 between the years 700 A.D. and 900 A.D., it was the largest urban center in what is now the United States, a record the area held until 1800 when it was surpassed by Philadelphia (Nies, 1996).

In the area of present-day Phoenix, Arizona, in A.D. 800 the Hohokam people were farming thousands of acres of desert and irrigating it with an intricate system of deep canals, laterals, and ditches. They were excellent engineers. One of the canals was over ten miles long with a perfectly engineered gradient, so the water flow flushed out silt and gravity did the work of distributing water. From the approximate years 1000 A.D to 1300 A.D., Anasazi communities flourished in New Mexico, southern Colorado, and northern Arizona. At Chaco Canyon, the Anasazi residents built Pueblo Bonito. Over 70 outlying settlement sites were connected by a complex road system. The Bureau of Land Management surveyed the Chaco road system by aerial photography and identified over 500 miles of Anasazi roads, absolutely straight, 30 feet wide, excavated down to bedrock (Nies, 1996).

The population of North American Indians was believed to have reached its height between A.D. 1200 and 1300. Some estimates go as high as 110 million people in the Western

Hemisphere at this time. In the 1300s the Mississippian sites began contracting and the large sites in the Southwest were abandoned. One theory for the decline is that an epidemic disease at the time spread throughout North America. But disease was not the only factor. The Spaniards who arrived in the Caribbean and in Mexico inflicted brutal slavery conditions, pressing the inhabitants of those lands into forced labor and servitude (Nies, 1996).

In the 1700s Native American peoples still lived in their original habitats, defined by rivers, river valleys, mountain elevations, watersheds, mountain ranges, deserts, canyons, and natural land forms. Corn was cultivated almost everywhere in North America where weather permitted. Although villages were located along rivers or other water sources, Indians used the resources of larger unpopulated land areas with great skill and knowledge. Virgin forests were important to Indian villages hundreds of miles distant because hunters found seasonal game and fish, craftsmen found clay for pots and trees for dugout canoes, and medicine men and women found plants for dyes and herbs for healing (Nies, 1996). The Native peoples of North America and Canada were primarily influenced by having to choose between alliances with France and England during the 1700s. Many Indian nations sided with the French against the British because they perceived the French as the lesser evil. The French seemed primarily interested in trade, with widely dispersed trading posts and missions, while the English seemed land-hungry, intent on settling the land with endless numbers of colonists (Nies, 1996).

### **Societal Structure**

It is alien to most Indian societies for one person to lay down rules, give orders, direct the lives of others, or claim that one person speaks for the tribe as a whole. This philosophy is reflected in governance, in ceremonies, and even in daily conversation (Jones & Krippner, 2012).

Like most other societies, Native Americans usually incorporated well-defined gender roles within their various groups. The cooperation of the gender roles was made clear by the hard facts of Indian demography. In most, if not all, Indian societies in the mid-nineteenth century there were far more women than men. Women often died at an early age, worn down by a life of hard work and frequent childbearing, but men died in greater numbers and at earlier ages, victims of their dangerous occupations (Wishart, 2011).

### **Women.**

Women raised children, farmed if the society was agricultural, tanned skins and preserved food. Native American women typically had a great deal of power within their communities. In Cherokee society women owned land. Plains Indians traced their lineage through their mothers. Iroquois women controlled their families and could initiate divorce and Blackfoot women owned the tipi in which their families lived. Indian women often owned whatever possessions the family had. Women had the right to demand divorce and it was the male who was left without possessions (Wishart, 2011).

Indian women were respected for their value to their villages. They were involved in village decision making and often made life and death decisions concerning prisoners of war and adoption. Until the Europeans forced cultural changes that transformed Indian society into the European mold, Indian women had an unusual degree of power. The Native men knew that women were the source of life and provided a feeling of strength and consistency in their lives. These gender roles lasted for so long because they worked to keep the family and the band or tribe intact. The world of Indian people was influenced by both male and female spiritual powers.

Balance between the two cosmic powers was the desired state that helped ensure balance, harmony, wellbeing, good crops, good hunting, and victory over enemies (Wishart, 2011).

### **Men.**

Native American men were responsible for hunting, defensive and aggressive warfare, manufacturing of weapons, and nearly all society wide political and religious operations. Indian men often helped the women in the fields or in the construction of a lodge. Men's work took them away from the village and it was dangerous (Wishart, 2011). As white culture continually took over Native lands, the Native American men hunted on increasingly contested hunting grounds and journeyed hundreds of miles to enemy encampments to steal horses and to win honors.

In the last decades of the nineteenth century, the Canadian and U.S. governments launched a concerted attack on the traditional roles of Indian men and women. Indian men were to become farmers or blacksmiths and Indian women were to become housewives. Indian extended families were to be fragmented into nuclear families, each occupying an individual allotment. These imposed changes were resisted by the Indians with little success. Indian men's traditional roles were fast disappearing and the task of supporting families fell increasingly to the women. This shift has continued into present day. Indian women are more likely than men to have completed high school and to hold jobs outside the home and are often the chief providers for the household (Wishart, 2011). For the men these changes bring with them the stresses of altered self-images. This altered self-image has been linked to the death rates of male Native Americans exceeding those for their female counterparts for every age group up to age 75 years and for six of the eight leading causes of death (Rhoades, 2003). These disparities in men's

health disorders such as cardiovascular disease, cancer and diabetes have been compounded by high rates of suicide, (Rhoades, 2003; Olson & Wahab, 2006) substance use, (Chartier & Cactano, 2010; Dickerson, O'Malley, Canive, Thuras, & Westermeyer, 2009) and psychiatric disorders (Brave Heart, Elkins, Tafoya, Bird, & Salvador, 2012).

Traditionally men were responsible for protecting the tribe, providing for those who could not support themselves, and keeping order in the village. Men developed their skills as warriors to defend the society. The ideal warrior was devoted to ensuring the good of the nation through generosity, self-sacrifice, humility, respect, compassion, hunting skills, and when at home assisting with caretaking of children. Women and children were esteemed as sacred beings, never as men's property. Domestic violence and child abuse were not tolerated. Any perpetrator's actions would be avenged by male relatives and often lead to banishment (Braveheart M. Y., 1998).

In the contemporary Native American world, male and female relations are much more ambiguous. The frequent reports of abuse of children and spouses do not conform to the past relations of respect and honor held between men and women. Europeans did not value women in a similar fashion politically, economically, socially or spiritually. Colonization brought with it loss of tribal culture and a societal structure, which had survived for thousands of years, replacing it with the views, beliefs and customs of the European invaders. The Europeans believed the white male was supreme. With colonization, women and elders tended to lose control over economic relations and were politically and spiritually pushed to the margins. Conditions on reservations emphasized male dominance over females and altered the position of women by discouraging clans and extended family relations and obligation. Creation teachings began to change under the influence of European and Christian ways. The creation teaching of

many Indian communities started to incorporate male creators that supplanted past female creator figures (Champagne, 2011).

### **Tribal leaders.**

How an individual became a tribal leader differed from tribe to tribe and depended upon each tribe's culture. An elder, considered by the tribe to be the wisest, most just and effective leader, could rise to the rank of chief. Some Native American chiefs were regarded as great warriors who led campaigns and protected their people against overwhelming military odds and some tribes had hereditary chiefs. However they became recognized as a tribal leader, these people were in highly honored positions within the community. Each band had its own tribal leader but no one tribal leader had the authority to sign treaties or make agreements which bound other tribes. It was this misunderstanding between whites and Indians that led to the destruction of trust between the U.S. government and Native Americans. The U.S. government failed to understand they were dealing with hundreds of differing tribes that were completely independent of each other. The Indians failed to understand that the U.S. government expected all bands to abide by these treaties.

Today in most Tribes there is a democratic process in place for selecting tribal leaders. From the establishment of the U.S. federal government until 1934, its representatives systematically removed existing tribal leaders and dismantled leadership structures. They moved Indian people onto reservations, often concentrated many Tribal Leaders in one place, and positioned non-native Indian agents to be in charge of tribal affairs. In 1934, the *Indian Reorganization Act* shifted the U.S. bureaucracy that dealt with Indians from a supervisory agency to an advisory agency. This was a major change but it still took decades for tribal people



to organize modern governments (Treuer, 2012). Many are still struggling with self-governing within their tribes today.

The U.S. government provided draft constitutions to tribes but those drafts were highly flawed and based on a corporate governance model rather than a political one with checks and balances. Tribes are still seeking to remedy those draft constitutions and remake tribal government in their own ways (Treuer, 2012). Political processes everywhere evolve in a contentious world, but there are additional complications in Indian country. Indian communities are small and tribal leaders, while responsible to all tribal members, trust and rely on extended family members to carry out critical jobs within the tribal government. Many tribes have effectively revised the constitutions that the U.S. government handed to them but constitutional reform is difficult for any government. Many tribal governments have yet to effectively reform their structure to provide for greater checks and balances and one that reflects needed changes in cultural healing and transition (Treuer, 2012).

### **Medicine men/women.**

The term Shaman was originally a Siberian word. Gradually the term Shaman was applied to spiritual practitioners who engaged in similar activities around the world. Native American practitioners prefer the terms medicine man or medicine woman, or use the tribal word for a medicine man or medicine woman. The term shaman is seen as a description imported from another time and place and a threat to the tradition of integrity of Indian medicine (Jones & Krippner, 2012). For the purpose of this paper the term medicine man is used with the acknowledgment that there are women who are medicine women as well.

The Indian art of healing is ceremonial in nature. Medicine men know physical health often fails without the aid of spiritual means. Dancing, chanting, etc. is conducted, according to the conditions, or severity of the patient. Training as a Native American healer begins very early. Individuals are selected on family recommendations or from signs of devotion, wisdom and honesty. Medicine men and women are trusted with all secrets, rituals, habits and legends of their people. They attend all ceremonial celebrations and critical meetings of the people at the side of their leader. The medicine man is the holder of truth about the Native American way of life. Through his storytelling, principles of goodness and prosperity are taught to the people. Thus, he is a man of great significance, not just because he is a healer or has knowledge of herbal medicine, but because he preserves the traditions and beliefs. All the knowledge needed to become a medicine man is taught orally; nothing is written, therefore it takes years to become a medicine man (Hutchens, 1991).

Western medicine places its emphasis on “curing,” removing the symptoms of an ailment and restoring a person to health, while traditional medicine focuses on “healing,” attaining wholeness of body, mind, emotions, and spirit. Traditional, indigenous medicine uses a variety of herbs and plant substances, as well as rituals and ceremonies directed toward activating the patient’s inner healer and connecting it with whatever spiritual, social, biological, emotional, and mental resources are available (Jones & Krippner, 2012). This emphasis on whole body health is a standard aspect of traditional medicine and is slowly becoming an important part of Western medicine as well. Native medicine is based on the understanding that man is part of nature. Health is a matter of balance, which is embodied in a lifestyle that honors all creation and therefore cannot be reduced to an academic body of knowledge and technique.

## Rituals and Ceremonies

In 1883 the U.S. Commissioner of Indian Affairs created a “Code of Indian Offenses” that was used to persecute tribal religious practice and until 1933, Circular 1665 instructed Indian agents to ban and break up tribal dances and religious ceremonies, even after Indians became U.S. citizens in 1924. Due to the enforcement of Circular 1665 the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution was insufficient to provide for the religious freedom of Indians as it did for Americans of different races. In 1978, the *American Indian Religious Freedom Act* sought to remedy that. The Act’s purpose is to assure American Indians the right to access sacred sites, freedom to worship through ceremonial and traditional rites and ability to use and possess objects considered sacred.

The act requires policies of all governmental agencies to eliminate interference with the free exercise of Native religion, based on the First Amendment, and to accommodate access to and allow the use of religious sites to the extent that the use is practicable and is not inconsistent with an agency. However, even today, free practice of religious custom is sometimes elusive. There are several instances of sweat lodges being destroyed by cities and fire departments across the country. Many tribes and tribal members cannot access their own sacred sites or sacred items. Peyote use for tribes that incorporate it in ceremonies and for the more modern Native American Church remains a contentious and sometimes restricted practice. Native Americans in federal or state prisons are often only allowed access to Judeo-Christian religious leaders. Tobacco and traditional medicines are not allowed in prisons or most schools. Although conditions have improved over the past century, there are many ways in which free practice of ancient custom remains difficult for Indians (Treuer, 2012).

Rituals are prescribed, stylized, step-by-step performances of a cultural worldview and its mythic themes. They attempt to promote social solidarity, provide for life transitions, and reinforce a society's values, belief systems, and rules of conduct. Rituals are generally performed in specific places and definite times by mandated persons. Rites are "minirituals" of passage from one stage of life to another such as puberty rites and funeral rites. Ceremonies are elaborate "maxirituals" that include a series of rituals such as coronation ceremonies and sun dance ceremonies (Jones & Krippner, 2012).

Ritual is still important in that the ritual itself is an essential element in supporting brain function and building community. Ceremonies consist of a number of rituals; a term applied to those activities considered sacred that carry deep meaning to those who practice them. Quite often these ceremonies are nocturnal activities that unite a community through the use of dancing, singing, chanting, drumming, clapping, and other shared behaviors. Ceremonies and rituals stimulate the release of body opioids and other internal chemicals through repetitive physical activities such as dancing and clapping, extreme body reactions such as sweating (as in the sweat lodge), self-inflicted wounds (as in some versions of the sun dance), emotional reactions (as in wearing or viewing terrifying masks), and suggestion (as in storytelling) that creates positive expectations. The body's opioids reduce pain and discomfort, and their production is highest at night (Jones & Krippner, 2012).

The human expressive capacity of music has deep evolutionary roots and provides a means of communicating information to other members of the group. Through the positive effects of tone and sound on emotions, music has positive effects on mental and physical health. Music synchronizes brain waves, has positive vibrator effects on the body, and impacts the brain's positive emotional processing centers. Therefore, music heals through the elicitation of

positive emotions as well as by providing a means for catharsis and the relief of troubling emotions and repressed feelings (Winkelman, Michael, 2010).

### **Drumming.**

A ritual is alive to the extent that its performers passionately believe in its underlying worldview whether that worldview is ritually enacted in an exact manner each time it is performed or the enactment is to some extent an improvisation. Sometimes rituals become stereotyped over time, with an emphasis on form rather than on feeling in their performance, which causes it to lose its impact. The incorporation of drumming into a ritual keeps the performance alive and stokes the passion of the performers. The drum is both functional and symbolic. The drum is connected to the Tree of Life through the wood of the frame. It is also connected to the spirit world through the animal whose skin is used to make the drumhead (Jones & Krippner, 2012).

Psychological research indicates that drumming slows the brain waves, producing a pattern of alpha and theta brain wave activity that differs from ordinary waking consciousness. Rhythmic drumming appears to produce clarity of thinking, intense visual imagery, and enhanced energy. (Winkelman, Michael, 2003). Drumming offers its participants a connection to their tribal customs, a sense of community and a way to reach altered states of consciousness which helps to deal with addictions.

The shift from beta wave activity to alpha and theta wave activity during drumming reflects the effectiveness of percussion rhythms to elicit the type of imagery conducive to shamanic journeying and healing. In fact, drumming seems to improve the functioning of the immune system and Western psychotherapists have successfully used percussion rhythm in the

treatment of drug addiction, alcoholism, hypertension, and autism. Drumming activates the brain's integration of nonverbal information from the lower brain structures into the frontal cortex producing insights that are frequently therapeutic (Winkelman, Michael, 2010).

### **Story Telling.**

Storytelling facilitates relationships among members of a tribe or clan in several ways. Traditionally, creation stories provided a mythological account of how the group came into being, and similar storytelling continues in the present day. Groups tell survival stories, mythic talks of how the tribe overcame natural catastrophes, plagues, and warfare. Art and storytelling serve primal, spiritual functions in daily life. Some tribes have “keepers of knowledge” who know where all this information is stored and who are able to pass knowledge to the next generation through such oral traditions as myths, songs, games, and dances. These accounts are often given at night, which holds special power for telling stories, giving teachings, and performing rituals. All indigenous people have creation myths about their tribal ancestors, and these tales provide them with an understanding of their place in the cosmos (Jones & Krippner, 2012).

### **Sun Dance.**

The Sun Dance is a sacred ceremony that celebrates the powers of the Sun spirit. The Blackfoot name for it is ok'an and means “coming together.” The ceremony is considered an act of sacrifice that renews participants' relationship with Nature. Among the Blackfoot it occurs in the summertime after the serviceberry ripens. These berries are needed for sacramental purposes and are an integral part of the ceremony. The major sacrament of the Blackfoot Sun Dance is the buffalo tongue, which is cut into thin strips and dried for the ceremony, during which it is eaten

to sustain the dancers. Unlike the sun dance of the Sioux, the Blackfoot do not pierce their flesh. Instead, they engage in a complicated rhythm of fasting, prayer, contemplation, and dancing (Jones & Krippner, 2012).

The Sun Dance also serves a social function by bringing the various bands together. This gathering allows members of one band to meet other bands, share stories, exchange ancient fables, and meet potential spouses. When a band performs this ceremony, it believes it is performing for the entire world. It is a call for the renewal of relationships with the spirits, the powers, and the energies that animate the cosmos (Jones & Krippner, 2012). Spirit dancing was strongly discouraged in the Washington Territory of the United States by decree of the Superintendent of Indian Affairs in 1871. In 1904, fearing the gathering of many Indians in one place, possibly inspiring rebellion, the U.S Government outlawed the Sun Dance among Plains Indians in clear violation of the Free Exercise clause of the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution and the ban was not lifted until 1951 (Nies, 1996).

When the Sun Dance was outlawed by the U.S. Government, it was practiced by at least 26 Plains tribes and generally took place in June or July in connection with communal spring hunts. It was the only religious ritual in which the entire political unit acted as a ceremonial unit. Organized by the medicine men and involving every member of the tribe, it began with an individual's vision or vow of personal sacrifice for the good of his people. The ceremony lasted a week and the actual dance, during which the dancers fasted, was four days long. After it was outlawed, many tribes continued the ceremony disguised within Fourth of July celebrations so the tradition, history and knowledge of how the ceremony was to be performed was retained. This was empowering for the individuals and the tribes. In 1950 the Sioux openly revived the

Sun Dance in its original form and meaning and began to train medicine men to pass it on to other tribes and groups (Nies, 1996).

## **Spirituality**

There are strong similarities between certain Native American perspectives and those of traditional Chinese Taoism. For example, both stress the importance of balance, of community and of closeness to nature. Human beings are a part of Nature not superior to it. There are laws of the universe; the laws of Nature, which are central and simple. If you pollute the air, you won't be able to breathe; if you don't take care of the water, you won't be able to drink. Nature is a part of every aspect of human life. Native American spirituality follows the doctrine that everything is a blessing, from Morning Prayer to eating, to raking leaves, to hunting a deer, to cracking ice on the water so that the animals can drink, to making love (Jones & Krippner, 2012). Native Americans believed that God is in nature and the Spirit expresses itself everywhere.

### **Quantum mechanics connection.**

Native Americans experienced being a part of the Universe; an integral part of the cosmos in which the lines between past, present and future were dissolved. The Native American worldview reminds many physicists of what is known as quantum mechanics, the approach to physics that posits that energy is not infinitely divisible. Instead, energy is absorbed or radiated in a discontinuous way through energy units called quanta and they are part of the most basic element in the world (Bohm, 1973).

Quantum mechanics stresses the complex link between observers and observed and the basic holism of all phenomena. Native American traditions hold that there is no separation



between individual and society, between matter and spirit, between each of us and the whole of nature. The physicist David Bohm spoke of what he called the “enfolded order”, an order in which the whole is enfolded within each part. This is a deeper physical reality than the surface reality that is ordinarily perceived by the senses. Bohm argued that classical physics described the surface of reality but quantum physics allows an understanding of deeper levels of the cosmos. He said reality is not a collection of material objects in interaction but a process he called “holomovement”, the movement of the whole (Bohm, 1973).

Quantum physicists suggest that nature is not a collection of objects in interaction but a fluctuation of processes. Native American traditions teach that the cosmos is an expression of relationships, alliances, and balances between energies, powers, and spirits. Many quantum physicists picture the material world as being the outward manifestation of patterns, forms, balances, and relationships among the powers and entities that surround them. The various alliances, pacts, and relationships that Native Americans have entered into with these powers form an important aspect of this world. In traditional Native American cultures these relationships carry with them obligations and the necessity of carrying out periodic ceremonies of renewal such as the purification and Sun Dance ceremonies (Jones & Krippner, 2012). It is community participation and ownership that nurtures these beliefs.

When Western science claims to be speaking about what is real in history and science, it implies that other cultures realities are merely myths, legends, superstitions, and fairy tales. This is the way in which a dominant society denies the authenticity of other people’s systems of knowledge and strikes at the very heart of their cultures (Jones & Krippner, 2012). Connection to the Earth is one of the most powerful bonds in an Indian society, which explains the anger that Indians feel when they see the land around them being exploited and destroyed. There are spirits

in a landscape and this “spirit of place” is felt to be so strong that it enters not only the current inhabitants of a location but future occupants as well (Jones & Krippner, 2012).

## Chapter 2

### 2. HISTORICAL TRAUMA

#### **Soul Wounding**

Many Native Americans and current day anthropologists believe that historical trauma, or soul wounding, among Native Americans resulted from colonialism, acculturative stress, cultural bereavement, racism, and genocide that has been generalized, internalized and institutionalized (Braveheart M. Y., 1998). Danieli (1998) added that such trauma is cumulative, unresolved, historic and ongoing. While historical trauma has just begun to be accepted by mainstream psychologists, researchers have embraced the concept of historical trauma for the last several years in an attempt to explain the heightened risk of depression, traumatic stress, alcohol abuse, child maltreatment, and domestic violence that exists in Native American communities. To understand this soul wounding one must understand the history of the Native American people.

#### **Genocide.**

The word genocide is used in this paper because the literary and legal definition of the word accurately describes the historical treatment of Indians. The dictionary defines genocide as “the systematic killing of all the people from a national, ethnic, or religious group, or an attempt to do this.” (Genocide, 2013) The legal definition of genocide developed by the United Nations in 1948 is “any of the following acts committed with the intent to destroy, in whole or in part a national, ethnical, racial, or religious group, as such: killing members of the group; causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; deliberately inflicting on the group

conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.”

### **Slavery.**

In 1492 when Christopher Columbus first came in contact with native people, he wrote: “They all go around as naked as their mothers bore them; and also the women.” He also noted that “they could easily be commanded and made to work, to sow and to do whatever might be needed, to build towns and be taught to wear clothes and adopt our ways,” and, “they are the best people in the world and above all the gentlest.” (Native American Timeline of Events, 2013) The “discovery” of America is a misnomer. The arrival of the Spanish in the lands that came to be known as the Americas was an invasion, not a discovery. When Columbus arrived on Hispaniola, present day Dominican Republic and Haiti, he immediately began gathering Arawak people, the indigenous tribe in the region, to take back to Spain to sell in the slave markets. He had his brother perform a census to determine how many male inhabitants were over 14 years of age and could provide labor. The estimate was over a million. Columbus immediately pressed Arawak men to work the gold mines. If they didn’t produce the requisite amount of gold, a hand or foot was cut off (Nies, 1996).

Bartolome de Las Casas, a Jesuit priest and later bishop in the Catholic church, accompanied Columbus on his second voyage and wrote several books about his observations in the “new world.” In one of those books he wrote, “The Spanish are treating the Indians not as beasts, for beasts are treated properly at times, but like the excrement in a public

square... Columbus was at the beginning of the ill-usage inflicted upon them” (Casas, 1542). Las Casas went on to write,

The Spaniards made bets as to who would slit a man in two, or cut off his head at one blow; or they opened up his bowels. They tore the babies from their mothers’ breast by their feet, and dashed their heads against the rocks... They spitted the bodies of other babes, together with their mothers and all who were before them, on their swords... [They hanged Indians] by thirteen’s in honor and reverence for our Redeemer and the twelve Apostles, they put wood underneath and, with fire, they burned the Indians alive... I saw all the above things... All these did my own eyes witness. (Josephy, 1994)

Columbus is seen by most as a hero. There are more places named after Christopher Columbus in the United States of America than anyone else in history except for George Washington (Treuer, 2012). Given what we are teaching our children about him it is no wonder he is mythologized as a hero. All nations have dark chapters in their histories. However, it is important for all countries to examine these dark chapters in order to learn from them. The U.S. was founded in part by genocidal policies directed at Native Americans and the enslavement of African people yet very little effort has been made to voice formal apologies or pass political mandates about educating our children about these past injustices

### **Invasion.**

At the same time all European attention was focused on the islands of the Caribbean, every river valley in what is now the continental United States was inhabited by Native peoples. Most grew corn and had fairly sophisticated horticultural practices which were supplemented by

hunting. The Mississippi cultures, spread out among all the rivers and tributaries of the Mississippi basin, were still strong. Most American schools teach nothing of the story of the American Indians before the 1600's, leaving out centuries of history, culture, knowledge and genocide. This perpetuates the idea that the Americas were uninhabited, uncivilized lands occupied by devil worshiping heathens who had to be overcome for the great New Americas to be born. Although most traditional accounts of U.S. history begin in 1620 with the landing of the Pilgrims in Plymouth, Massachusetts, historians rarely mention Squanto (Tisquantum), the English-speaking Patuxet Indian who taught the Pilgrim survivors of the first winter how to survive their second.

“Welcome Englishmen” were the first words the Pilgrims heard when the first Indian greeted them after they arrived at Plymouth Harbor. On December 21, 1620, a party from the *Mayflower*, which had been blown off course, went ashore, marched inland and discovered lands that had been cleared and planted. Finding a freshwater brook on the southern shore of the harbor, they staked off lots for every member of the colony and then mounted a cannon. Their first Indian visitor was Samoset, an Abenaki, who spoke a little English. By spring of 1621, 50 of the 102 colonists had died from scurvy, pneumonia, or tuberculosis (Nies, 1996). Far from settling a virgin continent, Europeans, moved into preexisting Indian villages and followed Indian trade routes into new territories using Indian guides. From the moment of first contact the Europeans saw Indians as savages, as a people without culture, valuable as a source of slave labor as well as a source of information about the land and how to survive in it.

Often by the time Indian leaders realized that they did not understand European thinking and their only hope lay in war, war was too late. Some tribes allied themselves with Cortes and thought they could put the Spanish horses and guns into service against their enemies yet met the

same fate as those they helped to defeat (Nies, 1996). Native leaders faced an enemy of which they had only dimly begun to comprehend. The descendants of the great Mississippian cultures, the Timcua, the Calusa, the Coosa, the Mobile, the Natchez, and the Caddo, were virtually wiped out within the century, devastated by a combination of guns, epidemics, and slavery (American-Indian Wars, 2013).

While the Spanish invaded from the south dominating the Caribbean, the Gulf Coast, and the American Southwest as far as California, the French invaded from the north. By the end of the 1500s France was entrenched in what is now Canada, had mapped the entire Mississippi Valley, and established a few settlements on the Carolina coast. In 1588, after England and the Netherlands had defeated the Spanish Armada, the English began to plant colonies on the Atlantic coastal areas of New England and New Amsterdam (New York). The destruction of the Armada marked the end of Spanish ascendancy and the beginning of English domination in the New World (Nies, 1996).

A look at the 1600s reveals that the “American wilderness” was a highly complex ecology of peoples, cultures, wildlife, and trade. The intricate pattern of relationships between all living things and their environments began to undergo fundamental and radical changes. Along the Atlantic Coast, the English negotiated with the Powhatans in 1607 for lands in Virginia on the site that became known as Jamestown and with the Wampanoags in 1621 in Massachusetts for the lands that became Plymouth. The Dutch established themselves in Manhattan in 1626 in the city they called New Amsterdam. In 1673 France sent Joliet and Marquette down the Mississippi River to establish trading posts and to claim all lands on either side of the river as Louisiana (Nies, 1996).

### **Disease.**

Disease accompanied the Europeans in all their contacts with Native peoples: Cortes in Mexico; De Soto in Florida, Georgia, Alabama, and Mississippi; Coronado in Arizona and New Mexico. Ninety percent of the populations they encountered were believed to have been eliminated by epidemics such as smallpox, measles, and typhoid fever. With the Spanish invasion of tribal lands in 1492 came diseases which the Native populations had no defenses against. Two hundred years later many countries other than Spain began to invade Indian land. The only constant seemed to be disease. Wherever the Europeans, whether Catholic or Protestant, made contact, epidemics of smallpox, measles, typhoid, chicken pox, or scarlet fever soon followed. Europeans of the time held steadfastly to the belief that their introduced diseases were acts of God perpetrated in their behalf. (Native American Timeline of Events, 2013). Not just entire families were wiped from the face of the earth but entire villages.

Estimates are that Hispaniola, present day Haiti and the Dominican Republic, had between three and four million Arawak's. The inhabitants of the Western Hemisphere had no immunities to the diseases that the Europeans brought with them. They began to die by the tens of thousands. Village after village of Arawak's were swept by epidemics of measles, chicken pox, scarlet fever, or smallpox. The epidemics did more than kill people. They shattered political cohesion and disoriented established rituals. Native medicine men had no cure for these afflictions and their leaders were powerless in the face of such massive death. By 1520 three million Arawak's had died. Without natives to do the work, the Spanish could not support themselves or realize the profit they expected. Within a few decades the Spanish supplemented the declining indigenous peoples with African slaves in chains (Nies, 1996).



The years 1633-1635 saw epidemics spread throughout the colonies of New France, New England, and New Netherlands. Over 10,000 Huron died. Some French Jesuit missionaries told the Huron that if they were baptized as Catholics they would be spared. If they weren't, they would come down with disease. Indian oral histories hold that the missionaries also gave the unbaptized Huron blankets that came from smallpox victims, to ensure that their predictions came true (Nies, 1996). In Native North American settlements, whether by deliberate means or by simple contact, contagious diseases ran rampant. A conservative estimate is that some two million Indians suffered premature deaths as the result of the European invasion, more from disease than from combat. A similar number died in South America, reducing the indigenous population to a fraction of what it was originally in what many historians refer to as "the Conquest" (Jones & Krippner, 2012). Epidemics accounted for a much smaller proportion of deaths of the Europeans than the native populations. Diphtheria, influenza, measles, pneumonia, scarlet fever, and smallpox passed through the population, producing death rates as high as thirty per thousand (Mintz & McNeil, 2013).

### **Extermination.**

There was ill will between the whites and Native Americans due to the colonist's belief that Native Americans would welcome them and willingly supply food. To the colonists it seemed that a mutually beneficial arrangement would be made by exchanging European tools and Christianity for sustenance, however, this made little sense to the Native Americans. Warfare continued for another decade until the settlers gave up all efforts to coexist with the Native Americans and began a policy of extermination. In 1623 the English invited the Powhatan leaders to a peace conference. At the end of the gathering they served glasses of wine, which

were poisoned, and proposed a toast to “eternal friendship.” The Indians drank. Those who didn’t die immediately were shot by English soldiers.

### **Indian Wars of 1600’s**

During 1636-1637 Puritan forces annihilated the Pequots in Connecticut and Rhode Island eventually ending with the death of 600-700 natives. The remainder were sold into slavery in Bermuda. Employing a scorched-earth policy, the colonists nearly exterminated the Narragansetts, Wampanoags, and Nipmucks in 1675-1676 (American-Indian Wars, 2013). In 1614 John Smith estimated there were 30,000 Powhatan and allied Indians in the area of Jamestown. By 1669 only 2,000 remained, decimated by warfare, disease, and migration. Native Americans were also faced with dealing with the variety of local and regional governmental entities taking their lands by agreements, by treaties, by land cessations, or by theft.

### **Indian Wars of 1700’s**

In Virginia and the Carolinas, colonists pushed aside the Tuscaroras, the Yamasees, and the Cherokees in what was known as the Tuscarora War of 1711 in Northern Carolina and the Yamasee War of 1715-1718 in Southern Carolina. The Natchez, Chickasaw, and Fox Indians resisted French domination, and the Apache and Comanche fought against Spanish expansion into Texas (Indian Removal Timeline, 2012). Most of the Indians east of the Mississippi River came to perceive the colonial pioneers as a greater threat than the British government and thus sided with the Crown during the American War for Independence. During the 1770s the former colonies became the United States of America. Eventually strong American forces penetrated the heart of the Iroquois territory, leaving a wide swath of destruction in their wake. Native peoples

of both coasts of North America had been decimated by war, removal, slavery, disease, economic deprivation, and missionary excesses. In many areas, Indian populations had been reduced by two-thirds (Nies, 1996). In the Midwest in 1782, the Americans marched northwest into Shawnee and Delaware country, ransacking villages and inflicting brutal defeats. (American-Indian Wars, 2013). Pressures mounted to remove intact Indian nations like the Cherokee, from their lands so that the lands could be made available to white settlers.

The next great region of conquest was the area known historically as the Great Northwest, lands in Ohio, Indiana, Illinois and the Great Lakes region (American-Indian Wars, 2013). Benjamin Franklin, one of Pennsylvania's Indian representatives, met with Ohio Indians in Pennsylvania regarding lands in Ohio in 1753. His letters repeatedly made reference to the Great Council at Onondaga and how the Six Nations elected their leaders. He began to contemplate a political instrument of unity for the colonies based on some of the ideas of the Iroquois confederacy.

At the outset of the fourth French and Indian War, a meeting of all the colonial Indian commissioners and *sachems* (chiefs) of the Iroquois confederacy was convened in Albany in 1754. Chief Hendrick of the Mohawk had requested that colonies organize themselves with one spokesman so that the Indians did not have to meet separately with the Indian commissioner from each colony. To that end, Benjamin Franklin had drafted the Albany Plan of Union, in which each colony retained its own constitution but would send representatives to a central council. The Albany Plan, which borrowed many of the principles of the Iroquois confederacy, was adopted by the commissioners but was not subsequently ratified by the colonies. However, it did form the basis of the Article of Confederation of 1777, which Franklin also helped to draft and which in turn formed the basis for the U.S. Constitution in 1789 (Nies, 1996).

1777 saw some major shifts for the Native Americans. The Oneida, Tuscarora, and Delaware Indians helped George Washington's cold and starving troops survive the winter at Valley Forge, Pennsylvania while at the same time the Shawnee leader, Cornstalk, was killed at Fort Randolph under a flag of truce. During this same year the Six Nations of the Iroquois confederacy divided, their council fire extinguished. The Mohawk were determined to support the British Crown. The Seneca and the Onondaga favored neutrality. The Oneida and Tuscarora, because of local trade and friendship ties with settlers, sided with the colonies. In 1779 General Washington sent an American army of 4,000 troops under General John Sullivan to attack the villages of the Iroquois confederacy in Western New York. Because of dissension and division within the Iroquois nations, Sullivan's men devastated the area (Nies, 1996).

### **Indian Wars of 1800's**

Although tens of thousands of Indians disappeared, many survived, abandoning villages and merging with other tribes. They sustained the knowledge of the land through oral traditions and in historical narratives connected to rivers and mountains, as well as to the immense and multiple Indian ruins and temple mounds that laced the entire Mississippi River system (Nies, 1996). All across the United States, weary from centuries of war, Native Americans were still desperately fighting to hold on to what land they still possessed and the only life they knew. In the Southeast in 1814, Andrew Jackson crushed the Creeks at Horseshoe Bend, Alabama in what is known as the Creek war causing the Creek to relinquish a vast land tract. The First Seminole War was fought during 1816-1818 during which Andrew Jackson failed to conquer the Seminole but succeeded in forcing Spain to relinquish the territory of Florida. The Black Hawk War of

1832 was fought in Northern Illinois and Southwestern Wisconsin and became the last Native American conflict in this area. (American-Indian Wars, 2013).

On the Pacific Coast, attacks against the native peoples accompanied the flood of immigrants to gold-laden California. Disease, malnutrition, and warfare, combined with the poor lands set aside as reservations, reduced the Indian population of that state from 150,000 in 1845 to 35,000 in 1860. Strychnine-laced dead cattle were set out in hopes of poisoning Indians. In 1864 John Chivington's Colorado Volunteers slaughtered over two hundred of Black Kettle's Cheyenne's and Arapaho's. By the 1880's many tribes agreed to accept reservation life but rebellion among the Sioux and Northern Cheyenne's, caused by government corruption, shrinking reservations, and the spread of the Ghost Dance, culminated in the slaughter of Wounded Knee (1890), in which casualties totaled over two hundred Indians. The army remained wary of potential trouble as incidental violence continued. Yet, with the exception of another clash in 1973 during which protesters temporarily seized control of Wounded Knee, the major Indian-white conflicts in the United States had ended.

## Chapter 3

### 3. RELOCATION

#### **Treaties**

In 1774 the First Continental Congress of representatives from all the colonies was formed. The delegates committed 40,000 pounds to Indian affairs and appointed a Committee on Indian Affairs to negotiate terms of neutrality or support from the Indian nations. Indian relations were considered of critical importance to the success of the upcoming War for Independence. In 1775 the Second Continental Congress established Indian commissioners for three departments. The Congress assumed centralized control over Indian affairs, not leaving it to the individual colonies as the British had. They created Northern, Southern, and Middle departments of Indian Affairs with commissioners to head each: Benjamin Franklin (Northern), Patrick Henry (Middle), and James Wilson (Southern). They were authorized to make treaties and to offer trade goods (Nies, 1996).

In 1778 the first U.S. – Indian treaty was signed. The Delaware (the Turtle people) signed a peace treaty with the United States at Fort Pitt. This began the mechanism of the treaty as the primary legal instrument for federal policy toward American Indians. The new U.S. Government immediately began making treaties with small Indian groups to gain additional public lands. The Indian agents used bribery, threats, alcohol, hostages, and manipulation of unauthorized Indian “chiefs” to wrench land away from communally held tribal property. The Wyandot, Delaware, Chippewa, and Ottawa were forced to sign the Treaty of Fort McIntosh ceding certain lands in Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, and Tennessee to the U.S. Government. This was viewed as a

“whiskey treaty,” extracted by threats and alcohol (Nies, 1996). Since few Indian leaders recognized the treaty’s legitimacy, they did not abide by its terms. Consequently, land struggles began almost immediately in those states where white settlers bought lands from land companies who had bought “public lands” from the government which in turn did not have legitimate title to the lands they sold.

The Greenville Treaty of Peace was signed by 1,100 Chiefs of the Western Confederate Tribes in 1795. The seven-foot-long document was signed by legitimate chiefs of the Shawnee, Delaware, Ottawa, Pottawatomie, Wyandot, Miami, Chippewa, Kickapoo, Wea, Painkashaw, and Kaskaskia. It extinguished Indian title to lands representing two-thirds of present day Ohio, a section of Indiana, and the sites of Detroit, Toledo, Chicago, and Peoria. The allied tribes gave up lands and in return were promised a firm boundary between Indian territories. The treaty also stipulated that lands could be ceded only by tribes as a whole, not individually, and that they had a right to all remaining lands not specifically ceded to white settlers. Acting on President Jefferson’s orders, the new Northwest Territory governor, William Henry Harrison, violated the treaty almost immediately (Nies, 1996).

The practice of negotiating treaties continued until 1871, when Congress prohibited any further treaties with Indian tribes. Between 1778 and 1871, the Senate ratified 370 treaties with Indian peoples. After 1871 agreements with Indian groups were made by acts of Congress, executive order, or executive agreement. The provisions of treaties were rarely kept. Once Indians were a minority population, they had little leverage in Washington.

## Land Cessions

By the end of the 1700s, over 300,000 settlers had moved into the multi-tribal hunting grounds of the Shawnee and the allied tribes of the Northwest confederacy. These regions soon became the states of Kentucky, Tennessee, and eventually Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, and Minnesota (American-Indian Wars, 2013). The native inhabitants were pressured to cede vast amounts of land. Indians living around Ventura, California, were disposed of their lands by the Spanish in 1782. In order to give large individual land grants to three Spanish soldiers for their service to the Crown, the Mission San Buenaventura took huge tracts of lands; these were the first of the massive land grants that formed the basis of the California land system (Nies, 1996).

Iroquois remaining in New York were forced to cede most of their territorial lands in 1783. The final blow came in 1784 when the New York Iroquois, by means of hostages and threats, were forced to cede all their lands, over six million acres in western New York and Pennsylvania as well as territories in Ohio and Kentucky occupied by their allied tribes, and to accept a small reservation of less than 71,000 acres in New York State. The Ordinance of 1785 created townships and took more land away from the Indians. The government called for the survey of public lands into “townships” of six miles square, divided into 36 sections of 640 acres each, costing 1 dollar an acre. This method of land management favored speculators with money to invest. The new government was able to raise considerable money by surveying and selling Indian lands in Ohio, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, and Tennessee to land companies and land speculators who in turn sold to land hungry settlers. These settlers did not abide by the agreements their governments had negotiated with tribal leaders (Nies, 1996).

In 1789 Indian affairs were moved to the War Department. Secretary of War Henry Knox agreed that Indian nations held legal title to their lands “until the government by just negotiation,



or a just war, extinguished that title.” Between 1789 and 1850 the U.S. acquired over 450 million acres of Indian lands for less than 190 million dollars (approximately 42 cents an acre).

Revenues from the sale of public (Indian) lands were 80 percent of the new government’s annual budget (Nies, 1996). In the year 1790, Congress enacted the first Trade and Intercourse Act to regulate trade and to strengthen federal authority over states in regard to Indian relations. The goal was to establish direct federal control of trade and commerce with Indian nations. It was the first of four such acts regulating all trade and intercourse with Indian tribes and placing all interactions between Indians and non-Indians under federal control. The basis of many present-day land claims by tribes is the legal requirement, still in effect, that Indian land could not be sold by the tribe without federal consent.

Congress abolished treaty making with Indian nations and turned to Congressional and Executive orders to make unilateral decisions concerning Indians and their resources. In 1880 the “Civilization Regulations” were passed which outlawed Native religions, healing practices, and the leaving of reservations. Indian lands and resources were expropriated at unprecedented rates and redistributed to settlers. Large scale attempts were made to dismantle tribes and assimilate Indian people into the mainstream through land reform such as the Dawes Act of 1887, forced reeducation through Boarding Schools, and the outlawing of their cultures, all of which resulted in widespread poverty, loss of lands/resources, abuse and neglect (Gonzales & Stansbury, 2006). Some communities took their cultures and languages underground, resisting the U.S. Government’s attempt to kill culture and break the back of the Native Americans.

### **Dawes Act.**

Senator Henry Dawes of Massachusetts (1816–1903) was a firm believer in the civilizing power of private property. He once said that to be civilized one must “wear civilized clothes, cultivate the ground, live in houses, ride in Studebaker wagons, send children to school, drink whiskey [and] own property.” His faith in that premise was so strong that he sponsored federal legislation in the 1880s to “civilize” Indians by giving them individual allotments of land. The consequences were disastrous. His legislation broke up communally owned tribal land that had guaranteed every tribal member a home and almost destroyed Indian communities, traditions and culture. Because of the Dawes Act, tribally owned land decreased from 138 million acres in 1887 to 48 million acres in 1934 (Toensing, 2012)).

The Dawes Act gave the President of the United States the right to dissolve “any reservation created for Indians’ use, either by treaty stipulation or by virtue of an act of Congress or executive order” if, in his “opinion”, it would be “advantageous for agricultural and grazing purposes.” The president could then “allot” the land to individual Indians living there. The head of a family would receive 160 acres, a single person or orphan over 18 years would receive 80 acres, and boys under the age of 18 would receive 40 acres. Married Indian women were not entitled to receive allotments. The allotments would be held in “trust” by the federal government for 25 years and then be turned over to the individual allotment holder who would hold the title free and clear but would then have to pay taxes on the land. The twist of the knife in this situation was that many Indian people lost their allotments because they couldn’t afford to pay those taxes (Toensing, 2012).

Land expropriation and assimilation became the federal government’s policy toward the Indigenous Peoples for the next 50 years. Commissioner of Indian Affairs Thomas J. Morgan

expressed the intent of federal policy in his annual report to the Interior Secretary for 1889. “The Indians must conform to the white man’s ways, peaceably if they will, forcibly if they must. They must adjust themselves to their environment and conform their mode of living substantially to our civilization. This civilization may not be the best possible, but it is the best the Indians can get. They cannot escape it and must either conform to it or be crushed by it.” The next year, Morgan reiterated the federal government’s policy toward Indians in his annual report. “It has become the settled policy of the government to break up reservations, destroy tribal relations, settle Indians upon their own homesteads, incorporate them into the national life, and deal with them not as nations or tribes or bands, but as individual citizens”. (Toensing, 2012).

There were more Indian removal acts, and soon one hundred million acres of land once protected by treaties had been wrested from Indian control. In 1934, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt and Congress finally put an end to the land grabs. Federal courts began relying on Chief Justice Marshall’s century-old legal precedents in a series of decisions that reminded lawmakers of the binding obligation to the tribes. But they deemed it too difficult to return the land that had been stolen and the remnants of the once great Indian nations were too poor to afford suitable lawyers (Jones & Krippner, 2012).

## **Removal**

Eastern U.S. wars, removal and relocation of Native Americans dominated the 1820s to 1848. This era saw the forcible relocation of Indian tribes of the eastern states to west of the Mississippi River. Upon the Spanish cession of Florida, the United States Government began removing the territory’s tribes to lands west of the Mississippi River but the Seminole Indians and runaway slaves refused to relocate. The Second Seminole War saw fierce guerrilla-style

fighting from 1835 to 1842. The Seminole were forced to retreat into the Florida Everglades but eventually nearly three thousand Seminoles were removed to Oklahoma, often referred to as Indian Country (Indian Removal Timeline, 2012).

In 1832 Chief Justice John Marshall offered a series of judgments that angered advocates of states' rights but affirmed that Indian tribes "are domestically dependent nations" entitled to all the principles of sovereignty with the exception of making treaties with foreign governments. He also ruled that treaties involved a granting of rights from the Indian to the U.S. Government, not from the U.S. Government to the Indians, and that all rights not granted by the Indians were presumed to be reserved by the Indians. These two landmark decisions became known as the "Federal Trust Doctrine" and the "Reserved Right Doctrine" (Jones & Krippner, 2012).

However, individual states as well as private corporations often ignored these doctrines, most notably between 1831 and 1839 when Georgia defied the ruling and, with the support of President Andrew Jackson, removed thousands of Cherokee, Choctaw, Creek, Chickasaw, and Seminole Indians from their homelands in what became known as the Trail of Tears. This notorious journey was spurred by the increase of settlers in Georgia after the rumor spread that gold had been discovered in the North Georgia Mountains. By this time, the Cherokee Nation had its own alphabet, perfected by the famed Indian scholar Sequoyah, as well as schools, roads, and even Christian churches, but none of this mattered (Jones & Krippner, 2012).

In 1839 the uprooted men, women, and children were forced to walk a thousand miles through the wilderness, foraging for food along the way, to their new home in Oklahoma, a desolate territory at the time. More than four thousand Indians died, those who survived arrived in the middle of a brutal winter. It is estimated that as many as 5,000 Cherokees died on this

“trail where they cried,” commonly known as the Trail of Tears (Indian Removal Timeline, 2012). But for the Native American people there were many trails of tears.

Massive amounts of Indian lands were opened up for colonization, Indian titles to lands were extinguished and Indians became wards of the Federal Government as “domestic dependent nations.” The Federal Government assumed trusteeship of Indian lands, resources, and affairs (Gonzales & Stansbury, 2006). During the seven years following the passage of Andrew Jackson’s 1830 Indian Removal Act, there was a forced relocation of upward of 46,000 Indigenous Peoples from their homelands in the south. By 1840 most members of the tribes in the Southern United States had been subdued, annihilated, or forcibly removed to land west of the Mississippi. Only a small number of Native Americans remained in their ancient homelands, a minute fraction of the population. Today there are Choctaws and Chickasaws in Mississippi, Seminoles in Florida, Creeks in Alabama, and Cherokees in North Carolina and other states (Jones & Krippner, 2012).

Between 1849 and 1870, Indian removal reached the Western United States. Reservations were being established as wars and treaty making continued. Massive western migrations of U.S. settlers beginning in the late 1840s led to horrific violence between colonizers and Native peoples. The U.S. Government used its military might and treaties to forcibly relocate Natives to so called Indian Territory or onto reservations and expropriate their lands. Indian Affairs was transferred to the Department of the Interior which manages public lands expropriated from Native people (Gonzales & Stansbury, 2006).

The 1850s to the 1870s saw systematic military campaigns designed to destroy the subsistence base of the Plains people leaving them no choice but to succumb to the reservation or relocate to Indian Country. Centuries old tensions were exacerbated by railroad expansion, new

mining ventures, the calculated destruction of the buffalo, and ever-increasing white demand for land. Philip Sheridan was successful in his winter campaigns of 1868-1869, but only with the Red River War of 1874-1875 were the southern plains tribes broken. It was the army's destruction of Indian lodges, horses, and food supplies, exemplified by Ranald Mackenzie's slaughter of over a thousand Indian ponies following a skirmish at Palo Duro Canyon, Texas, in 1874 that broke the tribes who were still holding on.

### **Reservations**

In 1638 the English Puritans established the first Indian reservation in Connecticut. The English forced an agreement on the Quinnipiacs (Wappingers) of New Haven, Connecticut, taking most of their lands and leaving them only 1,200 acres of their original lands, which had spread along the eastern bank of the Hudson River bordering Manhattan Island to the south and the Roeliff-Jansen kill, a major tributary to the Hudson, to the north and extended east into Connecticut, as a reservation. Under the terms of the agreement, the Indians were subject to the jurisdiction of an English agent; could not sell or leave their lands or receive "foreign" Indians; could not buy guns, powder, or whisky; and had to accept Christianity and reject their traditional spiritual beliefs, which Puritans believed were the teachings of Satan (Nies, 1996).

In 1799 the third Trade and Intercourse Act was passed. The law carefully regulated who could have contact with Indians. It restricted anyone without a license from having "any trade with the Indians" and subjected unlicensed traders to a fine and/or imprisonment. The act also provided for the presidential appointment of temporary federal agents to the tribes, the first Indian agents. The act was designed to keep federal control over all aspects of Indian relations.

The 1870s to 1900s saw the era of allotment and civilization/assimilation projects. Military agents were stationed to live on and oversee welfare disbursements and assimilations policies on reservations in the 1870s. The U.S. and Canadian governments instituted policies and laws to force Indians onto reservations while, at the same time, encouraging them to become assimilated into the mainstream culture resulting in high rates of alcoholism and suicide (Braveheart M. Y., 1998). It is ironic that the sacred substance used in the Roman Catholic Mass to represent the blood of Christ has caused so much devastation among Indians, while the Native Americans' sacred herb tobacco has caused major health problems for numerous Christians.

## Chapter 4

### 4. ASSIMILATION

#### **Boarding Schools**

After the Indian wars, America and Canada decided to educate Indians to extinction. Every Indian has heard, “Kill the Indian and save the man”, or “the only good Indian is a dead Indian.” Both phrases were uttered by Capt. Richard C. Pratt, the head master and founder of Carlisle Boarding School (DeMeyer & Cotter-Busbee, 2012) but he wasn’t the first to establish schools in order to convert Indian children. In 1619 the English colonists in Jamestown founded a school for Indian children in order to convert them to Christianity. Like the Spanish, the English wanted the Indians to declare submission to the Crown and the Church of England and to work for free. By 1620 there were over 1,000 English colonists in Jamestown who asserted their right to the Powhatan lands (Nies, 1996). In 1750 Moor’s Indian Charity School was founded in Connecticut. It was later moved to Hanover, New Hampshire when Presbyterian ministers in Scotland offered to raise money for the education of the Indians. It was later named Dartmouth College (Nies, 1996).

Beginning in 1887, the U.S. Government tried to “civilize” Native Americans by educating their young children. By 1900, thousands of Native American children were studying at 154 boarding schools in the United States alone, among them being Carlisle, Flandreau, Hampton, Haskell Institute and others. The U.S. Training and Industrial School was founded in 1879 at Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania. Carlisle provided vocational and manual training but systematically stripped away tribal culture, burning belongings and cutting off long hair. In many



tribes hair was cut off when a relative died so for some alarmed children, cutting hair meant cutting off contact from their families. Many tribes strongly disagreed with the American/Canadian government's system of residential boarding schools but they were not able to assert their opinions and children were removed by force. Over the past 100 years, tribes have lost two or three generations to the government's system of boarding schools.

The curriculum of boarding schools involved the banishment of traditional beliefs because of the assumption that Native cultures were pathologically deficient, without virtue and without value (Morgan & Freeman, 2009). Boarding schools were created to civilize Native children, some of whom were literally kidnapped from their communities as young as four years old as a result of rewards being given to those who delivered Indian children to these boarding schools. This caused a deep seeded fear and distrust of white people that continues today. Boarding schools continued to operate for 100 years with the last government run boarding school closure in 1970. Multiple generations of children suffered disruption of families and communities. During these years, it is estimated that 70% of Native children were in boarding schools (Robinson-Zanartu, 1996). Due to the lack of warmth and intimacy in childhood, repetitive physical and sexual abuse, loss of knowledge, language, and tradition and the systematic devaluing of native identity, these children developed severely impaired emotional responses and attachment disorders that impacted their lives as well as their children's lives.

### **Breakdown of spiritual life.**

Among Native Americans, knowledge is not a collection of boring facts. Knowledge is alive and dwells in specific power places. Traditional knowledge comes through watching and listening but not in the passive way taught in Western schools or in the repetitive prayers found

in most religious schools. Knowledge comes through the direct experience of songs, rituals, and ceremonies, from trees and animals, and from dreams and visions. When Indians say they have “come to knowledge” they mean that they have entered into relationships with power animals, power plants, and power objects. They have learned from birds, from herbs, from rivers, and from the winds (Jones & Krippner, 2012). School indoctrination in Canada and the United States was used to coerce young Indians into believing that these rituals were vestiges of a bygone era of superstition and barbarism.

After ten to fifteen years of living in these institutions, young people were then graduated and sent back to their communities without the years of training that were traditionally given by elders and their families (Robinson-Zanartu, 1996). Upon returning, many found that they were not white yet they were not Indian either. The result was an intergenerational division that still remains today and is a powerful influence on the cultural identity of many, particularly the elders. Native Americans call this group of people “Red Apple”, red on the outside but white on the inside. With this lack of identity, many boarding school attendees turned to alcohol as a way to self-medicate. Some traditional tribal members believe that Red Apples claim to have been educated but they were really brainwashed to be ashamed of being Indians so they forgot the old ways and the real values (Jones & Krippner, 2012).

### **Adoption Project**

Captain Richard C. Pratt, the founder of the Carlisle Boarding School, said in a speech to the Board of Commissioners in 1889: “I say that if we take a dozen young Indians and place one in each American family, taking those so young they have not yet learned to talk, and train them up as children of those families, I defy you to find any Indian in them when they are grown,

color amounts to nothing.” Government policies shifted in the 1950's towards a more humanitarian view but not without serious consequences. Humanitarians still viewed simulation as the best answer to the "Indian Problem" and saw tribes as incapable of caring for their children. New projects began, such as the Indian Adoption Project, which used public and private agencies to remove Indian children and place hundreds of them in non-Indian homes far from their families and communities (Mannes, 1995).

Few attempts were made or resources committed to help tribal governments develop services on tribal lands that would strengthen Indian families. As efforts to outplace Indian children continued into the 1960s and 1970s, the Association on Indian Affairs conducted a study in the 1970's that found between 25 percent and 35 percent of all Indian children had been separated from their families (George, 1997). This study also found that in 16 states in 1969, 85 percent of the Indian children were placed in non-Indian homes (Unger, 1977). The long-term effects of these massive out placements of Indian children were only just beginning to be understood in the 1970's, not only on the individuals directly, but also the wellbeing of entire tribal communities.

Not until 1978, after the passage of the Indian Child Welfare Act (P.L. 95-608), did the federal government acknowledge the critical role that tribal governments play in protecting their children and maintaining their families. At the request of Native American advocacy group's congressional consideration was given to the welfare of Indian children, during which strong opposition was raised by several states, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS Church), and several social welfare groups. The bill was pushed through by Representative Morris Udall of Arizona, who lobbied President Jimmy Carter to sign the bill (Wilkinson, 2005).

Congress recognized that if Indian children had continued to be removed from Indian homes at this rate, tribal survival would be threatened.

Adopting out Indian children was as destructive as a war but it lasts longer; it lasts a lifetime. The adoption program idea was not officially signed like other treaties made in Indian Country. These unique adoption program records were sealed and not made public. The goal was adoptions would be permanent and closed; therefore adoption was used as the ultimate weapon (DeMeyer & Cotter-Busbee, 2012). Native children adopted by non-Indians would be Americans and unable to open their records; tribal parents and grandparents would never see the children again, or be able to find them. This policy disempowered parents in the raising of their own children and disconnected native youth from their families, reservations, and culture.

Selling Americans and others on adopting Indian kids was quite effortless. Essentially all social workers had to imply to prospective parents was, "you'll save these poor Indians kids' lives." Indian children simply disappeared at the playground or from their backyard or babies were taken from hospitals. Some of the mothers were too poor and were pressured not to keep their children. Large black government sedan's had been reported in many abduction stories and the kidnapping perpetrated by the people inside the sedan was not prohibited or against the law. Most of the Native kids removed from their homes never had a social worker visit those homes (DeMeyer & Cotter-Busbee, 2012). Many tribal members were terrified of losing their children not because they were bad parents but because they were Indian. Some Native children were removed to residential boarding schools. Others were placed in orphanages and foster homes, and still others were adopted.

For the past century, parents living on reservations could not prevent children from being stolen for boarding schools and adoption. Many state administrations made rules and paid

agencies and churches to remove and Christianize children, to civilize and train children, and raise them to be non-Indian. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS Church) had an Indian Placement Program that removed Indian children from their tribes and placed them into church members' homes. By the 1970s, approximately 5,000 Indian children were living in LDS homes (Wilkinson, 2005). This truth of the government's plan to ethnically cleanse an entire population of Indian children is not widely acknowledged in history. Removing culture of Native children would not only destroy future generations of Indians but adopted children would not have treaty rights (DeMeyer & Cotter-Busbee, 2012). Adopted children would disappear. Few politicians know or acknowledge it happened. Most are stunned to hear it was government policy to run these various adoption programs.

Many adoptees claim their adoptive parents never knew anything about this. When an adoptee becomes an adult, some question whether their family or their tribe will accept them back. Some did not know they had been enrolled in their sovereign tribal nations, filed earlier by relatives. Some learned their parents and tribal relatives were assimilated too, in boarding schools or in relocation programs, severely scarring them. It's a painful cycle of loss in this past century. Some of the people need counseling and cannot seem to get anyone who understands the total disconnection of knowing they are Native but not knowing what tribe they are from, or who their family is. For a Native, that is like being dead. You have no roots, no beginning, no stories and no future (DeMeyer & Cotter-Busbee, 2012)

If the Native American population was 2 million and just one quarter of all children were removed before the Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978, then more than 80,000 children were removed from their families during the early to mid-1900s. If the population was 3 million, then over 100,000 were removed and relocated via adoption. In 1984, 80% of American Indian infant

adoptions into non-Indian homes were made without notification to the child's tribe or the Secretary of the Interior. Six years into its inception, the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) still was not understood, was not being implemented correctly or was simply ignored by social workers and church organizations.

The 1978 Indian Child Welfare Act is the first serious legislative attempt to counteract these adoption policies. It provides mandates to state courts and county social service case agencies for replacement of children who were removed from their homes, prioritizing placement with (1) preference of the child and parents, (2) extended family, (3) other tribal members, and (4) other Indians. It also requires that agencies notify tribes of cases affecting their members and it grants tribal courts agencies the right to intervene in their children's welfare (Treuer, 2012). The ICWA is a big step in the right direction but there are no fines, sanctions, or punishments for individuals or agencies that do not comply with the act. Often tribes receive no notice, or a late notice, and by the time they try to intervene and advocate, the affected child has already been removed from their homes for two years or more. Native Americans still have the highest foster care and adoption rates of all racial groups in the United States (Treuer, 2012).

## **Urbanization**

The U.S. government made it official policy to relocate Indians from reservations to urban areas in the 1950's. The government appropriated funds to provide tribal members with one-way transportation and rental assistance for the first month. Thousands of Indians took advantage of the program believing they would find greater financial opportunities in cities. Milwaukee, Minneapolis, Chicago, Denver, and Oakland developed large Indian populations as a result of this policy. But relocations failed to deliver the financial betterment promised. There

was still a racial barrier to gainful employment for people of color in the 1950s and 1960s, and Indians who moved under the policy were soon even more impoverished than their reservation counterparts (Treuer, 2012).

The turning point for Native Americans occurred in July 1970 when President Richard Nixon delivered the first speech by a U.S. president on behalf of the Indians. Nixon told Congress that federal Indian policy was a disgrace to the nation's character. "The American Indians," he said, "have been oppressed and brutalized, deprived of their ancestral lands, and denied the opportunity to control their own destiny." Nixon, who credited his high school football coach, a Cherokee, for teaching him leadership skills, noted, "The story of the Indian is a record of endurance and survival, of adaptation and creativity in the face of overwhelming obstacles." Henceforth, he concluded, federal Indian policy should "operate on the premise that Indian tribes are permanent, sovereign governmental institutions in this society." Nixon's staff started writing what became the *American Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act*, which gave tribes more direct control over federal programs that affected their members. By the time Congress passed the law in 1975, Nixon had left office in disgrace but for some 1.5 million Native American citizens of the United States, the Nixon initiative had far-reaching and positive effects (Treuer, 2012).

## Chapter 5

### 5. WHO ARE THE NATIVE AMERICAN PEOPLE

#### **Present Day Challenges**

At the time of first European contact about one-fifth of the Earth's population, including Native Americans, were living in conditions that today would be viewed as ideal. People worked two or three days a week to provide themselves with food, shelter, and basic life necessities. The rest of the time was spent playing, gossiping, visiting, worshipping and engaging in artistic activities. The European lifestyle was very different so brought about a lifestyle change for the Native Americans. The European contact also brought with it diseases that killed most of the Native Americans and left the remaining population a legacy of heart disease, breakdowns of the immune system, addictions, allergies, cancer, suicides, and mental illnesses.

Native Americans of every age can be categorized as being at high risk. Most have survived extreme poverty, racism, marginalization, oppression, and both overt and covert strategies by the federal government to either eradicate or assimilate them. In fact, being born a Native American has a profound impact on individuals, starting with neonatal survival and continuing with impacts on educational attainment, employment, housing, health, family, and community life (Smedley, Stith, & Nelson, 2003).

Human development spans a lifetime and each developmental stage holds increased risks for the Native American. Native individuals are among the most severely socio-economically disadvantaged population in the United States. This extreme poverty increases the developmental risks before a child is even born. Prenatal nutritional deficiencies, the toxic effects of chemical



substances, tobacco use, and alcohol use as well as the lack of prenatal medical care are influences that lead to higher rates of mental health problems for Native American children (Manson, Bechtold, Novins, & Beals, 1997).

Infants are born to parents who were raised in boarding school, which are the origin of bonding and attachment disorders. The boarding schools were the cause of a lost generation of parents due to the fact they were raised in an institutional setting that provided no means for learning the essentials of parenting. It is likely that the combination of socioeconomic disadvantage, significant social and familial disruption, and high rates of alcohol, drug and mental disorders affect the establishment of healthy parent-child bonds (Manson, Bechtold, Novins, & Beals, 1997). Attachment disorders are often carried into adulthood and affect the adult relationships the individual will have later in life (Feist & Feist, 2009). Attachment disorders are also passed down to children. The pattern is not easy to break and may continue for several generations.

School-age Native children are at risk for several educationally handicapping conditions. Native American children experience high rates of mental retardation, sensory impairment, emotional-behavioral dysfunction, and learning disabilities (Manson, Bechtold, Novins, & Beals, 1997). Native children typically begin the first grade somewhat ahead of the national academic norms and by the fourth year they are a half a year behind. Their educational performance continues to decline in subsequent years. Primary school years are focused more toward visual and motor abilities while secondary years require the student to demonstrate an increasing aptitude in verbal and conceptual skills. Traditional Native American culture is more visual than verbal and more experiential than conceptual (Manson, Bechtold, Novins, & Beals, 1997).

During secondary school years, the adolescent is likely to perceive himself as a failure, rather than the school system failing him, and drop out of school. The dropout rate is as high as 85% on some reservations (Sack, Beiser, Clarke, & Redshirt, 1987). This high dropout rate is an indication that the typical Western education is not considered valuable in the American Indian culture unless it incorporates Native American traditions and has been tailored to fit with Native American learning styles by maintaining the visual and experiential methods used in earlier school years. As with other adolescents this is a time to explore one's sexuality. Approximately 3 million teens are diagnosed with a sexually transmitted disease annually; Native teens being among the highest of any ethnic group (Mitchell, Whitesell, Spicer, Beals, & Kaufman, 2007).

The initiation to sexual activity carries two risk factors, use of alcohol or drugs and sensation seeking. For Native men, the school and peer microsystems were found to be more important predictors of early initiation than for Native women. The influence of mothers for young women is most important. Young women are positively impacted when their mothers were from intact marriages, postponed childbirth and had higher education (Mitchell, Whitesell, Spicer, Beals, & Kaufman, 2007). Mitchell's research found that the mother's educational achievements were important for young women suggesting that young girls from families who value accomplishments are less likely to begin early initiation of sexual behaviors.

### **Biological Needs of Native Youth**

Ritual reinforces the biological need for human communication that evolved to provide attachment bonds between infants and those who nurture and protect them. Humanity's evolutionary ancestry produced a neuropsychology for a social world; a need for a shared emotional life that is wired into the human nervous system. Ritual provides a group identity and

a social support system. The specific reasons for and purposes of vision quests varied from tribe to tribe. Typically, the fundamental reason an individual went on a vision quest was to grow spiritually and to bring back valuable wisdom to the tribe. The vision quest was frequently used as a rite of passage or an initiation practice to clearly delineate a young person's transition from childhood to adulthood. Older children undertook a vision quest before they reached puberty to receive spiritual guidance regarding what direction to take in life and to discover their life purpose. In some Native American cultures, both boys and girls went on vision quests, while in others it was a tradition for boys only. In cultures where girls did not undertake a vision quest menstruation and childbirth were often viewed as the parallel experiences to the vision quest (Ostow, 2006).

The United States Government outlawed all ceremonies of the Native American but the outlawing of the vision quest had a particularly devastating effect on the Native youth, especially the young men of the tribes. The loss of this rite of passage left many young men without a sense of purpose or a sense of direction (Jones & Krippner, 2012). The *American Indian Religious Freedom Act* was passed in 1978 to protect and preserve the traditional religious rights and cultural practices of Native Americans. These rights include access to sacred sites, freedom to worship through ceremonial and traditional rites, and use and possession of objects considered sacred. Unfortunately many of the Elders who had knowledge of the ceremony have passed, or "walked on" as the Natives refer to it, in the 80 years the United States had deemed it illegal to practice. Some believe the loss of this rite of passage is the leading cause of the suicide rate of Native youth, which is 70% higher than the rate for the general population in the United States (Centers for disease and Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, 2008).

This traditional ceremony is making its way back into the lives of Native Americans but now it faces devaluation by the wave of “New Age” practitioners who use this sacred ceremony as a way to make money with non-Native populations. It is important to note that Native American spiritual leaders who conduct these traditional ceremonies will not accept money preferring the traditional offering of tobacco or corn meal instead.

### **Complications on the Healing Processes**

Addressing poverty, racism, and other current social problems is essential for promoting well-being. Engaging youth, families and communities in these efforts can be challenging when their immediate needs are frequently pressing, and when trauma has occurred across generations and is pervasive throughout a community or tribe. Engaging youth in social change efforts to achieve social justice is important in terms of their self-esteem. Educating youth about the past is important. It helps youth begin to understand their parents and grandparents better and might help them experience less shame and self-blame as a result of understanding current behavioral health problems in a historical context (Goodkind, et al., 2010)

As Native Americans pass through each stage of development, traumatic events continue to accumulate into adulthood bringing on mental disorders such as addictions, depression and posttraumatic stress disorder. The soul wounding experienced by Native women seems to increase the co-occurrence of substance abuse and mental health issues (Bohn, 2003). For many, cultural identity conflicts have created behavioral, health and lifestyle problems. Native Americans have had to deal with physical abuse, sexual abuse, racism and discrimination in housing and employment opportunities. Rates of co-occurrence of mental health problems and substance abuse are estimated to be as high as 80% (Walters & Simoni, 2002). It is these women

who are battling depression and substance abuse that are the caregivers to not only the children but also the elders, creating a toxic micro system for generation after generation.

Native American elders living on reservations are at high risk for abusive care because of their living conditions. A number of factors specific to the Native American contribute to the increased risk of elder abuse. There is an increased prevalence of chronic conditions causing disability which requires more intensive support and the eldest daughter is most often the person who provides this support. It is the eldest daughter who is more likely to have been subject to the boarding schools and suffer from an attachment disorder. This attachment disorder can be the root cause of strained relations between the disabled parent and the caregiver child which creates the increased risk of elder abuse.

### **Addiction**

Historical trauma theory suggests that many American Indians are still affected by the cultural losses and injustices endured by the previous generations. The existence of a clinically significant trauma response among Native American is not just the result of direct individual exposure to trauma but is rooted deep within the psyches in the history of the population. It is believed to be the result of the devastating accumulation of genocidal acts, recycling epidemics of disease, war, and cultural destruction through forced relocation and assimilation over several hundred years beginning with Spanish and European contact (Braveheart & Debruyn, 1998; Thornton, 1987; Wiechelt & Graycznski, 2011). The disruption and decimation of economic systems, sustenance practices, spiritual practices, kinship networks, and family ties among Native groups stripped them of their culture, sources of self-worth, and mechanisms for coping (DeVries, 1996; Salzman, 2001; Stamm, Stamm, Hudnall, & Higson-Smith, 2004). The effects

of the massive cultural traumas accumulated over time in individuals' families and communities have been associated with adverse emotional states, family disruption, and health-risk behaviors such as drug and alcohol misuse.

It is well documented that, as a group, Native American tend to have higher rates of substance abuse than other racial groups. One study conducted between June 2000 and April 2010 in Los Angeles County focused on urban Native American Indians and found they had a significantly younger age of first alcohol use (12.1 years) compared to all other racial/ethnic groups (range 14.2-16.7 years). Native American adolescents suffer substantial social, emotional, educational, and legal consequences due to substance use. Morbidity and mortality rates are also disproportionately high. Native American youth (ages 15-24 years) have an all-causes mortality rate 2.3 times higher than the general population. Of the 10 leading causes of death of American Indian adolescents, at least four are related to substance misuse: accidents, suicide, homicide, and chronic liver disease and cirrhosis. Further, the alcohol-related death rate for Native youth is 4.0 times higher than the combined all-races rate (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Indian Health Services, 2009)

A common theme through several studies is high rates of traumatic exposure including witnessing domestic violence (84.2%) and being physically abused (26.3%). The majority of youth lives with at least one individual who has a substance abuse problem (64.7%). This is an indication that levels of mental distress among the youth need to be understood less in terms of the individual and more as a response to the cumulative trauma experiences by the community as a whole. High poverty and unemployment rates, disparities in health care access and utilization, and ongoing cultural/historical-based trauma are predominant among Native Americans.

Furthermore, urban Native Americans face significant physical and mental health concerns, often related to their cultural disenfranchisement (Dickerson, et al., 2012).

## Chapter 6

### 6. HEALING TREATMENTS

#### **Pacific Northwest Canoe Journey**

It is important to emphasize that effective healing treatments already exist within Indian communities. Traditional practices and ceremonies have been effective for thousands of years but federal policies at different times have prohibited them, disregarded them, perpetuated questions about their credibility and validity, and resulted in their loss across generations in some communities (Goodkind, et al., 2010). Researchers suggest involving schools, community organizations, Tribal Councils, and social services in the substance abuse prevention process. Cultural identity and participating in traditional practices, including traditional healing practices, can be a source of strength and connection for American Indian communities. One such tradition that has been resurrected is the Pacific Northwest Canoe Journey (Quinault Indian Nation, 2013).

Coastal Salish tribes historically traveled by canoe to meet, gather, trade, and celebrate with one another. The dugout ocean-going canoe was the very foundation of Salish culture but these customs were disappearing. In 1989, a small number of tribes came together for the “Paddle to Seattle.” Only nine canoes participated but the most recent journey, the Paddle to Quinault 2013, involved more than 100 canoes and an estimated 15,000 people. The purpose of the modern-day Canoe Journey is to honor the ancestors and to teach the community traditional cultural ways of being. Those who go on the annual journey learn respect for their culture and the greatness of their ancestors. In addition, they learn the importance of working together as a



community, the value of elders and taking instruction from them, and a greater appreciation for the importance of spirituality in their lives.

Canoe families meet throughout the year in preparation for the journey. They learn how to navigate the water and participate in the construction of a canoe from a single dugout tree. They also learn how to prepare their bodies, minds, and spirits for the journey, which includes being drug and alcohol free. Depending on the distance from the host tribe, canoe families might travel for as long as a month before arriving at their final destination. They travel from community to community along the coast of Canada and Washington until they reach the host tribe. When they arrive, the event is celebrated with cultural protocols that include feasting on local specialties, singing, dancing, drumming, and participation in gift-giving ceremonies. The celebrations usually last about a week. Those who complete the journey experience a great sense of pride in their accomplishment and pride in their culture.

The lessons for youth are learning the basic life skills by using cultural beliefs and practices. Traditionally, the ancestors taught young people these life skills using metaphor and storytelling and through example and role-playing. The goal of the teachings is the same today: to help adolescents and children grow up to appreciate their culture and be happy, responsible, and honorable individuals who serve their communities. The program also provides Native youth with the opportunity to develop skills to assist them in making choices that promote positive behavior while avoiding the hazards of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs (Hawkins & La Marr, 2012). The premise of the program is anything you need for a canoe journey you need for a life journey. On the canoe, you need to be in balance emotionally, mentally, physically, and spiritually in order to be a useful and valuable participant. You need problem solving skills, goals,

a plan, communication skills, and emotional regulation. On life's journey you need exactly the same skills.

### **White Bison Wellbriety Program**

Another example of interventions that have been developed and implemented by Native Americans is the White Bison Wellbriety program which teaches that the cycle of life is broken between youth and adult. In traditional cultures, elders taught the youth how to transition into adulthood during coming-of-age ceremonies. The U.S. Government outlawed these coming of age ceremonies in the late 1800's. It was only decriminalized in 1978 when the *American Indian Religious Freedom Act* was signed into law. Many of the young people no longer have access to the traditional teachings. Numerous Native American tribes practiced the rite of passage referred to as the Vision Quests, which was often taken by older children before puberty to "find themselves" and their life's direction. Often the individual was required to fast prior to the quest and was not allowed to sleep. During this period of sensory deprivation, the individual was to search for a guardian spirit's presence or a sign that would be given to them. Once the presence or sign was "seen," and the individual had realized his/her direction in life, they would return to the tribe to pursue their life's journey.

It has been argued that with the loss of this ritual the direction of the Native American youth has also become lost. These ceremonies took much preparation and guidance, which was provided by an elder of the community. White Bison Wellbriety provides a culturally based 12-step program that often refers to the Medicine Wheel when seeking instruction and direction. This intervention also implements the use of the sweat lodge, smudging, singing, dancing and drumming.

### **Drum-Assisted Recovery Therapy for Native Americans**

The Drum-Assisted Recovery Therapy for Native Americans (DARTNA) is a substance abuse treatment utilizing drumming as a core component. Drumming is an American Indian traditional based activity that has been utilized for many centuries to promote healing and self-expression. Drumming is also thought to have biological effects. For example, rhythmic auditory stimuli including drumming, singing, and chanting generates auditory drive leading to increased alpha and theta wave production contributing to a desired meditative state (Dickerson, et al., 2012). These treatments consist of a 3-hour treatment session, scheduled 2 times weekly over 12 weeks. During the first session, participants participate in making their own personal drum that they will use during their treatment. This activity offers participants a culturally relevant educational task that enhances their cultural identity.

These are just a few examples of culturally based interventions. There are also other traditional techniques such as circle talks, sweat lodges, and smudging that have been used for hundreds of years. Symbolic health rituals and ceremonies were often held to bring participants into harmony with themselves, their tribe and their environment. Cultural interventions are important in addressing social and health problems in Native communities. The worldview of Native Americans is that wellness is maintaining balance with the natural environment and harmony in human relationships. Restoring balance is the goal of ceremonial healing by traditional medicine people. Native Americans worldview is also rooted in tribal culture. Every event in one's circle of life relates to all other events regardless of time and space. Wholeness of individuals, families, communities, and nations are all parts of wellness. Historical trauma as well as the current situation of Native Americans being defined by others, which is disempowering, demoralizing and devastating to a sense of self, has contributed to the

astronomically high rate of addiction in the Native American youth. Wholeness is reinforced by a sense of cultural identity making it critical that interventions incorporate culture into their treatment plans.

It is important to not lose sight of the assets and underlying culturally based strengths that are evident in the American Indian population. These strengths include the high value placed on family, clan, tribal affiliation, and spirituality, as well as engagement with and support from the community, and respect and appreciation for elders and their wisdom (Dickerson, et al., 2012). Cultural identity and participating in traditional practices, including traditional healing practices can be a source of strength and connection for American Indian communities.

### **Traditional Dancing**

There was a revival of traditional dancing in the 1960's, and in January 1971 about eight hundred people from virtually all of the West Coast Salish regions were active participants in spirit dancing or observers when a new longhouse at Tzeachten, British Columbia, was opened. Traditional masks and costumes were publicly displayed for the first time in several decades, marking the abatement of suppression by government and religious authorities. The repression of Native rituals demonstrates how powerful social authorities and institutions take it upon themselves to socially construct rules of conduct. The suspension of these prohibitions was due to the accumulation and use of power, legal, political, economic, and perhaps spiritual power by Native people and other non-Natives who recognized the atrocities that had been committed.

## **Sweat Lodge**

The sweat lodge ceremony is one of the most widespread traditions for purification of spirit, mind, and body among Native people in North and Central America. To sweat in this manner is regarded as a sacred act and the ceremony is usually performed in a spiritual context. The Tribal Healers in many tribes used the ceremony, also called a “sweat,” as a healing procedure. For example, Maidu Medicine Men in California used their sweats to heal chills or fevers. Herbal medicine is placed in the water that turns to steam on the hot rocks, allowing the participants to inhale the medicine. In treating muscle strain, the injured area is covered with warm mud and the patient spends the night in the sweat lodge (Jones & Krippner, 2012).

The sweat lodge ceremony is also performed for other purposes, such as to induce a vision, to prepare for a hunt, or to commemorate the arrival of puberty. It has also been used as a preparation for warfare or to celebrate the killing of an enemy. An individual might sweat before participating in a sun dance ceremony, before embarking on a vision quest, or simply as preventive medicine. The sweat lodge ceremony allows people to search for solutions for their problems by getting in touch with their spirituality.

Once the participants begin to sweat, prayers are offered and songs are sung. This part of the ceremony varies from tribe to tribe. Sometimes sage or other sacred plants are placed on the hot rocks. Sometime there are as many as four breaks between “rounds,” during which time participants can leave the lodge and spray each other with cold water. The rounds may last from fifteen to forty-five minutes with the entire ceremony taking from between one to three hours. The ceremonial leader usually has an assistant who may bring in rocks from the outdoor fire pit, at which time each new rock is welcomed.

The first round often begins with a calling to an animal spirit or a welcoming song or prayer. The songs are generally simple and repetitive so that newcomers can learn them quickly and join in. Drumming is used in some of the ceremonies and, if so, it is repetitive and fairly loud. At the end of each round, the door flap is lifted and the steam rushes out. The fourth round is the time during which participants may experience the most profound shifts in their awareness. Visions are common, as are voices from unknown sources. Participants' accounts often include reports marked by colorful visual imagery, intense emotion, recall of important life experiences, insights into their personal path, freedom from physical or mental pain, and an overall feeling of cleanliness and purification. From a Native American perspective, the importance of these ceremonies is renewal because nothing persists, all is in flux, and a society will pass away unless it is willing to renew itself (Jones & Krippner, 2012).

### **Smudging**

The smudging ceremony is a Native American custom used for centuries to create a cleansing smoke bath that is used to purify the body, aura, energy, ceremonial/ritual space or any other space and personal articles. Smudging calls on the spirits of sacred plants to drive away negative energies and restore balance. Plants such as tobacco, sage, cedar, sweet grass, juniper and lavender are burned and the smoke is directed with a feather. Each plant has different healing properties. Sage is used to purify and drive out negative energy, sweet grass is used to attract positive energy, cedar is used to ward off sickness and lavender brings about spiritual blessings. Some tribes consider tobacco to be the most sacred plant, chasing away negative feelings and attracting positive thoughts. It is important to realize the tobacco is used sparingly as a medicine, not on regular bases, as this disrupts harmony and causes illness.

## **Mental Health Therapy Models**

Native Peoples' understanding of the world is based on concepts such as holism, interconnection, and universal relatedness (Cross, 1998). Native Americans believe that we are all one with each other and with all of creation, and that we need to maintain a respectful balance and reverence for all life. To understand this group of people, it is important to appreciate patterns of behavior, meanings, and values both in the Native American subculture and in the larger culture in which the subculture is embedded. A holistic, ecosystem perspective provides the framework that is culturally compatible with the Native American people (Grandbois & Sanders, 2009). Tribal identity, Elders, ceremonies and rituals, humor, oral tradition, family, and support networks are essential strategies that keep Native people strong but spirituality is at the core of their survival. Resilience is not only embedded in their culture but also in the oneness and sense of connection they feel with all of life (Grandbois & Sanders, 2009). Resilience and strength that exists among the Native peoples can only be fully understood when looked at through the Native American worldview that allows them to be accepting and open to mystery. Much of what Native people accept as truth cannot be measured and often cannot be seen but the inability of scientific measurement does not mean that it does not exist.

Many non-Native counselors come from a value system which emphasizes saving, domination, competition and aggression, mastery over nature, individualism and the nuclear family, a future-time orientation, a preference for scientific explanations, and reverence of youth (Sanders, 1987; Regents of the University of California, 2012). Native values include sharing, cooperation, the group and extended family, noninterference, "being," a time orientation toward the present, harmony with nature, preference for explanation of natural phenomena according to

the supernatural, a deep respect for Elders (Herring, 1990; Regents of the University of California, 2012). These differing sets of values present a huge obstacle for therapists to overcome. Arguments have been made for the superiority of Native American counselors to non-Native counselors and physicians in working with Native Americans. Trustworthiness has been identified as a more significant variable in caregivers' effectiveness rather than ethnicity. Research has found that there is a preference for cultural sensitivity rather than cultural similarities. Native Americans prefer a therapist who possesses a general awareness of Indian-White relations, some specific tribal knowledge, and an understanding of Native family relationships (Lafromboise & Dixon, 1981; Regents of the University of California, 2012).

The creation of mental health therapy models that integrate Native American traditions into their treatment plan is crucial to the healing of soul wounds. Native American educators and health care professionals maintain that interventions are effective only when Native American clients are encouraged to become responsible in ways that are culturally relevant (Coggins, 1990). The willingness of mental health professionals to educate themselves about the historical traditions, beliefs and behavioral norms has helped American Indians with various mental health issues regain their self-worth and improve self-efficacy. There are many changes that therapists need to make to develop a trusting relationship with Native clients. Some suggestions include the need to change their usual 50-minute hour, move the counseling environment out of the office, permit drop-ins, and pay attention to nonverbal communication. Therapist should encourage the use of Native American healing practices such as powwows, music, smudging, storytelling, sweat lodge, pipe ceremony, vision quest's and the use of herbs.

The healing of soul wounds demands a holistic treatment plan if the wound is to be diminished. It may take many generations to accomplish this but through the use and integration



of Western and Native medicine there is hope that the severe poverty, substance abuse and violence will begin to recede, leaving space for traditional ways to reestablish themselves. Western doctors must incorporate Native traditions into their health care plans and mental health professionals need to think in terms of the Native American.

## Chapter 7

### 7. RESILIENCY OF THE NATIVE AMERICAN PEOPLE

The Native American population climbed by nearly a third between 2002 and 2010. Over the last decade the American Indian and Alaska Native population increased by 18.4 percent moving them to a slightly larger minority, comprising 0.9 percent of the population in 2010 (Census 2010, n.d.). The number of businesses owned by American Indians has increased dramatically in recent years with revenues receipts reaching \$26.9 billion in 2002 (Census 2010, n.d.). A review of Home Mortgage Disclosure Act (HMDA) data revealed a 39% increase in housing loans to American Indians between 1997 and 2001 (Olson M. , 2002).

#### **Higher Education**

Considerable publicity was given to the American Indian Movement's violent siege of the town of Wounded Knee, South Dakota, in 1973. But at the same time, thousands of young Indian men and women began attending colleges and universities. In 1968 there were only about five hundred Indian students in institutions of higher education but a decade later that number had jumped tenfold. There are a great many well-educated African American people in the United States who occupy positions of economic and political power. There are many black teachers, Asian teachers and Hispanic teachers, not nearly enough, but the numbers are still greater than those of Native American teachers. Very few Indians have PhDs and write books.

The civil rights movement brought a great deal of attention to America's unfair treatment of black citizens. Since then there have been successful efforts to include black history and black

heroes into the curriculum. But there has never been a comparable effort to weave the Native American story into the curriculum on a system-wide basis. With so few Indians in the world, and so few of them in positions of educational, financial, and political power, the true story of Native American history does not get told. For Indians who do obtain higher education, there is an understandable urge to return to their home communities and serve their own people. Tribal governments and tribal colleges are eager to hire their own. As a result, Indians do their part to maintain their own isolation (Treuer, 2012).

### **Preserving Tribal Language**

There are currently about twenty tribal languages in the United States and Canada spoken by significant numbers of children (Treuer, 2012). People are worried about the future vitality of tribal languages as mainstream media is coming in to even the most remote areas of Indian Country. Native languages are cornerstones of identity, and their use keeps them recognizable to their ancestors. Language is the defining features of nationhood. The retention of tribal languages tells the world that Native Americans have not been assimilated, in spite of five hundred years of concerted effort to achieve that. They are the only customary languages for many ceremonies, a gateway to spiritual understanding. Tribal languages are the first languages of this land and the first languages of the first Americans. This fact alone makes their retention important but there also are proven links between academic achievement and cultural and linguistic competency for native youth. There are challenges to successfully revitalizing tribal languages. Many tribal languages were never written and there is not a universal agreement among tribal members about written language. The Pueblos are the strictest in their insistence that the language remain oral

and not written but most tribes accept the writing of tribal languages believing it can be a critical part of developing needed resources and preserving critical information. (Treuer, 2012)

### **From Anger to Positive Action**

Even though Native Americans account for only 0.9 percent of the U.S. population, their tribes hold 40 percent of the nation's coal reserves, billions of cubic feet of natural gas, and 20 percent of the nation's freshwater. With these resources and tribal owned casinos, the cycle of poverty, alcoholism, drug addiction, sexual and emotional abuse within families, and other ills are beginning to recede from the hangover of the European conquest. A large part of this improvement lays in the creation of mental health therapy models that integrate Native American traditions into the treatment plans. It is because of the mental health professional's willingness to embrace the concept of historical trauma, encouraging participation in traditional activities, and provide treatment models that include Western and Native knowledge that the American Indian is able to work through their reality of poverty, alcohol abuse, drug abuse and depression, and perceive a brighter future for themselves, their children and their communities. When the individual is healed the community will heal, when the community is healed, the culture will heal.

People in pain are rarely happy, and Indians are in pain. Chronic unemployment and poverty, pervasive substance abuse, and lack of economic and political power plague many native communities. The situation would be bad enough if it were just bad luck or circumstance, but we know that the source of a lot of the problems in Indian country can be traced to specific government actions. The U.S. government carried out a systematic effort to politically and economically disempower Indians and to eradicate Indian culture. Genocidal wars, residential

boarding schools, and many other policies did tremendous damage to native communities (Treuer, 2012). This makes Native Americans angry.

Many of the policies are not so ancient. Circular 1665, which was used to actively suppress tribal religions, was in effect until 1933, within the living memory of many tribal elders today. Most of the grandparent generation carry vivid memories and emotional scars from their experiences at residential boarding schools run by the U.S. government. Anger from such experiences does not fade overnight. And on top of it all, most American people do not understand Indians or their experiences very well. The curriculum in most schools still gives candy-coated versions of Christopher Columbus and Thanksgiving when Indians know the history was far different from what is often taught. Anger is not a healthy emotion. It will take strength and courage to convert this understandable feeling of anger into positive actions.

Native American people are survivors and have demonstrated resilience that can and will pull them from the depth of despair and poverty. It is through reconnecting with their traditions and culture that this will be done. The community fellowship is being strengthened through more participation of traditional ceremonies, traditional healing and a resurgence of the spirit of the people. Mental health professionals are realizing the impact of historical trauma and developing treatment models that incorporate traditional healing and spirituality with the technology of today. It is not the intent to disavow all western things but to learn to incorporate them into the traditions of each culture. Bronfenbrenner (1979) states that “an individual’s perception of the environment is often more important than reality and that this perception influences one’s expectations and activities”. Bronfenbrenner was a path finder with this now prominent therapeutic concept. It is this perception that may prove be the salvation for Native Americans.

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