Psychological and Health Consequences of Historical Trauma in Native Communities
Good Afternoon
Bitterroot (spetƛm)
nmisuletken
nmišulętkʷ
Nmisuletkw
nmisuletkw
Glacial Lake Missoula
nmisuletkw

Duncan McDonald and Red Sleep
Missoula
IT'S GOOD TO SEE YOU HERE

Xest lu wičt'mncn u kʷl'e

IT'S GOOD TO SEE YOU HERE
What is Historical Trauma?

Maria Yellow Horse Brave Heart (1995)
Maria Brave Heart & Myra DeBruyn (1998)
Brave Heart-Jordan & DeBruyn (1995)

• First “defined” it and tied the American Indian genocide, ethnic cleansing, and policies of forced acculturation and allude to patterns of symptoms
• The discussion had been largely theoretical
Historical Trauma

• “the cumulative, collective emotional and psychological injury over the life span and across generations resulting from a history of group trauma experiences” (Yellow Horse Brave Heart, 2003, p. 7)

And

• Loss that began long ago and extends to the present day. “There has been a continual, persistent, and progressive process of loss that began with military defeat and continues through to today with loss of culture.” (Whitebeck, Adams, Hoyt, & Chen, 2004, p. 125)
Symptoms of Historical Trauma

• **Poverty**
  • Poverty rate of 24% (US Bureau of the Census)
  • Unemployment rates as high as 80% (DOL.gov)
  • Median household income is 50% of the income for Whites (US Census Bureau)
    • $30,348 for Whites and $16,300 for MT AIs

• **Poor Health Status**

• **High Disability Rates**
  • 24.3% rates of Disability (Spinal Cord Injury, Diabetes complications, Blindness, Mobility Disability, TBI, Deaf/Hard of Hearing, Emotional or MH Concerns, Alcoholism or Drug Dependence)

• **Lower Life Expectancy**
Life Expectancy

- Average ALL United States Life Expectancy = 75.8 years
- Average ALL American Indian/Alaska Natives = 71.1 years
- Average Billings Area Office (Montana and Wyoming) American Indians/Alaska Natives = 67.2 years

Anderson, Belcourt, & Langwell (2005)
A Paradigm Shift

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<tr>
<th>Western Perspective</th>
<th>Indigenous Perspective¹</th>
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<td>Discovery and Contact</td>
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<td>Population Decline</td>
<td>Genocide and Destruction</td>
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<td>Acculturation</td>
<td>Resistance and Survival</td>
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<td>Assimilation</td>
<td>Recovery as Indigenous People</td>
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<td>“Reinvention” as a hybrid, ethnic culture</td>
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¹Smith (1999, p. 88). *Decolonizing Methodologies*
Vera Manuel

- Spirituality
- Children
- Elders
- Adults
- Warriors
First came disease....

- Cholera
- Measles
- Influenza

1492 - 1900

1900 Census
240,000

Died
Survived

10%
90%

²Nabokov, 1997, p. 87
...and then Starvation

- Altercation between White settlers and starving Northwestern Shoshone: 2 Whites and 2 Shoshones were killed

- January 29, 1863, Colonel Patrick E. Conner, US Army’s Third California Volunteers

- 490+ Northwestern Shoshone men, women and children (nearly double those of Wounded Knee, SD and Sand Creek, CO)
Blackfeet Starvation Winter (1883-1884): 555 Blackfeet Died

- Land was emptied of bison and pronghorn
- The Agency man was blackmarketing the Indians’ rations and the reservation was enclosed in barbed wire
- Cattle of White settlers grazed illegally on Indian land
  - Spring—ate the last govt provided seed potatoes
  - June—stripped cottonwood trees to chew the inner bark
  - Almost a Dog cut 555 notches in a willow stick for every Blackfeet who had died (1 in 4)
Starvation

Adverse Childhood Events (ACE)
http://www.theannainstitute.org/ACE%20STUDY%20FINDINGS.html

- Food insecurity is associated with adverse health outcomes in infants and children (Cook et al., 2004)
  - Obesity
- Health
  - Autoimmune Disease
  - Heart Disease (Depression & Anger)
- Psychological factors
  - Depression
  - Psychosis
  - Suicidality
- Risk Taking Behaviors
  - Smoking
  - Substance Abuse

Epigenetics

- Dutch Hunger Winter (1944-45) (Lumey et al., 2007)
- Children born to starving mothers had higher rates of
  - Diabetes
  - Heart Disease
  - Schizophrenia
- As did their grandchildren
Leading Causes of AI Deaths

1. Heart Disease
2. Malignant neoplasms
3. Accidents (3.1 Xs)
4. Diabetes Mellitus
5. Chronic Liver Disease and Cirrhosis
6. Cerebrovascular Diseases
7. Pneumonia and Influenza
8. Suicide
9. Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease
10. Homicide and Legal Intervention
Youth Suicide Prevalence

- AI/AN youth have the highest suicide rates
  - 1991-1993 it was 31.7 per 100,000
- TWICE the national rate for all youth
- The second leading cause of death

¹13,454 youth from Alaska, Arizona, California, Minnesota, Montana, New Mexico, South Dakota, and Tennessee. 1990 National American Indian Adolescent Health Survey, 7th – 12th graders in reservation communities
Then came religion....

**Father DeSmet & Lizette**
(1801 – 1873)

**Father Ravalli**
(1812 – 1884)

St. Mary’s Mission
Stevensville, MT
Established 1842
We already had spirituality
St. Ignatius Catholic Church

Established 1891
<table>
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<th>Non-Indian</th>
<th>Indian</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Ruth Beebe Hill, <em>Hanta Yo</em></td>
<td>• Chunksa Yuha (aka Alonzo Blacksmith), the Indian “authenticator” of <em>Hanta Yo</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>• J. Marks (aka Jamake Highwater), <em>The primal mind.</em></td>
<td>• Chief Red Fox, <em>Memories of Chief Red Fox</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Lynn Andrews, <em>Medicine woman; Jaguar woman; Crystal woman, Spirit woman</em></td>
<td>• Hyemeyohsts Storm, <em>Seven Arrows</em></td>
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Then came the Educators....

- Carlisle Boarding School
- The Ursulines
- Chemawa
- Haskell
- Sherman
Residential Schools in Canada

Residential Schools

Legend:
- Residential School
- Provinces and Territories
  - Alberta
  - British Columbia
  - Manitoba
  - New Brunswick
  - Newfoundland
  - Northwest Territories
  - Nova Scotia
  - Nunavut
  - Ontario
  - Prince Edward Island
  - Quebec
  - Saskatchewan
  - Yukon Territory

* See attached data: Residential School Information.
* Disclaimer: This document is under development. The information contained herein is subject to change without prior notice.
* Produced: November 2004, K. Kettler, Aboriginal Healing Foundation.
Off-Reservation Boarding Schools in the United States
BEFORE and AFTER Photographs
Parents began to lose hope

Hopi prisoners at Alcatraz (circa 1895)
The US Government

War Crimes

Wounded Knee, December 29, 1890
200 men, women, and children

Sand Creek Massacre, November 29, 1864
70-163 Cheyenne and Arapahoe
2/3 women and children

Baker Massacre, January 23, 1870
200 women, children, and elderly men
Blackfeet
Forced Marches
Loss of Land
Risk Factors

- Friend attempted or completed suicide
- Somatic symptoms (headaches and stomach problems)
- **History of sexual or physical abuse**
- Family member attempted or completed suicide
- Health concerns
- **Frequent alcohol or marijuana use**
- Gang involvement (males)
- Treatment history for emotional problems (males)
- Knowing where to get a gun (females)
- History of being in a special education class (females)
Protective Factors

• Garrouette, Goldberg, Beals, Herrell, Manson & AI-SUPERPFP Team, 2003)
  • Spiritual/traditional practices

• Borowsky, Resnick, Ireland, & Blum, 1999
  • Discussing problems with friends or family,
  • Emotional health
  • Family connectedness

• INCREASING PROTECTIVE FACTORS WAS MORE EFFECTIVE AT REDUCING THE PROBABILITY OF SUICIDE ATTEMPT THAN WAS DECREASING RISK FACTORS
The Most Effective Tools

- Community Wellness
- Cultural Competence/Humility/Safety
- Suicide prevention should be guided by aboriginal communities (Health Canada, 2002)
  - Youth drive
  - Community based
  - Regionally defined (Assembly of First Nation National Youth Council, 2005)
Interventions must be

• Culturally sensitive

• Acknowledge the heterogeneity of Indian populations

• Be grounded in cultural traditions that promote health

• Be developed with full participation of the involved communities

Blum, Harmon, Harris, Bergeisen & Resnick (1992) AI/AN Youth Health.
Community-based approach

- A substantial drop occurred in suicidal gestures and attempts
- Suicide deaths neither declined nor increased
- Total number of self-destructive acts declined by 73%

May Serna Hurt & DeBruyn (2005)
When indigenous people become the researchers and not merely the researched, the activity is transformed. Questions are asked differently, priorities are ranked differently, problems are defined differently, people participate on different terms.” Smith, L. T. (2004).
Cultural Community Factors

1. Language
2. Self-Government (including women on Tribal Council)
3. Land Claims
4. Education
5. Health Care
6. Cultural Facilities
7. Police and Fire Services

Hallett Chandler & Lalonde (2007)
Lemlmtš pesya
(Thank you everyone!)

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References


