

# HISTORICAL TRAUMA & IT'S MODERN IMPACTS ON AMERICAN INDIANS

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## TRAINING FORMAT, OVERVIEW, OBJECTIVES/OUTCOMES

- Format: live discussion/recording and discussion
  - Overview: A brief review of historical trauma & contemporary response(s)/reactions in the Native American Community.
- Benefits & Target Audience:** Trauma Therapists and Healthcare providers will be able to identify risk factors & barriers to treatment for American Indian clients.
- Objectives/Outcomes:** by the end of this discussion participants will be able to:
- Define the term "Historical Trauma" in the context of United States history.
  - Identify symptoms, responses & complex defense mechanisms in American Indian therapy clients.
  - Examine your internal awareness & responses to intergenerational trauma as it relates to therapy with underserved populations specifically American Indians.
  - Increase provider competence & resiliency to gain tips to begin to effectively treat and transcend trauma in American Indian Communities.



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## LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to acknowledge that I am presenting from Goodyear, AZ the traditional home lands of the following peoples:

O'odham Jewed, Akimel O'oodham  
(Upper Pima), Xawitt Kwnchaway  
(Cocopah), Hohokam Piipassh (Maricopa)  
& Yavapai Apache.



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## TRIGGER WARNING(S)

- The content in this presentation may trigger the following reactions.
- Common reactions are: disbelief, guardedness, anger, frustration, apathy, tearfulness, numbness, confusion, minimization and denial.
- \*Nervous system activation is very common.



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## HISTORICAL TRAUMA

- What is historical trauma?

Historical Trauma-the cumulative emotional and psychological wounding from a massive group trauma across generations, including lifespan which may result in a historical trauma response.

Sources: M. Yellow Horse Brave Heart (1998, 1999, 2000)

\* (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. Trauma-Informed Care in Behavioral Health Services. Treatment Improvement Protocol (TIP) Series 57. HHS Publication No. (SMA) 13-4801



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## NATIONAL HUMANITIES OVERVIEW OF EARLY NORTH AMERICAN HISTORY



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## AN INDIGENOUS VIEW OF EARLY NORTH AMERICAN HISTORY



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AMERICAN WAS BORN  
FIGHTING INDIANS



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## HISTORICAL TRAUMA RESPONSE

▪ Historical Trauma Response-a constellation of features in reaction to historical trauma, including unresolved grief

-M. Yellow Horse Brave Heart (Social Worker)



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# GENOCIDE

Genocide: a term coined by Raphael Lemkin to encompass the mass destruction of entire communities.



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## INDIGENOUS GENOCIDE

- A term used to describe the expansion of European Colonial Powers (British/Spanish, etc) and the subsequent acts of genocidal violence against the indigenous groups in the Americas, Australia, Africa and Asia.
- Some scholars also call this ethnocide.
- Lemkin suggested a two-stage process
  1. Destruction of the indigenous population's way of life.
  2. The newcomers impose their way of life on the indigenous group.



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## ENACTMENT OF GENOCIDE

- According to David Maybury-Lewis, imperial and colonial genocide are enacted in two ways:
  1. Through the deliberate clearing of territories and their original inhabitants in order to make them exploitable for purposes of resource extraction or colonial settlements
  2. Through enlisting indigenous peoples as forced laborers in colonial/imperialist projects of resource extraction.



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## GENOCIDE IN THE US: 1830: INDIAN REMOVAL ACT

- The Indian Removal Act was signed into law by President Andrew Jackson on May 28<sup>th</sup>, 1830 authorizing the president to grant lands west of the Mississippi in exchange for Indians lands.
- A few Tribes went peacefully, many did not.
- 1838-1839: Trail of Tears: Eastern Indian Removal and Relocation
- 1863-1866: The Long Walk: Western Removal/Relocation



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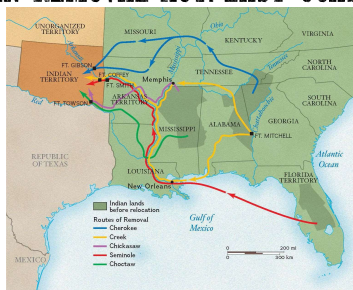
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## INDIAN REMOVAL ACT: EAST COAST



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## SETTLER MINDSET

- "If the Army placed the Navajo on a Reservation far from the haunts and hills and hiding places of their country, they would acquire new habits, new ideas, new modes of life. Civilizing the Navajo could best be achieved through their children. The young ones will take their places without these longings: and thus, little by little, they will become a happy contented people."

-James Carleton to Thompson, 9/19/1863 in the *Navajo Roundup: Selected Correspondence of Kit Carson's Expedition Against the Navajo, 1863-1865*, ed. Lawrence C. Kelly (Boulder, Co: Pruett Publishing, 1970), 56-57



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## THE SOUTHWEST: NAVAJO-LONG WALK



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## PHOTO FROM THE LONG WALK



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## RACIAL PRIVILEGE

When the United States (and many other governments) instituted Genocidal practices, they introduced trauma into Tribal communities.

- These practices established a hierarchy of racial & gender privilege.

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## POST RELOCATION

- 1887: The US Federal Government attempted to Americanize Indians

"It is a great mistake to think that the Indian is born an inevitable savage. He is born a blank, like all the rest of us. Left in the surroundings of savagery, he grows to possess a savage language, superstition, and life. We, left in the surroundings of civilization, grow to possess a civilized language, life, and purpose. Transfer the infant white to the savage surroundings, he will grow to possess a savage language, superstition, and habit. Transfer the savage-born infant to the surroundings of civilization, and he will grow to possess a civilized language and habit. These results have been established over and over again beyond all question; and it is also well established that those advanced in life, even to maturity, of either class, lose already acquired qualities belonging to the side of their birth, and gradually take on those of the side to which they have been transferred Indians via education."



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## KILL THE INDIAN, SAVE THE MAN

Indian Civilization Act Fund of March 3 1919 and the Peace Policy of 1869, the US in concert with the Christian Church adopted the Indian Boarding School Policy. It's goal was to implement Cultural Genocide through the removal and reprogramming of American Indian and Alaska Native Children, the ultimate goal was to systematically destroy the Native American Cultures.



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## 1926

- 86% of Native American Children are enrolled in boarding schools. \*

\*Not all of them came home.



Five young male Sioux student, c. 1880 – Photo: Carlisle Indian School Digital Resource Center



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## INTERGENERATIONAL TRAUMA

- Intergenerational parental trauma traced back to legacy of negative boarding school experiences
- Constant trauma exposure related to deaths from alcohol-related incidents, suicides, heart disease, diabetes, cancer, etc.
- **Surviving family members include individuals who are descendants of massive tribal trauma (e.g. massacres, abusive and traumatic boarding school placement)**
- Cumulative trauma exposure – current and lifespan trauma superimposed on collective massive
- **American Indians have the highest military enlistment rate than any other racial or ethnic group – extends traumatic exposure**



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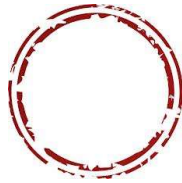
## IMPACT OF BOARDING SCHOOLS

### Individual:

- Loss of identity
- Low self esteem
- Institutionalized
- Difficulty forming health relationships

### Family

- Loss of parental power
- Loss of parental knowledge/skill
- Near destruction of extended family system



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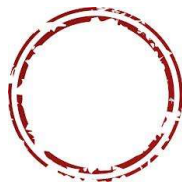
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## IMPACT OF BOARDING SCHOOLS

### Tribal Communities

- Loss of sense of community
- Loss of language
- Loss of Tribal Traditions and Ceremonies
- Weakened Tribal Structure
- Depleted numbers for enrollment
- Intergenerational stress/trauma reactions
- Erasure



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## THE PAST IS PRESENT



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## “HORRIBLE HISTORY”-NY TIMES 5/28/21

### The remains of 215 children are found on the school grounds of a residential school in Canada

On May 28, representatives of the Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc Nation reported finding the remains of 215 children that were buried at the former Kamloops Indian Residential School, run by the Catholic Church in British Columbia from 1890 until 1978

<https://www.livescience.com/children-graves-residential-schools-canada.html>



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## JUNE 30, 2021

- Representatives of the Lower Kootenay Band, a member band of the Ktunaxa Nation, revealed that a recent search at the site of the former St. Eugene's Mission School — another Catholic institution in British Columbia, open from 1890 to 1970 — uncovered another 182 unmarked, shallow graves holding children's remains, [CNN reported](#) on July 2.

<https://www.livescience.com/children-graves-residential-schools-canada.html>



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We deserve to know the **TRUTH** about Indian Boarding Schools

This is **AMERICAN HISTORY** not just Native American history!

boardingschoolhealing.org

2021

Deb Haaland, America's first Native American Cabinet Secretary ordered an investigation into Indian Boarding Schools

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### RACIALIZED TRAUMA RECOVERY

Francesca Marguerite Maxime: "Trauma itself, unless it's resolved, unless it's allowed to deactivate, unless there's something actively done to release it from the system, it won't leave the system. And if the systems of oppression remain as they do, then it's going to continue to be perpetuated. And that's why people talk about reparations. That's why they talk about equity. That's why they talk about inheritance of wealth. That's why they talk about shifting funds. That's why it's talked about in a way that is reconciling. Where there's remorse, where there's grief on behalf of people who have inherited privileges based on racial privileges, racial advantages, based on just being white."

-Body Kindness Podcast, #157 "Becoming an Embodied Anti-Racist for Collective Trauma Healing with Francesca Marguerite Maxime"

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### CULTURALLY & HISTORICALLY RESPONSIVE ASSESSMENT

- Explore generational boarding school history, tribal traumatic events, and investigate how these were/are processed in the family
- Explore degree of involvement in traditional Indigenous culture; complexity of cultural responsiveness
- Use adaptation of the DSM IV & 5 Cultural Formulation (Lewis-Fernandez & Diaz, 2002), expanded to include exploration of boarding school trauma, tribal relocations, migration, trauma in tribal community of origin, language

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## INDIGENOUS RECOMMENDATIONS FOR HEALING

- Traditional societies for both Native men and women are helpful in reclaiming sense of self and sacredness
- Importance of purification for those returning from war for reintegration into society and to release the traumatic exposure, combat stress; attend to spiritual beliefs about sacredness of life, death and war (Black Elk – painting faces black to hide from the Creator)
- **Releasing the historical trauma through healing and reclaiming traditional protective values and practices**
- Can combine PTSD/Alcohol treatment key components with culturally adapted evidence based practices or empirically supported treatments
- Acknowledgement of (continued) Historical Trauma reduces stigma and empowers American Indian/Alaska Native and First Nations communities through acknowledging the collective trauma across generations



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## TRIBAL TRAUMA RECOVERY STEPS

The Road to EBP/EBT & Key Elements Addressed - Historical Trauma Intervention Research & Evaluation (1992 - 2003)

- Reduction in sense of feeling responsible to undo painful historical past
- Less shame, stigma, anger, sadness, guilt
- Increase in: joy and sense of personal power, valuing true self and tribe
- Increased sense of parental competence
- Increase in use of traditional language
- Increased communication with own parents and grandparents about HT
- Improved relationships with children, parents, grandparents, and extended kinship network



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## HISTORICAL TRAUMA TIPS FOR PROVIDERS

- Trauma narratives of patients will be triggering particularly if therapist has own trauma history.
- Developing comfort with one's own reactions and working on healing from one's own trauma is essential.
- **Awareness of trauma is helpful rather than harmful** (avoidance is worse as one can "act out" by not listening to the patient, shutting down emotionally, becoming judgmental, and interfering with the patient's healing)
- Trauma informed care includes addressing providers own needs and healing. Review information on Secondary, Vicarious Trauma, Compassion, Fatigue, and Burnout



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## TREATMENT & BARRIERS TO TREATMENT

- Evidence-Based Treatments: – Pronged Exposure (PE) – Cognitive Processing Therapy (CPT) – EMDR -TF-CBT
- Indirect styles of communication, values of non-interference and non-intrusiveness, & polite reserve may delay help- seeking and true presenting problem
- Variation in eye contact; cultural differences in personal space & cross-gender interaction
- Listening for the meaning in the metaphor
- Client use of narratives, stories; talking in the displacement
- Beginning phase may be longer: take the time to build rapport.



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## TRAINING RESOURCES

- [https://ihscqpub.cosocloud.com/content/connect/c1/7/en/events/event/private/1302046856/1987898159/event\\_landing.html?connect-session=breezbreezg99a3qpp3qtikqwz&sco-id=1987794548& charset =utf-8](https://ihscqpub.cosocloud.com/content/connect/c1/7/en/events/event/private/1302046856/1987898159/event_landing.html?connect-session=breezbreezg99a3qpp3qtikqwz&sco-id=1987794548& charset =utf-8)
  - Indian Health Services Telehealth <https://www.ihs.gov/teleeducation/training/>
- Sources:
- *Official Report of the Nineteenth Annual Conference of Charities and Correction* (1892), 46–59. Reprinted in Richard H. Pratt, "The Advantages of Mingling Indians with Whites," *Americanizing the American Indians: Writings by the "Friends of the Indian" 1880–1900* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1973), 260–271.
  - <https://boardingschoolhealing.org/education/us-indian-boarding-school-history/>



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- Robin, R.W., Chester, B., & Goldman, D. (1996). Cumulative trauma and PTSD in American Indian communities (pp. 239-265). In Marsella, A.J., Friedman, M.J., Gerrity, E.T., & Scurfield, R.M. (Eds), *Ethnocultural aspects of Post-traumatic Stress Disorder*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Press
- Robin, R., Chester, B., Rasmussen, J., Jaranson, J., & Goldman, D. (1997). Prevalence and characteristics of trauma and posttraumatic stress disorder in a southwestern American Indian community. *American Journal of Psychiatry*, 154(11), 1582–1589.
- Shear, K., Frank, E., Houck, P.R., and Reynolds, C.F. Treatment of complicated grief: A randomized controlled trial, 2005, *JAMA*, 293 (21), 2601-2608.
- US Senate Miscellaneous Document, #1, 40th Congress, 2nd Session, 1868, [1319]



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- Brave Heart, M.Y.H., Chase, J., Elkins, J., & Altschul, D.B. (2011). Historical trauma among Indigenous Peoples of the Americas: Concepts, research, and clinical considerations. *Journal of Psychoactive Drugs*, 43 (4), 282-290.
- Brave Heart, M.Y.H. & Deschenie, T. (2006). Resource guide: Historical trauma and post-colonial stress in American Indian populations. *Tribal College Journal of American Indian Higher Education*, 17 (3), 24-27.
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- <https://oxfordjournals.com/americanhistory/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780199328175.001.0001/acrefore-9780199328175-e-3>
- **APA citation style:**
- Cherokee Agency. (1838) *Orders No. 25 Head Quarters, Eastern Division Cherokee Agency, Ten. n. p. 1838*. [Pdf] Retrieved from the Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/item/rbpe.1740400a/>.



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## LEARNING RESOURCES

- <https://traumahealing.org/anti-oppression-resources/>
- <http://nationalhumanitiescenter.org/pds/amerbegin/>
- [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Genocide\\_of\\_indigenous\\_peoples](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Genocide_of_indigenous_peoples)
- <https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2021/04/29/us-biden-armenian-genocide-native-americans-recognition/>
- <https://guides.loc.gov/indian-removal-act/digital-collections>
- <https://www.nationalgeographic.org/thisday/may28/indian-removal-act/>



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