### Traditional Indian Values vs. All-American Values


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<th>Traditional Indian Values</th>
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CLAN ANIMAL ATTRIBUTES

Bears hibernate in the winter, which may explain their association with "dreaming the Great Spirit" or introspection. The symbolism of the Bear's cave reflects returning to the womb of Mother Earth, suggesting a strong feminine aspect, one of nurturing and protection. People with Bear Medicine are considered by many as self-sufficient, and would rather stand on their own two feet than rely on others. They are sometimes considered dreamers. Many have developed the skill of visualizing new things, but as a result can get caught up in the dreaming, making little progress in waking reality. Bear's medicine includes introspection, healing, solitude, wisdom, change, communication with Spirit, death and rebirth, transformation, and are creatures of dreams, shamans and mystics.

Deer is a keen observer, enabled to see well in low lighting and its sensitive hearing allows it to perceive a twig snap in the distance. For the first few days of life a fawn hardly moves, hidden by the color of its coat from predators. Once it can stand, it follows its mother around to learn how to survive. The graceful movement and gentle nature of these creatures shows us the innocence of nature. Deer is a messenger of serenity, can see between shadows and hear what isn't being said. Deer teaches us to maintain our innocence and gentleness so we can share our open-heartedness with others.

Eagles hunt with sight and sound, seeing eight times greater than humans. Their incredible sight and hearing makes them good at feeding themselves from the land while flying at great heights. They use their feathers as little winglets to reduce turbulence which increases lift. Both male and female eagles incubate the eggs. Eagle shows us that people with high ideals need to be able to spread their wings so they can reach for the stars. Eagle brings the gift of clarity of vision. As long as we follow our intuition we will be heading in the right direction.

Turtle symbolizes our entire Earth, and therefore is associated with respect of the Earth and Earth Elements. The North American Continent is called "Turtle Island" in Native American mythology and legend. Turtle Clan members are the examiners of the state of things within the tribal unit. They take issues to the Wolf Clan first and the Bear Clan second, only after the turtle sachems and wolf sachems have discussed a matter fully. Bear then studies the Great Laws and decides if the issue can be solved. Turtle teaches us to be patient with others, and to never give up on an issue worth fighting for. The Turtle clan is strong, wise and is well-respected. The Turtle Clan is an earth clan. Turtle reminds us to care for, protect, and nurture Mother Earth. Earth people are said to be stable and constant in their opinions, ideals, and ideas. They are dependable and loyal, but with a tendency to become too rigid or stubborn. Turtles can live on both the earth and in water. Thus Turtle Clan members are reputed to be very adaptable to life's traumas.

Wolf is the sage or Great Teacher. The Wolf Clan has a strong sense of family mores and values. Wolf Clan members keep an eye and ear to the happenings within the tribal unit. Wolves are the lions of the Northern Hemisphere. They live in groups (packs), they are both meat-eating, and they are handsome creatures. "Man's best friend," the dog, is really a member of the wolf family. Loyalty is a trait one often admires in their family dog. Wolves are loyal to their families and mate for life. Wolves, like domestic dogs, are intelligent and love to play. In fact, in many ways wolves are very much like humans. Wolf has firm traditions and boundaries. Wolf Clan people are honest and straightforward. They are not always diplomatic, saying what is on their mind. Wolves mate for life. They can teach man about love and family. Wolves are realistic and live by rules. They have a hierarchical structure. There is an alpha male and an alpha female leader of the pack. Wolves make use of all that is available to them. Wolves are intelligent and will generally go out of their way to avoid trouble or danger.

Raven likes you to know she is near. Her call can beckon or warn. She is known as a trickster and a messenger. Raven is introspection, courage, has self-knowledge and is magic. Raven is interested in justice, is a shape shifter, likes change, is creative, has spiritual strength, energy is interested in community sharing and balance.
Cherokee Self-Reliance

**Being True to Oneself**

**BEING RESPONSIBLE**
- Caring for Self
  - earning an income
  - getting assistance when needed
- Caring for Others
  - respecting others
  - being dependable
  - being accountable
  - respecting the Creator
    - using resources provided by the Creator
    - honoring the Creator

**BEING DISCIPLINED**
- Setting Goals
  - making decisions
  - taking risks
- Pursuing Goals
  - creating a plan
  - getting assistance
  - redirecting one’s efforts

**BEING CONFIDENT**
- Having a Sense of Identity
  - being proud of heritage
  - accepting beliefs and values
- Having a Sense of Self Worth
  - accepting personal attributes
  - contributing to the group

Lowe, J. (2002)
Handout: Activity 6B

**Practical Suggestions for Non-Indian [Child Welfare] Workers and Newcomers to Tribal Communities**

1. Keep in mind that you are the "foreigner" in "Indian Country": it is up to you to adapt and learn the Indian ways.

2. Do not assume that you are 'needed, 'right', or should be in control; be respectful at all times.

3. Go slowly; be cautious about attempts to change Indian people and tribal systems.

4. Spend time in informal social exchanges with staff and tribal community members; talk, listen, be seen, help out.

5. Avoid professional jargon: remember that some clients may be unfamiliar with long words. Explain written forms.

6. Make yourself as available as possible; accept that clients will not always make or keep appointments.

7. Explain your role and services; do not assume that clients are familiar with [child welfare services].

8. Be flexible and adjustable about your role; and be prepared to change gears and pitch during tribal events.

9. Develop team relationships with Indian social service staff who can help you learn about family resources, Indian values and culturally appropriate service approaches; ask for feedback; don't let yourself become isolated.

10. Learn who is related to whom and how this affects social roles.

11. Respect traditional beliefs and practices.

12. Remember that spiritual matters may be private; watch, express respectful interest and what to be told.

13. Be careful what you say about clients, staff and tribal members; remember that your attitudes and ability to keep confidentiality will be examined and that the person you are speaking with may be related to the person you are discussing.

14. Be willing to adjust your therapeutic expectations; understand that you are working with complicated and long term problems in a system which you do not completely understand.

CULTURAL COMMUNICATION PRACTICES

**Storytelling:** A traditional American Indian method used to provide contextual information for community members. Stories may be personal or anecdotal of a community or culture that the teller uses as a frame of reference to describe their situation or to share concepts of meaning and purpose. “Storytelling plays a special role in Indian culture because it avoids the appearance of personal criticism while teaching culturally congruent values and behaviors.”

**Non-verbal Gestures:**

- Direct Eye Contact is considered by some cultures to be intrusive, inappropriate, rude or even an insult.

- Downcast Eyes may signal a variety of emotions for many cultures, including personal discomfort with the person or situation, shame, lack of respect for others who are present.

- Ignoring a person may indicate unhappiness with, or disagreement with another.

- Humor may be used to express truths or difficult messages, or often to mask pain.

- Verbal criticism may be considered an unacceptable form of expression.

- Time commitments may be viewed, and even agreed to, from varying understanding of meaning.

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ACTIVE LISTENING & MANAGING POWER

**Active Listening:** A particular communication skill used to enable the parties to fully express their thoughts and feelings with minimal interference and maximum attention. Active listening is a method whereby the parties are able to hear what they themselves are saying as well as what the others are saying.

**Phrases for Active Listening:**

Encouraging – “Can you tell me more?” “How would you feel if …?”

Clarifying – “When did this happen?”

Restatement and Summarizing – “Let me see if I understand what you just said.”

Acknowledging – “I can see you are feeling very angry right now.”

Open Questioning – “Why?” “What would you like to see happen?”

Responding – “I see it this way.” “How do you see it?”

Soliciting – “I would like your advice about how we can resolve this.”

Normalizing – “Many people feel the way you do.”

Empathizing – “I can appreciate why you feel that way.”

Validating – “I appreciate your willingness to talk with me.”

**Managing Power:** Requires the commitment to consider your intentions before visiting with a family or youth. To build a working relationship requires focus on the strengths, concerns and needs of others. Be there to listen and to learn. Respecting the perspectives, knowledge and strengths of families builds trust and is the path to successful case planning with, not for, the families and youth.
Establishing Trustworthiness & Engagement

Current research confirms that the issue of establishing trustworthiness is crucial for social workers, and is key to any sustaining relationship or partnering with Native American families.¹ Trustworthiness is often determined during the initial visit. During the initial visit the Social worker should:

- Communicate genuineness and sincerity: Use a cultural and value-based personal introduction; demonstrate your interest in learning from and about the family in order to be of help; share with the family that you recognize that they are the experts on their family and community; share a personal value or story; explain this visit as an opportunity to get to know one another and ask questions of great concern; show concern for the comfort of others in a difficult time.

- Be respectful: Acknowledge all present, listen carefully, ask open ended questions.

- Demonstrate caring: Be empathetic; acknowledge difficulties of separation and loss; acknowledge the difficulty of discussing private matters with strangers; recognize issues raised by the family.

- Culturally appropriate apology: Express sincere regret for your mistake and any discomfort that you may have caused. Body language should reflect openness.

The goals for the social worker during the initial visit should include:

- Observing and listening to develop an understanding of this Native American youth and family, strengths and concerns.

- Learning the degree of tribal identification

- Assessing how traditional are this families values, family, and living situation. Are they:

Traditional: Total observance of Native American practices and traditions
Assimilated: Nearly or total non-tribal practices and traditions
Acculturated: “walking in both worlds”: a blend of both tribal and non-tribal practices and traditions

• The potential for inner conflict for a person is one value system trying to live by the rules of the other is obvious. If American Indians had been able to maintain their traditional beliefs and values, at least then the problem of value conflicts would be definable. Most of the American Indians, like other minority populations, are caught living between two value systems. ²

• Learn the extent of the client’s support system

• Understand the client’s expectations

• Learn how the youth or family identifies a need for change. Ask how the change may occur? This information will provide a framework for working with the family.

• Take note of non-verbal behaviors and subtly match them to develop rapport

The social worker should be prepared to share and discuss with the family:

• A clear sense of how the social worker may be helpful

• Clarification of their role

• Mutual responsibilities of the client and the social worker ³

² Tribal Star Focus Group 2005
TIPS FOR IDENTIFYING TRIBAL YOUTH

One of the biggest challenges facing social workers and service providers is the ability to successfully identify Tribal youth. After many years of historic and cumulative collective traumas many Native American Indian/Alaska Native descendants have little or no knowledge of their heritage. It is not uncommon to hear “Grandma said we are Indian” with no additional information. If the individual does have any ties to Tribal culture there is a probability that some information exists in an unassociated manner. The following questions provide a checklist which filters those youth who have any knowledge of Tribal Culture.¹

Have you ever heard of Fry Bread?

Have you ever eaten American Indian foods like

- Tortilla rolls
- Wee Wish
- Sha’wee

Have you ever been to an American Indian event?

- Powwow
- Fiesta
- Gathering
- Sweat lodge
- Ceremony

What tribes have you heard of?

- What do you know about these tribes

Do you have any relatives who are Indian? First Nations?

- Has your mother, father, grandmother, or grandfather ever told you they were Indian or First Nations?
- Are you a member of a Native Corporation (Alaskan Tribes)?

What does your family do when someone crosses over/passes away?

¹ Tribal Star 2007
Handout: Activity 7A

IDENTIFYING NEEDS

1. Recognition of difficulties for youth and family in discussion of needs

2. Engagement includes discussion of custom, history and values, and support systems

3. Needs are determined from the perspective of the youth and of the family members

4. Involvement of larger family or tribal members may provide support to youth and family and facilitate a deeper discussion

Factors in determining availability of culturally appropriate Services:

1. Understanding the customs, history and values of youth/families will help to define what services and organizations will be culturally appropriate for the individual youth and family

2. Gaining awareness of services to similar communities

3. Awareness of gaps in services for youth

4. Awareness that placement in an unfamiliar or estranged tribal setting may require uniquely specialized services that the tribal community is not able to provide.
Questions for Activity # 4 “How Do I Do That”


Questions:
  o Generate 3 questions that would help you in your work with youth
    1.
    2.
    3.
  
  o Generate 3 questions that you might ask a social worker about a client’s case.
    1.
    2.
    3.
  
  o Generate 3 questions that you might ask a parent or family member about a youth.
    1.
    2.
    3.
  
  o Generate 3 questions that you might ask a teacher or school administrator about a youth’s academic activities.
    1.
    2.
    3.
VIGNETTE SCENARIO


Vignettes/Scenarios

• **SHEILA:** Sheila is a 17-year-old girl from a local reservation and is the fourth child of seven. Her mother, who is non-Indian, has never been legally married and Sheila’s siblings are from three different relationships. The responsibility of seven children was too much for Sheila’s mother. She sent Sheila’s older sisters to be raised by the “rich” aunt and left Sheila and two younger brothers to their father’s mother on the reservation where they have lived for two years. Sheila has contact with all her siblings about every two months but would like to see them more often. Sheila is a good student and has won several awards for academics. Sheila wants to go to college, but is not sure what degree she would like to pursue. Sheila would like to get a part-time job, to start saving for college. She has no previous work experience and does not want to work fast food unless she has to.
VIGNETTE SCENARIO


Vignettes/Scenarios

- **JOSEPH**: Joseph was voluntarily placed in foster care in a California county at the age of 3 by his mother. His mother was 20 years old and felt she could not care for him due to severe depression. There was a history of suicide in her family and she had attempted to take her own life when Joseph was 2. Joseph has been in his current foster home for two years now. His skin is very dark, but no tribal connection could be established. Paternity is listed as “unknown” in Joseph’s file. However, Joseph associates with the Native American students in school and regularly attends tribal functions with his friends. His best friend’s family considers him as part of their family. Joseph is in special education class and making progress in school. He is likely to remain with the Jones family until he graduates. Joseph is interested in computers and Native American history, traditions, and customs. Joseph is a regular volunteer at the local Indian community center during events for the elders.
The Other Side of ICWA: a cultural journey to fairness & equity

WELCOME
Overview: objectives & competencies
Cultural & Value-based Introductions
Non-tribal
Tribal

Prepared in a collaborative relationship between:

Tribal Star
Public Child Welfare Training Academy (divisions of the Academy for Professional Excellence) and
Title IV-E, SDSU School of Social Work
The Hidden Building Blocks of Historical Trauma & Cumulative Collective Trauma

Effects of:
- depression
- anger
- learning disability
- low self esteem
- family problems
- suicide
- distrust
- Behavioral problems
- Health problems

Group discussions:
- What are your experiences with cumulative trauma?
- What are the triggers today?
- How does this impact the well-being of your family members?
- Each group present an example if you are comfortable!
Building Blocks of Understanding

HISTORICAL TRAUMA & CUMULATIVE COLLECTIVE TRAUMA

The Other Side of History

The Pre-Reservation Era 1789-1871

"Indian Problem"
or
"Euro-American Problem"

NATIVE AMERICAN CORE VALUES & BELIEFS

SPIRITUALITY

CHILD REARING / EXTENDED FAMILY
VENERATION OF AGE / WISDOM / TRADITION
RESPECT FOR NATURE
GENEROSITY AND SHARING
COOPERATION / GROUP HARMONY
AUTONOMY / RESPECT FOR OTHERS
COMPOSURE / PATIENCE
RELATIVITY OF TIME
NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION

The Other Side of ICWA
Reservation Era 1871 -1928
(period of deculturization)

- Creation of reservations
- Creation of the Bureau of Indian Affairs
- Lands taken
- Dawes Act of 1887: allowed sale of tribal lands to settlers
- US citizenship granted to all Indians
- Systematic removal of children to boarding schools: 1st school in 1879

Indian Adoption Era 1950’s – 70’s

25 – 35% of all American Indian children removed from their families – PERMANENTLY

Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) 1978

Federal Law reaffirms right of American Indians to be and remain Indian and to suspend current practices of out of home care and non-Indian placement
Adoption & Safe Families Act (ASFA) 1997

Adds term "best interests of the child" and to a focus on safety, permanence and well-being

Building Blocks of Understanding

HISTORY

VIDEO: 500 NATIONS

Boarding Schools
Discussion:

- Have elements of these eras survived to the present day?
- How does this knowledge impact your thinking about your practice?

TRIBAL STRUCTURE

- CLAN
- MOIETY
- MEMBER

"WHO ARE WE?"

- Who do you consider family?
- How is that like others at your table and how different?
- What is the tribal person’s view of family?
Tribal View of Family:

Let’s ask:

• How may a tribal person view family?
• Who is included in the tribal perspective?
• How does this concept apply to a child or family separated from their tribe in an urban environment?
• What are our challenges with the tribal view and CWS regulations?
• How might a tribal person perceive placement that may differ from the majority culture view?

• What conflicts might occur when placing a tribal child?
• How does/should this knowledge inform our practice with tribal families?
• How can you utilize this knowledge when first engaging with the family/child?
• How does this relate to what you know about family-centered practice?
Building Blocks of Understanding

TRIBAL STRUCTURE

From Outsider to Insider

Culturally Sensitive Communication

Historical & Cumulative Trauma & Family Concepts & Values

TRUST

• How do we know we can trust someone?
• What qualities/characteristics support trusting someone? (e.g. sincerity, honesty)
• How do we deal with disputes with friends or family?
• How can we convey that we’re trustworthy to an American Indian family?
AN INSIDER STORY: (part 1)

1. How and why did the youth come to trust his/her social worker?

2. What are some other ways to strengthen trust when working with tribal youth?

Building Blocks of Understanding

TRUST

Visiting: a sharing time with families

How does visiting differ from visitation?
Trustworthiness & Engagement

What communications issues do you observe?

Building Blocks of Understanding

CULTURALLY COMPETENT COMMUNICATION
Finding the Unseen Youth

Building Blocks of Understanding

RECOGNIZING TRIBAL YOUTH

HOW DO I DO THAT?
Application of the “Naturalistic Inquiry”

3 Questions:
• Generate 3 questions that would help you with your work in engaging youth
• Generate 3 questions that you might ask a SW about a client’s case
• Generate 3 questions that you might ask a family member about a youth
• Generate 3 questions you might ask a teacher about a youth’s academic activities
Next step: practice, practice.....

Apply your developed questions to one of the scenarios – either Sheila or Joseph

• What went well
• What was unexpected
• Other learning points

Uncovering Hidden Resources

brainstorm

Building Blocks of Understanding

CULTURALLY APPROPRIATE RESOURCES
Closure

Thanks to the Tribal people who helped in developing this curriculum and to the Tribal youth in the foster care system who shared their experience with us. Thanks to all of you for your attention today. We hope this informs your work with Tribal families.