



# Therapy and Traumatic Stress in Indian Communities: An Indigenous Approach to Healing

Leon Leader Charge Oglala/Sicangu Lakota (Rosebud/Pine Ridge Sioux Tribe),  
B.S. Addiction Studies, Treatment/Prevention



# Traumatic Stress



- ▶ Trauma-"acute traumatic events" "chronic traumatic situations"

The National Traumatic Child Network(NCTSN)

<http://www.nctsn.org/content/defining-trauma-and-child-traumatic-stress>

- ▶ Trauma and stress can compromise physical, mental, emotional, spiritual health
- ▶ "The Hutkan (roots) are the source of strength but can be the source of pain. For example, healing ceremonies can have a lifetime impact, as trauma can have long term impact."- Richard Two Dogs and Ethleen Iron Cloud/Two Dogs



# Historical Trauma (Brave Heart)

- ▶ Definition: The collective emotional and psychological injury both over the life span and across generations, resulting from a cataclysmic history of genocide

## Causes:

- ▶ Legacy of genocide

## Effects:

- ▶ Unsettled trauma
- ▶ Increase of child abuse and domestic violence (Brave Heart)



# Transgenerational Trauma

- ▶ trauma that is transferred from the first generation of trauma survivors to the second and further generations of offspring of the survivors via complex post-traumatic stress disorder mechanisms
- ▶ “Soon after descriptions of the so-called concentration camp syndrome (also known as survivor syndrome) appeared, clinicians observed in 1966 that large numbers of children of Holocaust survivors were seeking treatment in clinics in Canada. The grandchildren of Holocaust survivors were overrepresented by 300% among the referrals to a child psychiatry clinic in comparison with their representation in the general population.”  
Fossion, P., Rejas, M., Servais, L., Pelc, I. & Hirsch, S. (2003). "Family approach with grandchildren of Holocaust survivors," *American Journal of Psychotherapy*, 57(4), 519-527.



# Dutch famine of 1944, known as the Hongerwinter ("Hunger winter")

- ▶ Famine that took place in the Netherlands
- ▶ German blockade prevented food and fuel from entering
- ▶ 18,000-22,000 may have died as a result of the famine



# Dutch Famine Birth Cohort Study

- ▶ “found that the children of pregnant women exposed to famine were more susceptible to diabetes, obesity, cardiovascular disease, microalbuminuria and other health problems”
- ▶ “data suggested that the famine experienced by the mothers caused some kind of epigenetic changes that were passed down to the next generation” Stein, AD; Lumey, LH (August 2000). "The relationship between maternal and offspring birth weights after maternal prenatal famine exposure: the Dutch Famine Birth Cohort Study". Hum Biol. 72 (4): 641–54. PMID 11048791.



# Dutch Famine Study

- ▶ “Subsequent academic research on the children who were affected in the second trimester of their mother's pregnancy found an increased incidence of schizophrenia in these children” Brown, AS; Susser, ES (November 2008).  
"Prenatal Nutritional Deficiency and Risk of Adult Schizophrenia". *Schizophr Bull (Oxford journals)* 34 (6): 1054–63. doi:10.1093/schbul/sbn096. PMC 2632499. PMID 18682377.
- ▶ “Also increased among them were the rates of schizotypal personality and neurological defects.” Walker, Elaine E; Cicchetti, Dante (2003).  
*Neurodevelopmental mechanisms in psychopathology*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press. pp. 88–93. ISBN 0-521-00262-1.



# Cross-Generational Transmission Epigenetics

- ▶ Children of Holocaust survivors have significantly lower cortisol secretion when compared with control groups and children of holocaust-surviving parents with PTSD had lower cortisol levels than children of Holocaust survivors that did not have PTSD. (Yehuda et al., 2000)
- ▶ 9-month old infants born to mothers who developed PTSD after 9/11 had lower salivary cortisol than infants born to unexposed mothers (Yehuda et al., 2005)
- ▶ Cortisol-released in the response to stress “stress hormone”



# Federal Policy/Historical Context

- Eradication->Genocide
- Relocation
- Assimilation

1924 Granted US Citizenship

1928 Merriam Report

1930 Congressional Hearing on Status of American Indians

1934 92,000 Indian children enrolled in public schools

1934-1950 Indian reorganization (tribal constitutions, elections, BIA governance)



# Federal Policy/Historical Context

1950-1960 Termination Period (200 tribes terminated)

1950-1968 Relocation, urban development (migration from rural to urban)

1953 Public Law 280: State jurisdiction

1954 Law Re: IHS & policy on “disallow services to competent Indians”

1968 Indian Civil Rights Act

(What was the conflict?)

1975 Indian Self-determination & Education Assistance Act (Contracting & Compacting)

1978 American Indian Religious Freedom Act

1978 Indian Child Welfare



# Doctrine of Discovery

- ▶ “public international law expounded by the United States Supreme Court in a series of decisions, most notably Johnson v. M'Intosh in 1823. Chief Justice John Marshall justified the way in which colonial powers laid claim to lands belonging to foreign sovereign nations during the Age of Discovery. Under it, title to lands lay with the government whose subjects travelled to and occupied a territory whose inhabitants were not subjects of a European Christian monarch. The doctrine has been primarily used to support decisions invalidating or ignoring aboriginal possession of land in favor of colonial or post-colonial governments” (Wiki)



# Doctrine of Discovery

## Criticisms

- ▶ "no Indian voices were heard in a case which had, and continues to have, profound effects on Indian property rights." Dussias, Allison M., "Squaw Drudges, Farm Wives, and the Dann Sisters' Last Stand: American Indian Women's Resistance to Domestication and the Denial of Their Property Rights", 77 N.C. L. REV. 637, 645 (1999)
- ▶ "Discovery doctrine has been severely condemned as socially unjust, racist and in violation of basic and fundamental human rights." United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

"as the foundation of the violation of their (Indigenous people) human rights".  
"Preliminary study of the impact on indigenous peoples of the international legal construct known as the Doctrine of Discovery" (PDF). United Nations Economic and Social Council. 4 Feb 2010. Retrieved 4 January 2014.



R U L E S GOVERNING THE COURT OF INDIAN OFFENSES,  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, OFFICE OF INDIAN AFFAIRS,

Washington, March 30, 1883.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, Washington, December 2, 1882

- ▶ 6th. The usual practices of so-called "medicine-men" shall be considered "Indian offenses" cognizable by the Court of Indian Offenses, and whenever it shall be proven to the satisfaction of the court that the influence or practice of a so-called "medicine-man" operates as a hindrance to the civilization of a tribe, or that said "medicine-man" resorts to any artifice or device to keep the Indians under his influence, or shall adopt any means to prevent the attendance of children at the agency schools, or shall use any of the arts of a conjurer to prevent the Indians from abandoning their heathenish rites and customs, he shall be adjudged guilty of an Indian offense, and upon conviction of any one or more of these specified practices, or, any other, in the opinion of the court, of an equally anti-progressive nature, shall be confined in the agency prison for a term not less than ten days, or until such time as he shall produce evidence satisfactory to the court, and approved by the agent, that he will forever abandon all practices styled Indian offenses under this rule.



## Dr. Leslie E. Korn, Rhythms of recovery



“For Native people the transformational power of trauma can be found in traditional ceremonies and rituals. From a Western scientific, biological perspective, the positive effects of ceremony lay in its ability to trigger hormonal responses in the brain that can break harmful autonomic nervous system patterns created by trauma.



# Dr. Leslie E. Korn, Rhythms of recovery

One of the enduring legacies of colonialism has been the demonization of Native religions and spiritual practices which were outlawed during the assimilation period. Today, Native ceremonies such as the sweat lodge are further delegitimized in the public's eye when people are injured or die as a result of misappropriation by unqualified, non-Native scam artists."

- ▶ [indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2013/12/02/healing-historical-trauma-through-promoting-traditional-culture-mainstream-medicine](http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2013/12/02/healing-historical-trauma-through-promoting-traditional-culture-mainstream-medicine)

# American Indian Freedom of Religion Act

Public Law No. 95-341, 92 Stat. 469 (Aug. 11, 1978)

These rights include, but are not limited to, access of sacred sites, freedom to worship through ceremonial and traditional rights and use and possession of objects considered sacred. The Act required 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 use of religious sites to the extent that the use is practicable and is not inconsistent with an agency's essential functions. It also acknowledges the prior violation of that right.

# Wounded Knee Massacre

Dec. 29, 1890





# Origin of trauma

- ▶ Hiawatha Insane Asylum, Canton, S.D.
- ▶ Trail of Tears
- ▶ Dakota 38+2
  - ▶ Dakota exiled from Minnesota-Trail of Tears 3-4 Children perished a day, estimated 90 total
- ▶ Navajo Longest Walk
- ▶ Forced Sterilization of Native American Women during the 60's
- ▶ Boarding schools



# Holocaust

Corpses lie in one of the open railcars of the Dachau death train. The Dachau death train consisted of nearly forty cars containing the bodies of between two and three thousand prisoners transported to Dachau in the last days of the war. Dachau, Germany, April 29, 1945.

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

<http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/index.php?ModuleId=10006237>

Hitler adoption of U.S. Policy pertaining to Native Americans



# American Indians and Jewish: Correlation

Survivors Child Complex

- Fixation to trauma
- attempts to resolve past

## 1. Effects

Nightmares

Perceived obligation to ancestors

## 2. Coping strategies

Memory Candles

(Living testaments) (Brave Heart)



# American Indians and Jewish: Correlation

Disenfranchised grief

Loss cannot be openly mourned

1. Individual

Inhibited with shame

2. Society

Loss of ancestral tradition(Brave Heart)



# American Indians and Jewish: Correlation

Transposition

Living in the Past & Present

1. 1st Generation

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder

2. Subsequent Generations

Historical Unresolved Trauma (Brave Heart)



# Six Phases of Historical Unresolved Grief (Brave Heart)

1st contact

- *Life shock*
- *Genocide*
- *No time for grief*

Economic Competition

- *Sustenance loss*  
(*physical/spiritual*)

Invasion War Period

- *Extermination*
- *Refugee symptoms*

Subjugation and Reservation  
Period

- *Confined / translocated*
- *Lack of security*

Boarding School Period

- *Destroyed family system*

Forced Relocation and  
Termination Period

- *Transfer to urban areas*
- *Prohibition of religious freedom*



# 1st Contact (Colonization), Boarding Schools, & Relocation (Brave Heart)

## Colonization

### 1. Introduce

- ▶ *Disease*
- ▶ *Alcohol*

### 2. Main traumatic events

- ▶ *Assassination of Tatanka Iyotake (Sitting Bull)*
- ▶ *Wounded Knee Massacre*

## Boarding school

### 1. 1st school: Pennsylvania

- ▶ *Beaten*
- ▶ *Raped*
- ▶ *Native language prohibited*

### 2. Lasting effect

- ▶ *Ill-prepared for parenting*

## Relocation & Assimilation

- ▶ *Racism/ viewed as 2nd class*
- ▶ *Black Hills Confiscation*
- ▶ *Spiritual prohibition*
- ▶ *Change of Government*



# Implications of Historical Trauma

Lack of brain development

- Lack of impulse control
- Social cues misinterpreted
- Misconstrue emotions



# Cycle of Historical Trauma

Historical loss

- Forced acculturation

- Relocation

- Disruption in family-boarding school

Resulted in

- Dysfunctional parenting

- Discrimination

- Loss of cultural identity

Historical Loss Symptoms

- Depression, hopelessness, drug abuse, poverty, unemployment, suicide, abuse/neglect, diabetes, obesity (Brown-Rice 2013)



# Native Americans

- ▶ 566 federally recognized tribes
  - ▶ Often misinterpreted origin theory
- 



# Havasupai Tribe Research Lawsuit

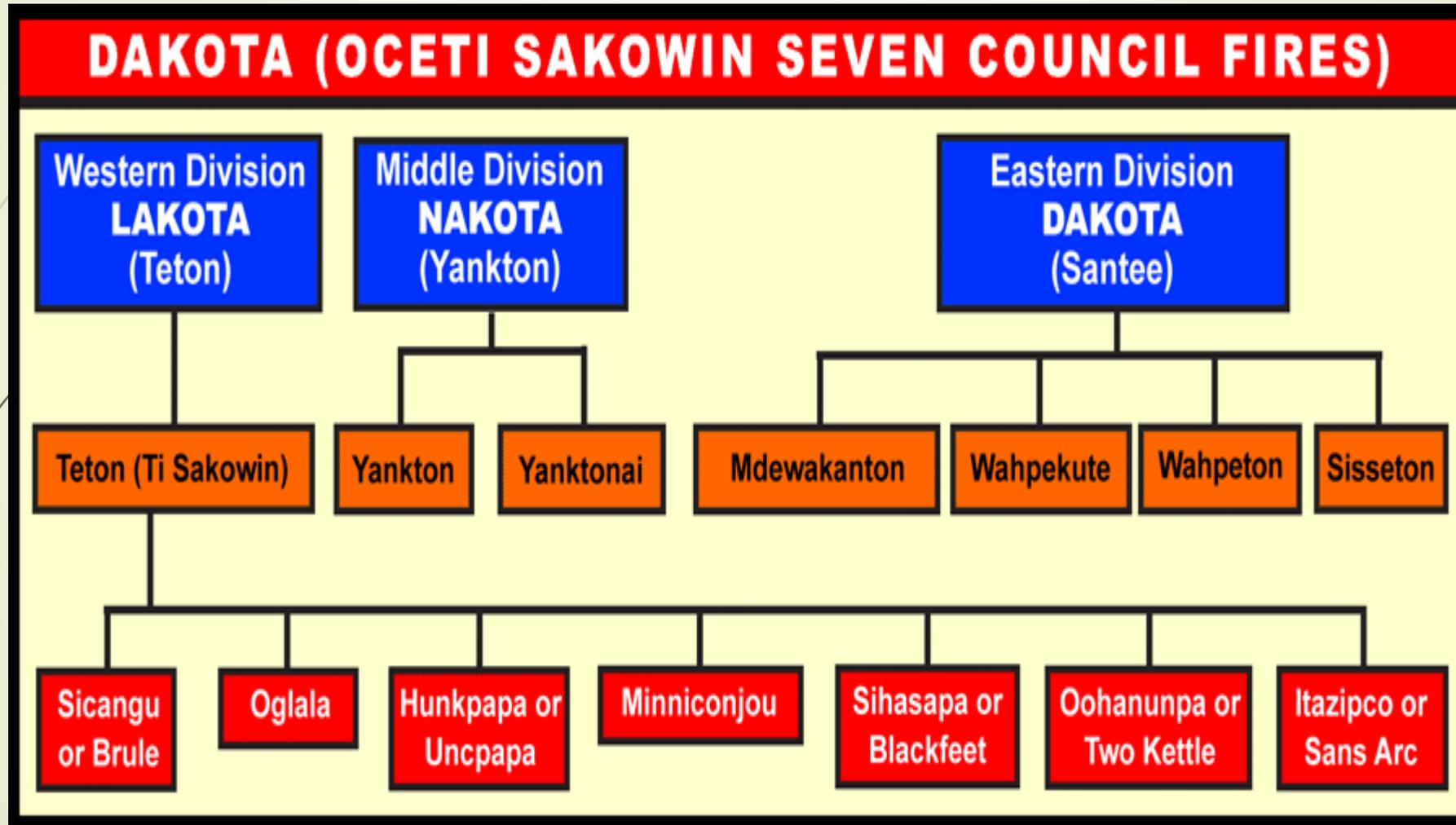
- ▶ Informed Consent- Tribal members were misled and genetic samples mistreated
- ▶ Human Migration Studies research conducted on the samples rather than the promised Type II Diabetes research
- ▶ Stigmatization- The researchers actually utilized an “inbreeding coefficient” in their research and later publication



# Havasupai Tribe Research Lawsuit

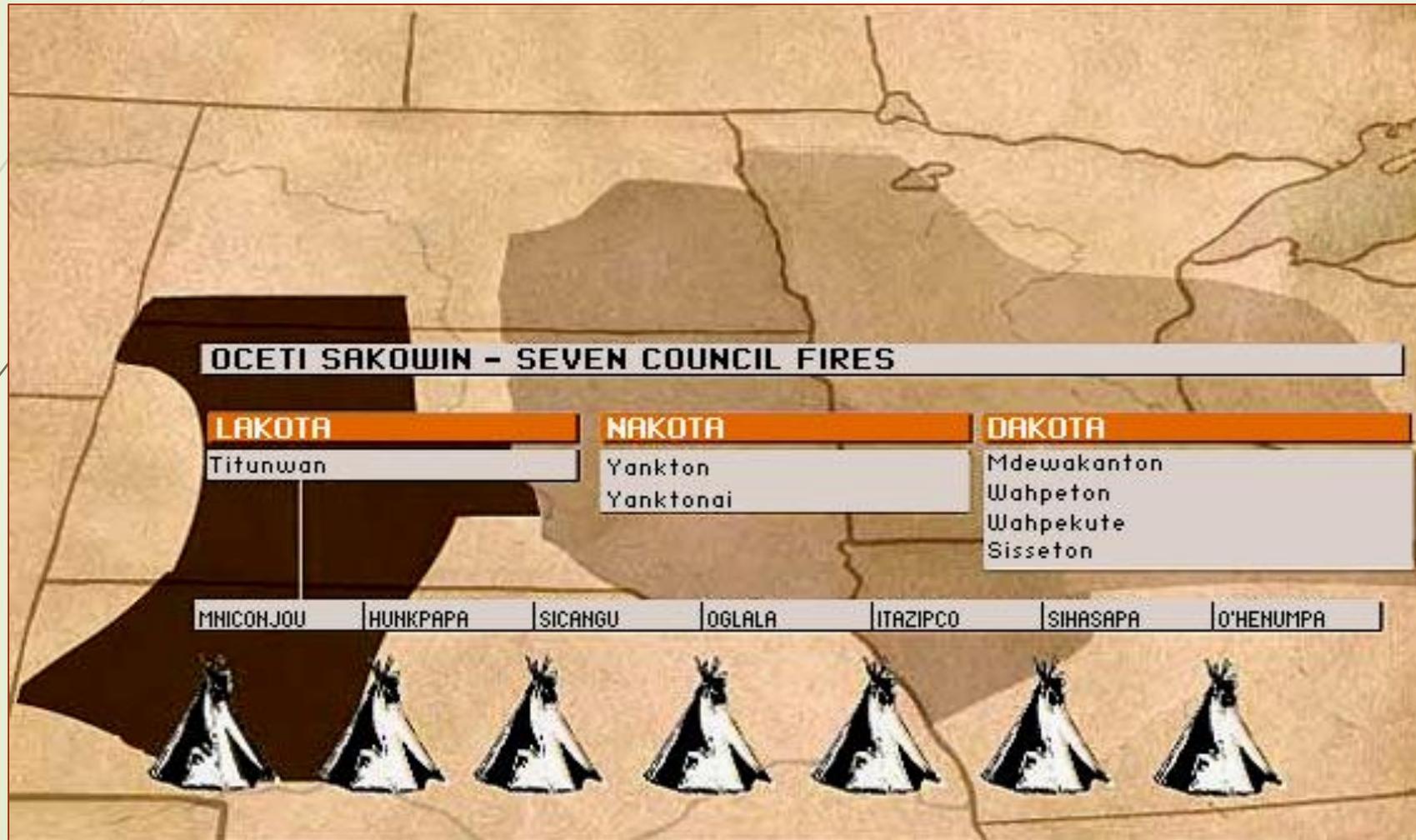
- ▶ Access to Medical records- Access to records was gained with no consent from the tribe, relatives, tribal leaders or participants, a complete violation of research ethics
- ▶ Privacy violations- The tribe was named in the publication, and with the low number of tribal members (650), identification of individuals could be done with ease

# Oceti Sakowin: Seven Council Fires



# Oceti Sakowin: Seven Council Fires

31



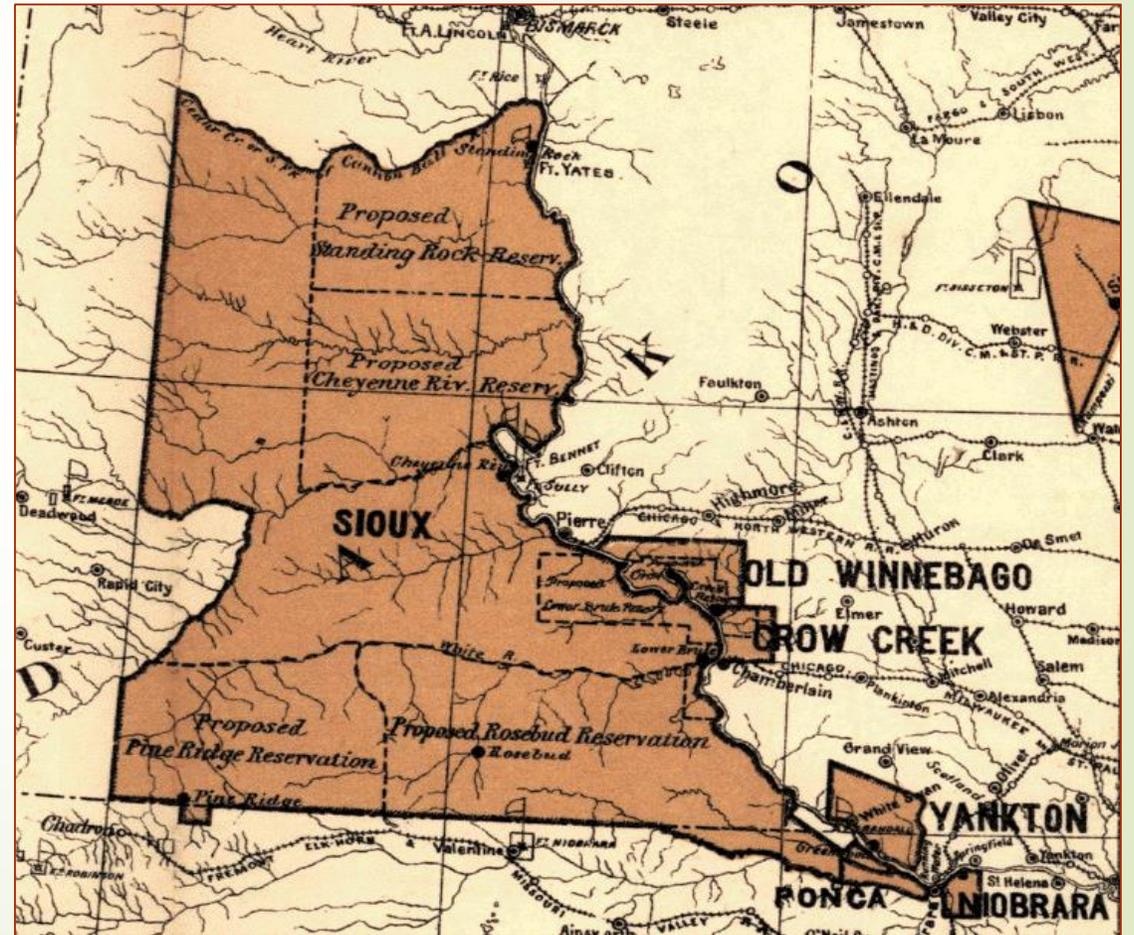
# Lakota Territory

32

1851 Ft. Laramie Treaty

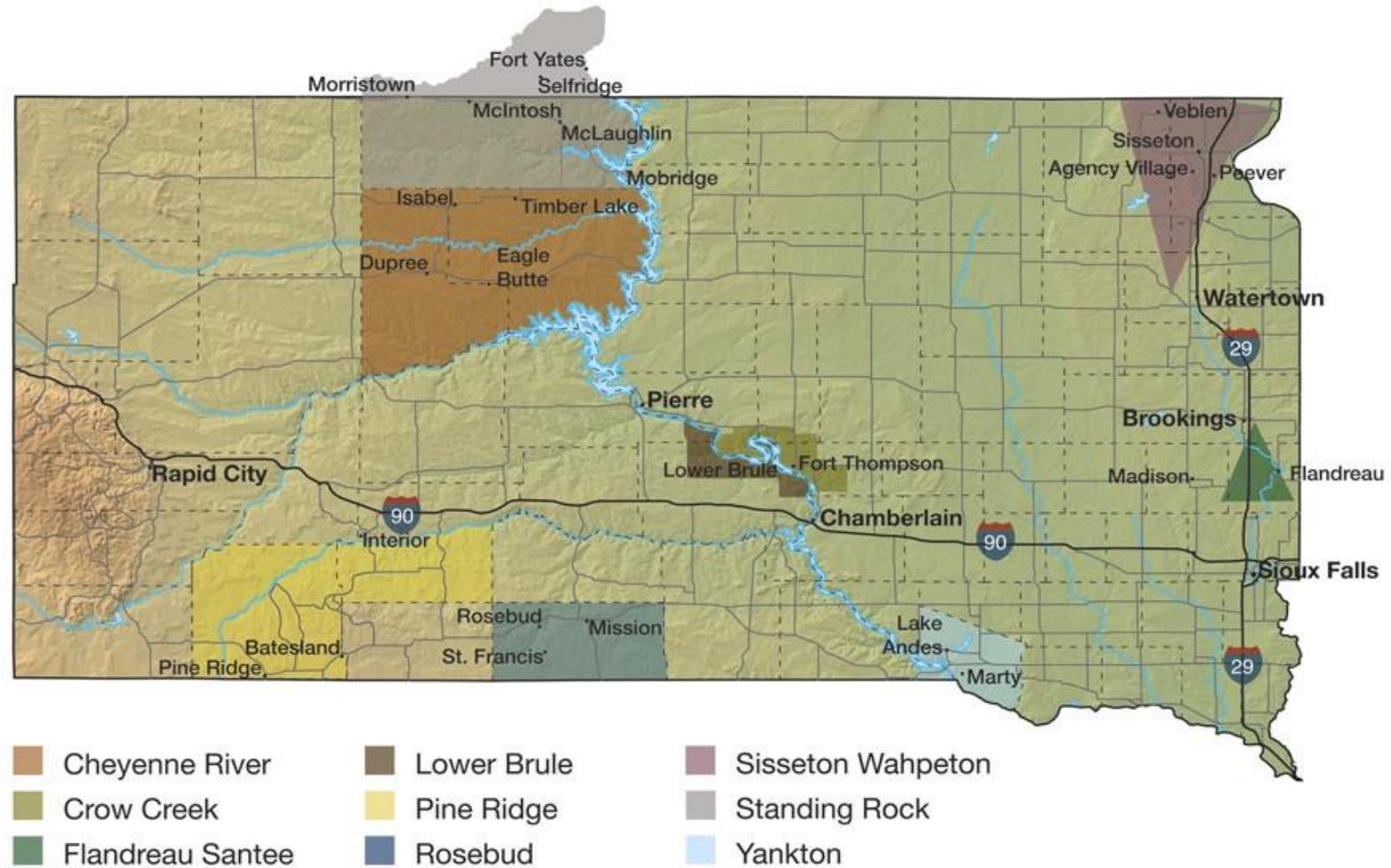


Great Sioux Reservation  
1888



# Present Day

33



# Native American Mascots



# Harmful Images in the Media



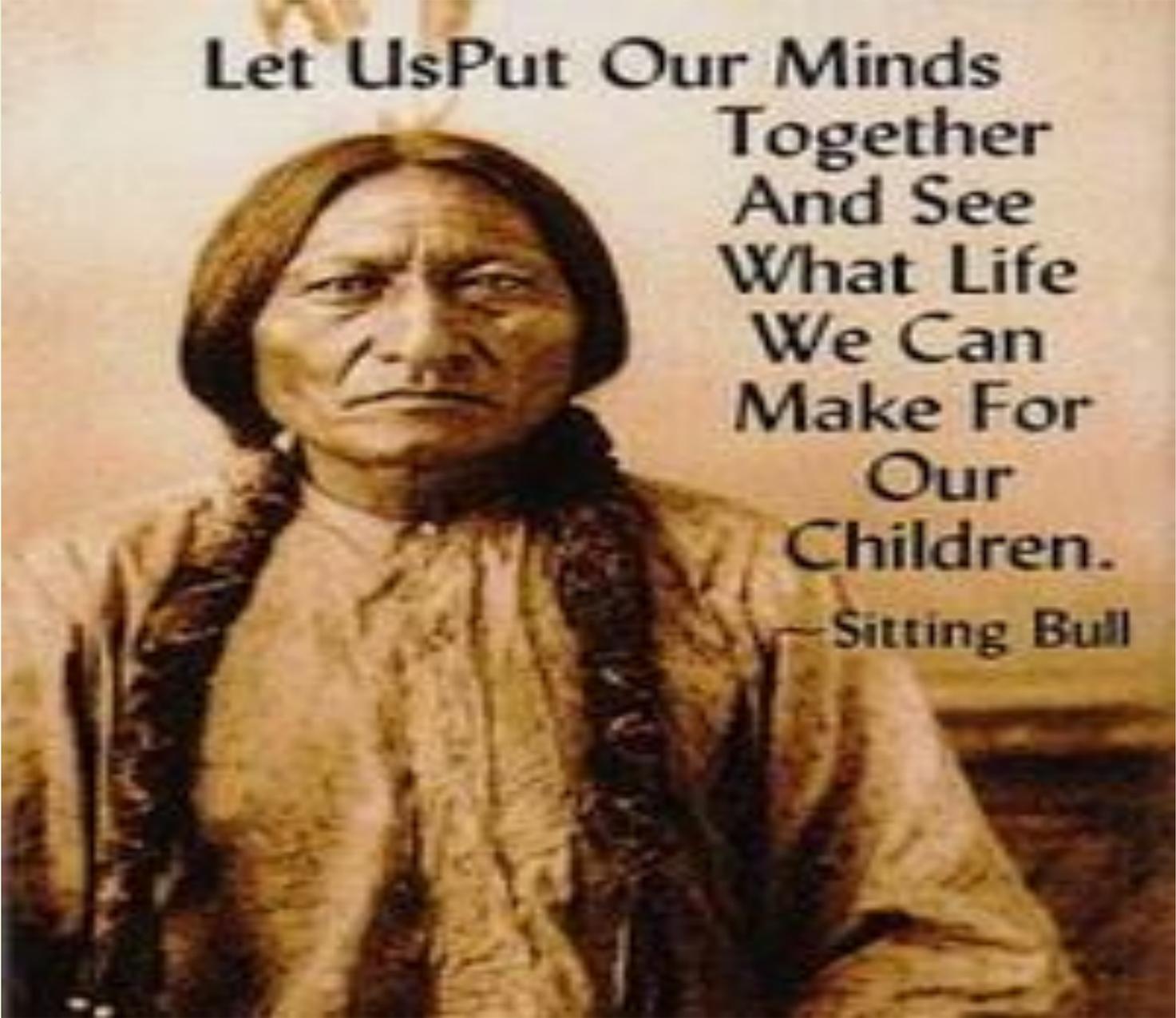




# Education



- ▶ Education is an effective vehicle for equal thought and feelings
- ▶ Education is an equalizer in a society based on social stratification
- ▶ Education=cohesiveness
- ▶ Questions during rapport building about culture develops trust
- ▶ Cultural sensitivity training assists counselors effectiveness



Let Us Put Our Minds  
Together  
And See  
What Life  
We Can  
Make For  
Our  
Children.

— Sitting Bull



# Lakota Wotakuye (Relations/Family)

Cokan (self)

Tiwahe (family)

Tioaspye (extended family)

Ospaye (community)

Oceti Sakowin (seven bands)

Unci Maka (grandmother earth)

Maka sitominayan (universe)

# “Kill the Indian save the man”

- ▶ General Pratt-founder and superintendent of Carlisle Indian school-1879



Wicozani-(Health)

## Balance is key to healthy lifestyle

Woapiye/Wopakinkte-  
address trauma ceremony

Apoiciye Peji Hota  
(Smudge with sage)





# Healing from Historical Trauma

- ▶ Cultural/Tribal Community Based Healing
  - ▶ Traditional Healer/Medicine Man
    - ▶ honesty vs. illusion-implications of harm done by imposters
  - ▶ Ceremony
    - ▶ Wopakinte-address first trauma/intergenerational trauma
    - ▶ Inipi-purification rite
    - ▶ Lakota Caje- Icicu-identity, self-esteem
    - ▶ Wicoicage-future-goal moderation for positive change
    - ▶ Rites of passage-Stages of life, male or female
    - ▶ Community welcoming

# Self-help guru James Arthur Ray convicted of 3 sweat lodge deaths, Oct., 2009





4340. The Cheyenne and Family

Copyright 1899 by DeWitt Photographic Co.

# Gene Thin Elk: Red Road Approach

- ▶ Co-Founder along with Rick Thomas
- ▶ In 1987, Newsweek magazine named Gene Thin Elk one of "100 New American Heroes" for his work in developing alcohol treatment programs serving Native Americans
- ▶ Discovered that conventional cures did not address the cultural clash of being Indian in a Eurocentric society: they detoxified the body, but not the spirit.
- ▶ Thin Elk has worked to develop alcohol prevention and treatment programs rooted in traditional Indian values and ceremonies.





# Medicine Wheel Inc. (Thin Elk)

- ▶ The Red Road Approach is a Lakota culturally-based chemical dependency treatment program designed to utilize the Lakota culture and life ways as healthy and healing necessities for prevention, intervention, treatment and aftercare support systems
- 



# Red Road (Thin Elk)

- ▶ Contemporary means someone lives in the mainstream majority society (primarily Caucasian), and embraces the mainstream religious teachings, modern values, lifestyles. This person identifies with, and is more comfortable with, this mainstream lifestyle, especially if they feel alienated (pushed away) in some way. Some Native Americans will attempt to “fit in” with people of other color societies (Latino, Hispanic, Black American, etc.), especially if they are mixed blood from one of these ethnicities/cultures and know very little of their Native American heritage.
- ▶ Bi-cultural means Native Americans live in two worlds: the Caucasian world beliefs, values, lifestyles and the Native American world beliefs, values, lifestyle; balancing their sense of identity in both worlds.
- ▶ Traditional means Native Americans choose to live in a primary indigenous lifestyle with an indigenous worldview and minimal compromises to exist in the modern world. Many times, their language is intact or is a priority for learning. Ceremonies are attended, social systems are maintained or being re-developed/reconnected.
- ▶ Pseudo-cultural means Native Americans choose to honor their respective tribal nation with integrity, honor global tribal nations, because their interactions with many tribal nations and at the same time function successfully in the mainstream societies.



# Sacred Seventh Direction (Wo'wakanyela O'unye Shokowin) (Thin Elk)

- ▶ The Sacred Seventh Direction works within the changleshka (medicine wheel) Lakota way of life. The 7th Direction is the ikcheya wicasha (common human) experiences in the circle of living. This teaches about the core power to change oneself for health and wellness away from chemical abuses and the addictions; to become connected with a greater power, Taku Wakan (That Which is Sacred), and rediscovering the internal power in the core of one's being.(Thin Elk)



# Healing

## Traditional

- ▶ Ceremony
- ▶ Social-bridging communication gaps and effective communication
- ▶ Coping strategies
- ▶ Clinical/Spiritual healing

## Education Reciprocity

- ▶ Traditional Language
- ▶ Traditional Culture
- ▶ Traditional History
- ▶ Social
- ▶ Mainstream/western ed.,
- ▶ Cultural competency
  - ▶ Ex. how many tribes in your state?
  - ▶ Fed. Recognized vs. State?



# Values of Lakol Wicoun(Lakota Way of Life)

- ✘ Wocekiya - Praying: Finding spirituality by communicating with your higher power, this communication between you and Tunkasila without going through another person or spirit.  
Wahola - Respect: for self, higher power, family, community and all life.
- ✘ Waunsila - Caring and Compassion: love caring, and concern for one another in a good way, especially for the family, the old ones, the young ones, the orphans, the one in mourning, the sick ones, and the ones working for the people.
- ✘ Wowijke - Honesty and Truth: with yourself, higher power and others with sincerity.
- ✘ Wawokiye - Generosity and Caring: helping without expecting anything in return, giving from the heart.
- ✘ Wahwala - Humility: we have a spirit; we are not better or less than others.
- ✘ Woksape - Wisdom: practice with knowledge comes wisdom. (Two Dogs-Iron Cloud)



# Education/Workforce Development

Techniques and solutions

▶ “Educare model”

“This edu-caring approach...concentrates on the notion that healing is educational and education can be healing.”-Judy Atkinson

**Attunement**-practice of one person focusing attention on internal world of another

Relationship building

Safe physical and emotional spaces

Protection-triggered responses-> coping skills

Sense of self control

Artistic- music, dancing, storytelling (Brown-Rice 2013)

# White Bison Don Coyhis

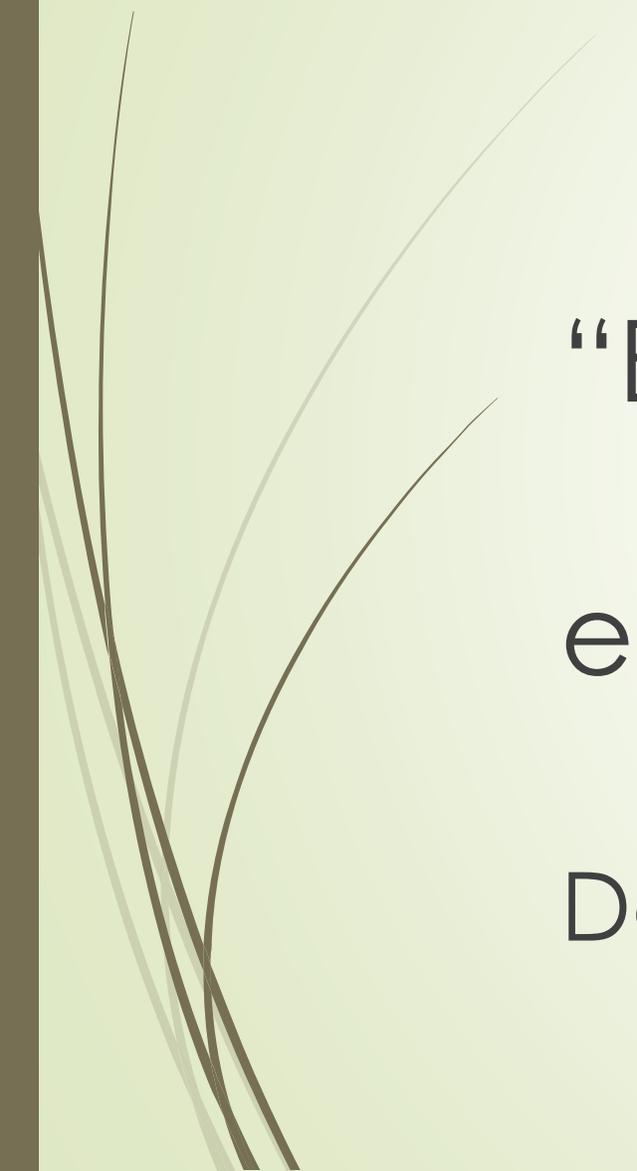
- Founder
- Native American 12 Step healing program
- Works on intergenerational trauma and intergenerational healing
- Worked in DC to gain a public apology from the Obama Administration for the genocide and trauma inflicted on Indian children during the boarding school era





# Mitakuye Oyasin

**“ The Lakota Universe can be described as Mitakuye Oyasin. That means everything is connected, interrelated and dependent in order to exist. The universe includes all things that grow, things that fly-everything you see in the world or the place that you walk on. These are all included in what the Lakota see as the universe.”- Robert Two Crow, Community Curator, 1999**



“Education is the greatest  
equalizer to social injustices”

Donald Warne, MD, Oglala Lakota



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