

# Resiliency

As a response to Historical Trauma

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## **Social Sciences**

**Sociology – knowledge about human social structure and activity. (what humans do - external)**

**Psychology – human mental functions and behavior (how they think- internal)**

**Society –Human societies are characterized by patterns of relationships between individuals that share a distinctive culture or institutions.**

**Institutions – are structures and mechanisms of social order:**

**Government**

**Family**

**Economics**

**Education**

**Religion**

**Culture – the set of norms, values, and beliefs that characterize an institution, organization or group. (The personality of a society).  
The distinct ways that different peoples classify and represent their experiences.**

**Norms – expected patterns of behavior**

**Formal – laws**

**Informal – what foods go together**

**Values – matters of preference, what's better than what.**

**Beliefs – views on what is true.**

**Traditions – a practice, custom, or story that is passed down from generation to generation.**

Resilience - most commonly understood as a process,  
and not a trait of an individual. (organizations)

Resiliency - is understood to be the individual traits.  
(people –students/families/clients)

# Historical Trauma

## Definitions:

- Historical Trauma is trauma upon trauma that occurs in history to a specific group of people causing emotional and mental wounding both during their lives and to the generations that follow.

(Native American Children & Family Services Training Inst., 1999)

- Historical Trauma is cumulative emotional and psychological wounding, over the life span and across generations, emanating from massive group trauma experiences.

(M. Yellow Horse Brave Heart, 2003)

# **Historical Trauma impacts all the major institutions of a society:**

**Education – boarding schools, today’s public schools.**

**Government – federal jurisdiction, tribal government**

**Language –loss, limited**

**Economics – poverty, middle class**

**Religion – what maintains the culture, one separate area**

## **Historical Trauma impacts individual/groups;**

**Alcoholism and other forms of substance abuse**

**Mental Health – anxiety, depression, low self-esteem, etc.**

**Physical Health – diabetes, obesity, etc.**

**Impact on Native American/Alaskan Native youth?**

**According to the National Indian Child Welfare Association (NICWA):**

**5.2 million American Indians and Alaska Natives (AI/AN) live in the United States—making up 1.7 percent of the total population.**

**The AI/AN population is young, with 33.6 percent under the age of 18, compared with 24 percent of the total population.**

**There are alarming statistics on AI/AN youth in almost every risk area:**

**American Indian children have one of the highest rates of victimization at 11.6 per 1,000 children of the same race or ethnicity.**

**In 2009, 7,335 AI/AN children were victims of child maltreatment.**

**27% of American Indian children live in poor families.**

**Suicide is the leading cause of death for AI/AN ages 10-14. The suicide rate among young AI/AN males ages 15-24 is high, accounting for 64% of all AI/AN suicides. This is 2-3 times higher than the general U.S. rate**

**More than half of those who committed suicide in American Indian country had never been seen by a mental health provider, yet 90% of all teens who die by suicide suffer from a diagnosable mental illness at the time of death.**

**Alcohol-related deaths among American Indians between the ages of 15-24 are 17 times higher than the national average for the same age group.**

**In 2001, 74% of youth in custody in the Federal Bureau of Prisons system were AI/AN youth, a 50% increase since 1994. (NICWA, 2004) The AI/AN youth population is more affected by gang involvement than any other racial population.**

**Where is the help? What do we do?**

**Individual/ group counseling**

**Medical/perscriptive**

**Cultural/ceremonial**

**Build Resilience – something we can all participate in.**

**"I have heard there are troubles of more than one kind. Some come from ahead and some come from behind. But, I've bought a big bat. I'm all ready you see. Now my troubles are going to have troubles with me!"**

**(Dr. Suess)**

## Resiliency :

The quality within people which allows them to bounce back from physical and psychological traumas.

More than just survival, it's the quality of the survival.

Allows us to bounce back healthier, stronger, smarter.

## Seven common characteristics:

1. Insight – tough questions – honest answers: Why. They were very curious, they wanted to know why. (sensing something is not right, alert to danger)
2. Independence – Keeping distance emotionally & physically. They developed an emotional distance between themselves and the problem. (sometimes distance feels better than closeness)
3. Relationships – Ties to people of mutual respect. Develop key Relationships that were not damaging, but nurturing. (We can love and be loved)
4. Initiative – Taking charge of problems, stretching themselves. Do not see themselves as a victim. (Carve out a piece of their lives that they can control)

5. Creativity – Imposing order, beauty, purpose. They have the creativity to put chaos into order. (A place to take refuge)
6. Humor – A sense of humor. Finding the comic in the tragic. (mix the absurd and the awful and laugh at the combination. Proof you've stopped the course of destruction)
7. Morality – Staying holy in an unholy place. They have developed a moral code to live by. (the wish for a good personal life, valuing decency, honesty, fair play, etc.)

## Questions to help build resiliency:

Insight	Why?
Independence	How am I different? How is the situation not about me?
Relationships	With whom do I have mutual respect?
Initiative	What can I do? What parts can I address?
Creativity	What is my purpose? What are the rules here.
Humor	What about this is funny?
Morality	What is the right thing to do? What is kind, humane compassionate? What is the least destructive way to handle it?

## Use mediation -

What – identify the stimulus

Why – assign meaning

How – identify a strategy

Use appropriate interventions, based on resources.

(Most failures occur because of missing pieces. Can you fill in the missing piece?)

## Resources:

Financial – having the money to purchase goods & services.

Emotional – being able to choose & control emotional responses without engaging in self-destructive behavior.

Mental – having the mental abilities & acquired reading skills (reading, writing, computing) to deal with daily life.

Spiritual – believing in a divine purpose & guidance.

Physical – having physical health & mobility.

Support systems – having friends, family, backup resources available in times of need. (external resources)

Relationships/role models – having frequent access to adults who are appropriate & do not engage in self-destructive behavior.

Knowledge of Hidden Rules – knowing the unspoken cues and habits of a group.

**Hidden Rules** – people, driving forces in life, food, fighting, discipline, noise, destiny , etc.

Direct teach the hidden rules.

Teach that there are two sets of rules.

Understand the hidden rules that kids bring with them.

## **Key points:**

All seven characteristics can be taught.

Everyone has the ability to teach them.

Kids can learn how to be more resilient, regardless of their IQ.

Girls tend to become resilient by building strong, caring relationships, while boys usually bounce back by learning how to problem-solve.

No learning takes place without a relationship.

Recognize survivors pride -

Honor the struggle – individual struggle should be recognized, not pitied.

“I know you have a lot of responsibilities at home, your doing a good job.”

Reason to persist - a guiding purpose in life or the reward at the end of a trying experience. The motivation to keep up the struggle.

“I know things have been hard for you, you could have given up but you didn't. I know you can succeed now too.”

Forming a bond – develop a relationship that is nurturing and sustaining.

“ So, what was it like to you as a child?”

The self image of one who prevails – see themselves as someone with strength, not a victim.

“When you needed to you took action. I see that stength in you today.”

**How do we know when we have been successful?**

**“To laugh often and much;**

**To win the respect of intelligent people and the affection of children;**

**To earn the appreciation of honest critics and endure the betrayal of false friends;**

**To appreciate beauty, to find the best in others;**

**To leave the world a bit better, whether by a healthy child, a garden patch or a redeemed social condition;**

**To know even one life has breathed easier because you have lived.**

**This is to have succeeded.”**

*Ralph Waldo Emerson*

Thank you all so very much for your time and attention.

Questions??