

Culturally Informed Safety Planning for Children Exposed to Family Violence

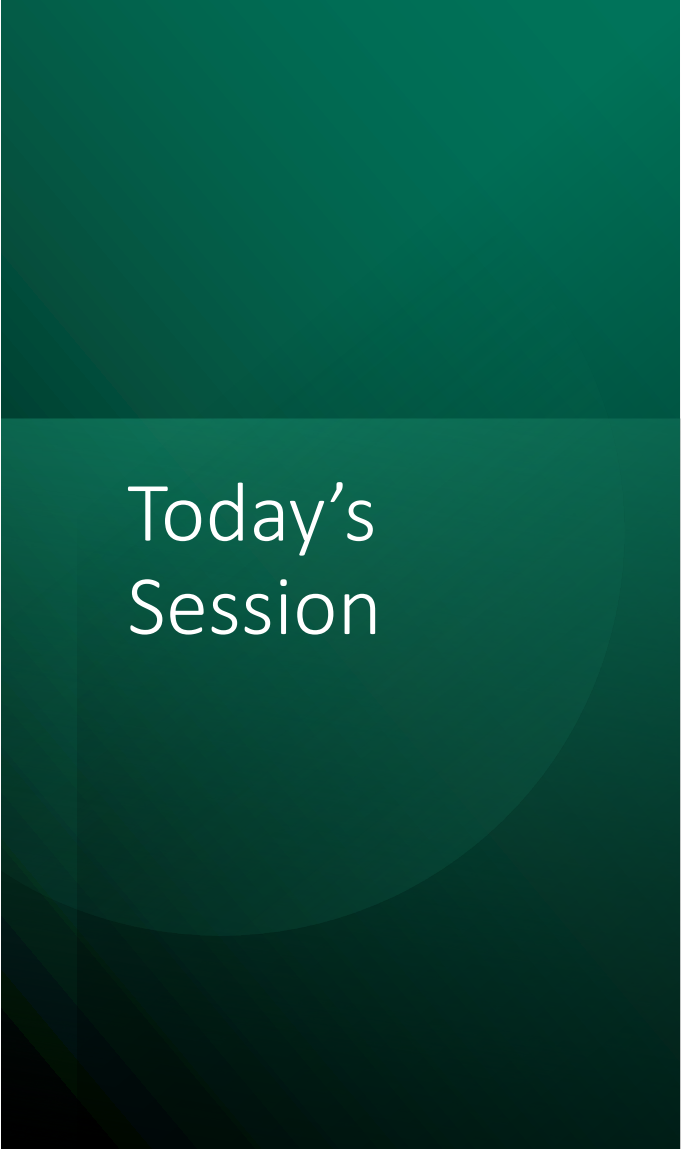


2025 Violence Against Women Act
Training
“Healing through Practice: Strategies for
Addressing Domestic Violence”
November 20, 2025

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- *Be sensitive to topics being discussed*
- *Recognize any trauma triggers and practice self care*
- *Our perceptions vary from life experiences*
- *Value others and be respectful*
- *Embrace your own story and pass along your courage and strength to heal*
- *Encourage Healing*



Today's Session

Exploration of Cultural Influences

Review Culturally Sensitive
Interventions for Family Violence

Engaging the Family in Culturally
Informed Safety Planning

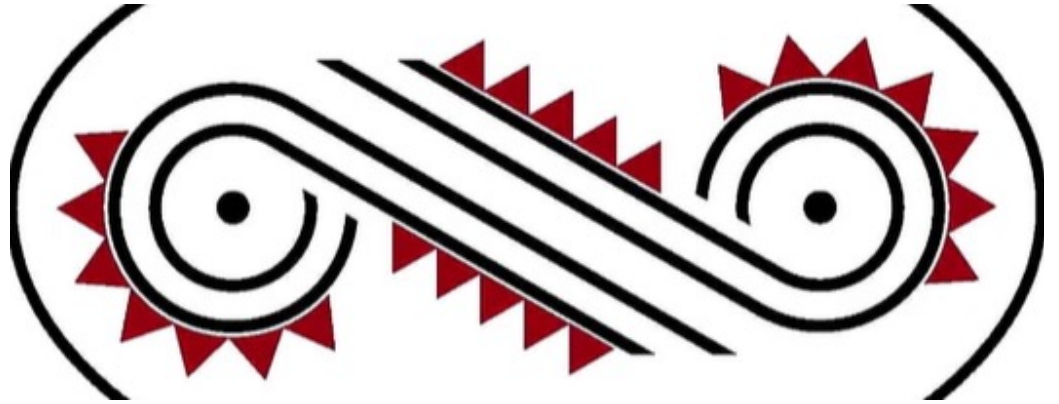
Empowering Communities to Thrive

EXPLORATION OF CULTURAL INFLUENCES

Connecting with our past creates a shared present, helps us to ensure a sense of community and reciprocal obligations and shared identity as a community.

Iyyikowa “broken foot”





What does it mean to be Indigenous a.k.a. Native a.k.a. Native American a.k.a. American Indian a.k.a. Choctaw or other membership?



Culture is considered a web of beliefs, rituals, customs, artifacts, norms, traditions, and values interconnected, some more directly than others.

Can you
Feel it?

Can you
See it?

Can you
Taste it?

Can you
Hear it?

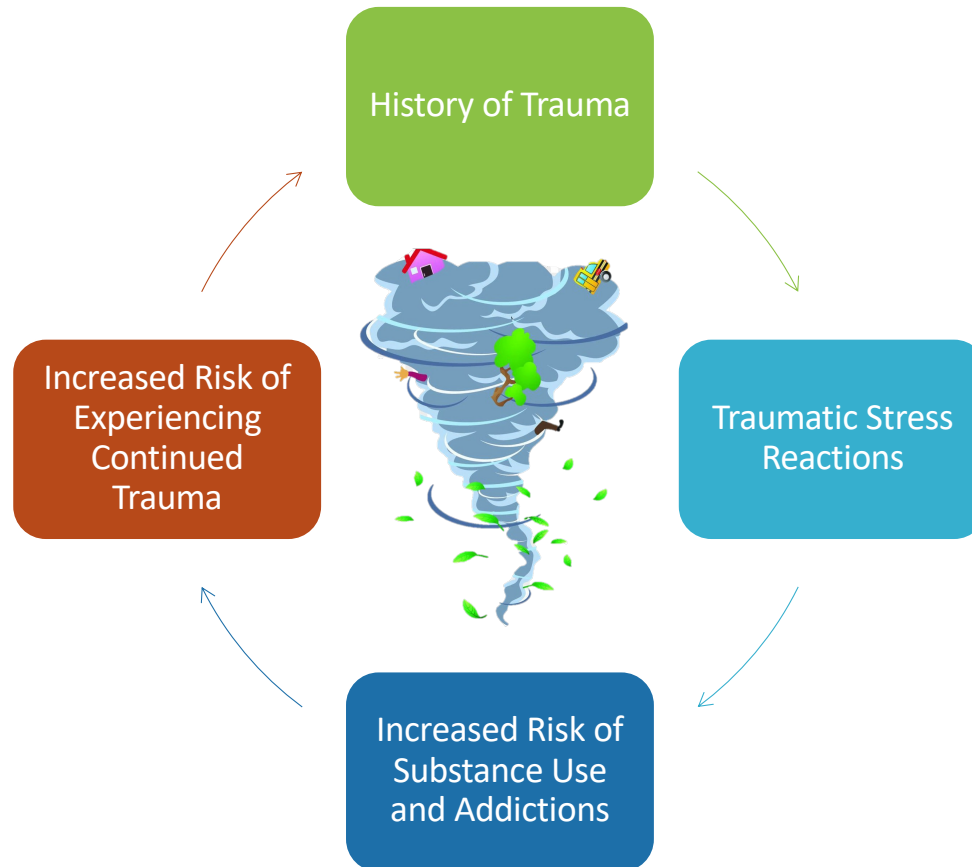
Can you
Breathe it?



The Harsh Realities the Impact of Trauma

On Native Ground, 2013

EVENT EXPERIENCE EFFECTS



Cultural Oppression:

- **Perpetuating harmful stereotypes:** Reinforcing negative attitudes and beliefs about one's own community.
- **Erasing cultural identity:** Suppressing cultural practices and languages, leading to cultural loss and erasure.
- **Maintaining colonialism:** Perpetuating the dominant culture's values, beliefs, and practices within one's own community.
- **Hindering decolonization:** Preventing efforts to reclaim and revitalize cultural heritage and identity.



Tip of Trauma Iceberg

What You See

- Family Violence
- Child Abuse/Neglect
- Substance Use and Addiction
- Poverty

What You Can't See

- Fear or Hurt
- Depression / Suicidal Thoughts
- Low Self-Esteem / Insecurities
- Chronic Mental/Physical Health Issues
- Developmental Disabilities



Family Violence

Strategies to Promote Safety

- Understanding Layers of Complexity
- Shaping Cultural Influences
- Overcoming Disrupted Trust
- Culturally Appropriate Services

“When children witness or experience violence in the home, it affects how children feel, how they act, and how they learn.”

Without intervention, children are at higher risk for school failure, substance abuse, repeat victimization and perhaps most tragically, in perpetuating the cycle of violence in their own lives.”



IMPACT OF WESTERNIZATION

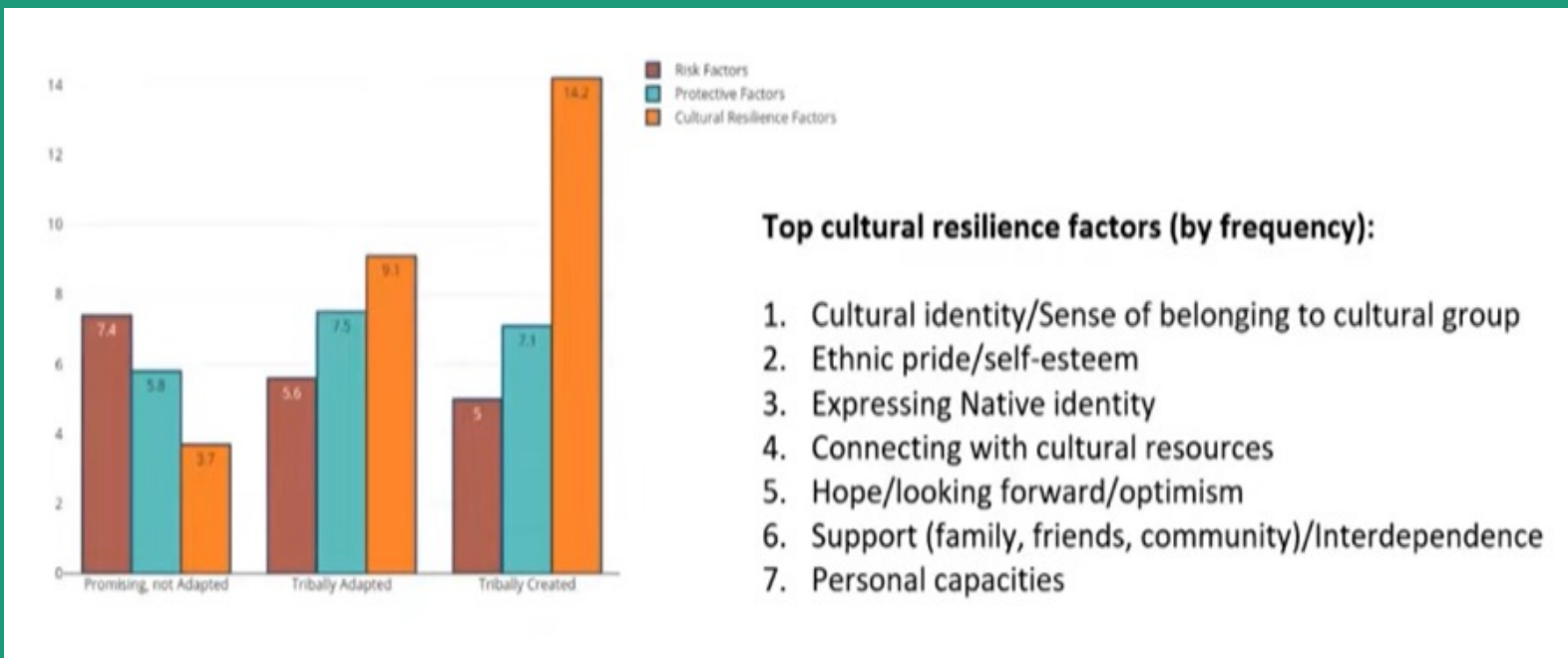
- 60% of American Indian and Alaska Native individuals reside in urban areas. Only about 40% live in rural locations, most often on tribal lands
- Federal funding, training, coordination, and jurisdictional complexities hinders the ability of Tribal governments to practice complete sovereignty
- Disconnect from traditional practices and more entrenched in modern society
- Criminalistic society or primary focus on pursuit of justice
- Potential Conflict between traditional healing and conventional medicine
- Loss of communal child rearing practices:
 - More family violence is most common risk factor involved with child protection
 - Co-exists with drug and alcohol use and mental health issues
 - Patriarchal and need for control



REVITALIZATION OF CULTURE:

- Kinship and Clans are fundamental to family and community relations
 - Historically, Tribes had clans related to animals or other representation. These clans represented connection to family, identity, and a sense of belonging.
 - Due to colonization, some Tribes have lost clan identification. However, the clanship system continues in adoption of family systems, relatives are more extended. We term them, aunties, uncles, or grandparents.
- Diversity of Family Strengths – roles as women or elders
- Tribal Language to understand traditional values and culture
- Spirituality and Prayer as a traditional way of life. A communal and ceremonial way of interconnectedness with all living things and a higher being.

Value of Cultural and Resilience based Interventions



Exploration of Family's Worldview:

- 1.Cultural Connection:** A strong connection to tribal culture, language, and traditions, which provides a sense of identity and belonging.
- 2.Family Support:** A supportive network of extended family members and community connections that provide emotional and practical support.
- 3.Parental Resilience:** The ability of parents to cope with stress, trauma, and adversity, and to adapt to challenging situations.
- 4.Spiritual Beliefs:** A strong spiritual foundation and connection to traditional beliefs and practices, which provides comfort, guidance, and meaning.
- 5.Community Involvement:** Active participation in community activities, cultural events, and tribal ceremonies, which fosters a sense of belonging and connection to the community.

Examples of Strategies Embracing Culture Interventions



Restoring the Sacred Circle 2024

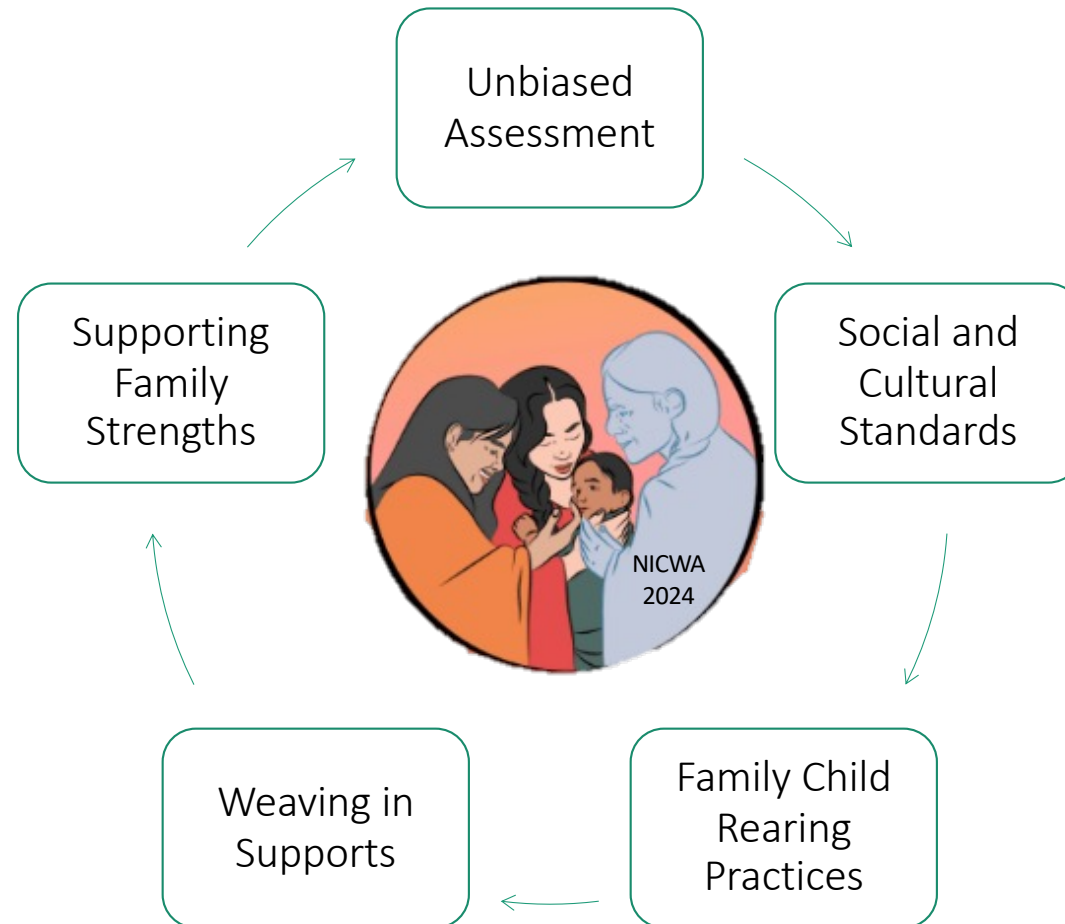
STOP the Violence Coalition

Safe Haven

Navajo Peacemaking System

Tribal Strategies against Violence

Culturally Informed Practice



Connecting the Past ~ Healing the Future

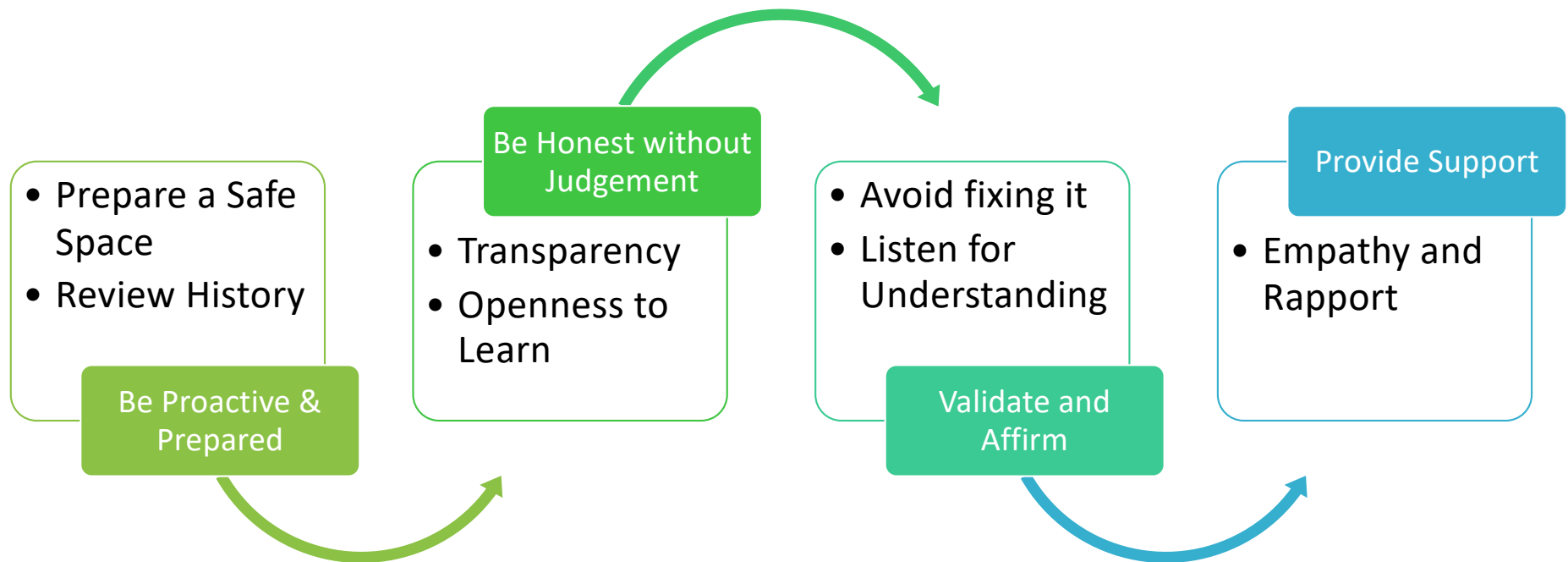
- How can we adapt this our healing interventions to align with our tribal cultural values and practices, and ensure that it honors the cultural identity of the people we serve?
- How can we ensure being culturally informed is used in a way that prioritizes family and community connections?
- What cultural activities and relational supports are most effective in supporting the healing and recovery of those who have experienced trauma?
- How can we reframe and elevate culture in our daily practice?

ENGAGING FAMILY IN CULTURALLY INFORMED SAFETY PLANNING

"Building relationships with Native American parents requires a foundation of trust, respect, and cultural humility. It's about listening to their stories, honoring their traditions, and walking alongside them on their journey towards healing and reunification. By doing so, we can empower families to thrive and strengthen the fabric of our communities." – Author Unknown



Authentically Engaging the Child, Youth, and Family



FIGHT

Response Trigger: to face any perceived threat aggressively

Emotion: angry, upset, critical, controlling, defensive

Healing: grounding, accept support, self-care, physical activity

FLIGHT

Response Trigger: run away or retreat from threat

Emotion: worried, distracted, fearful, panicked

Healing: set boundaries, pace, contemplate energy

FREEZE

Response Trigger: inability to move or act

Emotion: anxiety, isolated, depression, indecision

Healing: realize not alone, say yes, find comfort zones

FAWN

Response Trigger: pleasing to avoid conflict

Emotion: overwhelmed, burnout, responsible for others, try fit in

Healing: value oneself, accept can't please everyone, it's okay to say no



RECOGNIZING TRAUMA TRIGGERS & HEALING RESPONSES

The Tip of Trauma Iceberg: Recognizing Effects



Discussion Points:

What does Family Violence mean to you?

Definition - Any forms of abuse perpetrated against a person either by an intimate partner or family member

How does it make you feel?

Examples:

PHYSICAL – chronic fatigue, rapid pulse

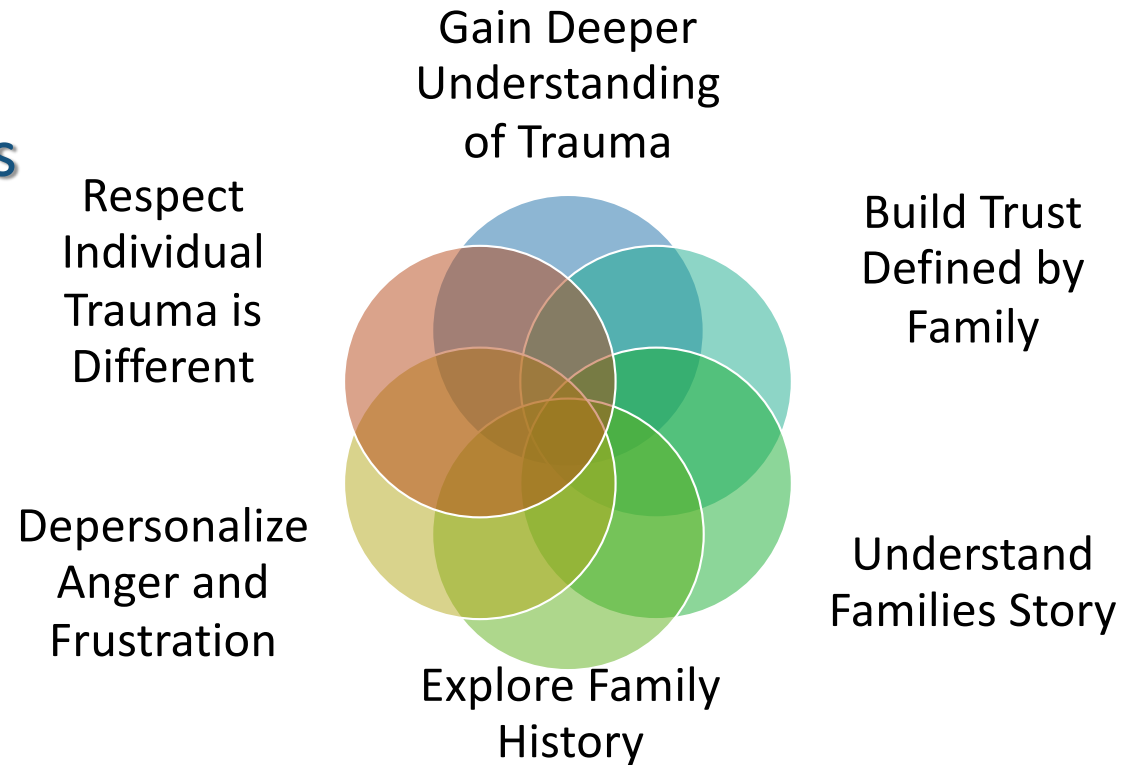
EMOTIONAL – disconnect, anxiety, guilt, anger

BEHAVIORAL – irritability, isolation, moody

SPIRITUAL – loss of purpose, questioning God

COGNITIVE – pessimism, loss of focus,
inattention

Cultural Tools for Engagement: Sharing their Stories



Marilyn Bruguier Zimmerman, Ph.D. Assiniboine-Sioux Tribe

Cultural Tools for Engagement: Family Portrait

Group Activity Instructions:

- Role play ask for volunteer
- Use Handout #1: Family Portrait
- Draw a picture of your family and use symbols or emojis for descriptions
- Use the talking points to explore how they see themselves within their family



Tell me about your family of origin and connection to the community and Tribal Nation(s)

What are your most important moral, cultural, or spiritual values (for example: respect, spirituality, honesty, integrity, love, etc.)

As a family, describe your strengths

What are your challenges

Share about the typical roles and relationships of family members (Mother – Father - Grandparents: - Auntie and Uncle – Children – Cousins)

Describe how these identities are regarded in my family culture (Females – Males – Two Spirited and/or LGBTQI+)

Tell about these special family cultural activities (Foods – Language - Music/Dance - Traditions/Ceremonies – Holidays - Dress/Regalia - Spiritual/Faith – Other activities)

Anything else you'd like to share about your family cultural or traditions

ASSESSING SAFETY THRESHOLD “S.O.O.V.I.”

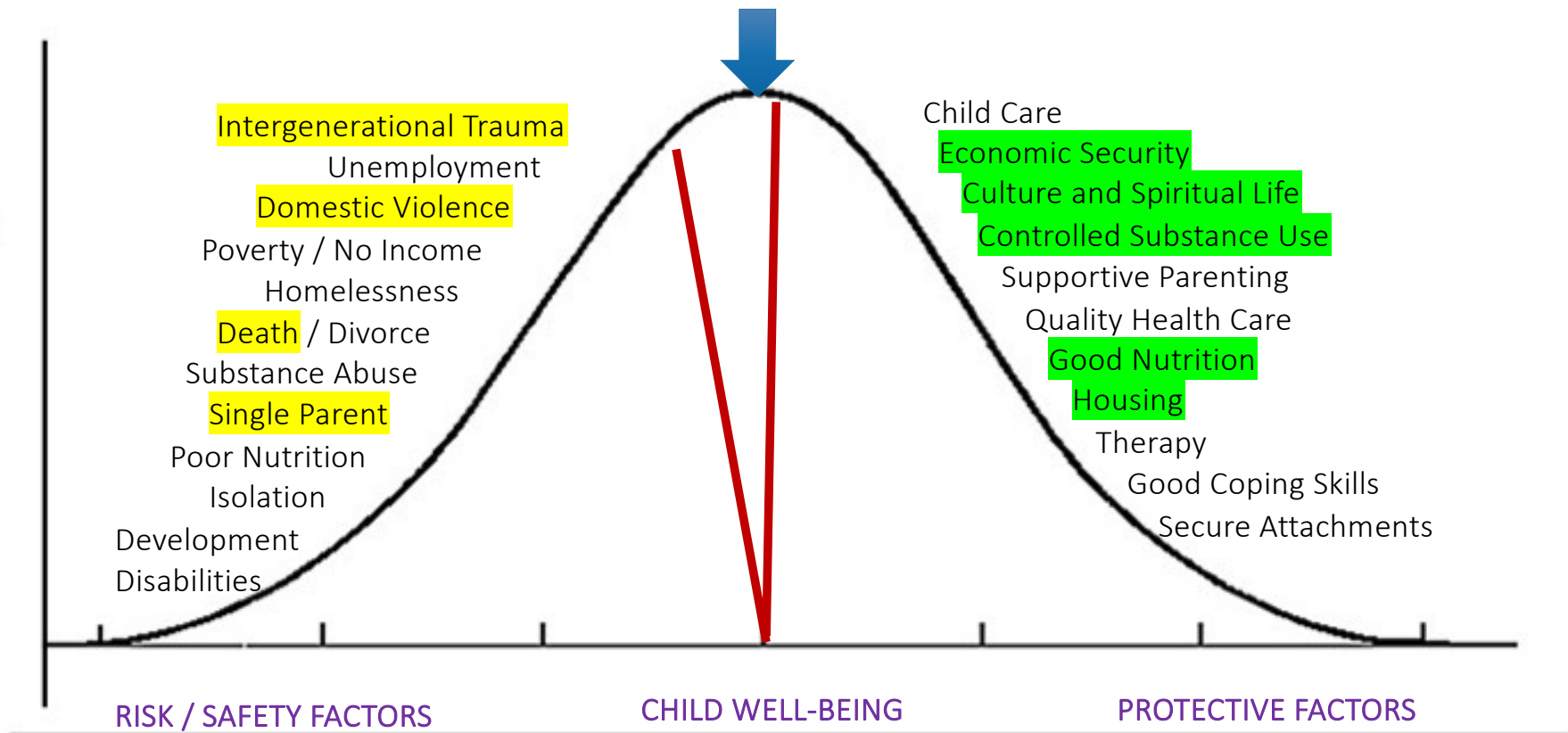
FIVE CRITERIA MUST BE MET TO BE A SAFETY THREAT:

- Serious
- Observable & Specific
- Out of Control
- Vulnerable Child
- Imminent

THE SIX DOMAINS TO ASSESS SAFETY:

- Type of Maltreatment: What is the extent?
- Nature of Maltreatment: What are the circumstances?
- Child Functioning: How is the child’s functioning and their general behavior?
- Adult Functioning: How are the adults functioning including substance use and behavioral health?
- General Parenting: How do the caregivers generally parent?
- Parenting Discipline: How do the caregivers discipline the children?

EXPLAINING SAFETY THRESHOLD AND PROTECTIVE FACTORS



Cultural Tools for Engagement: Protective Circles

Group Activity Instructions:

Use Handout#2: Protective Circles

Draw circles for each topic and write in responses:

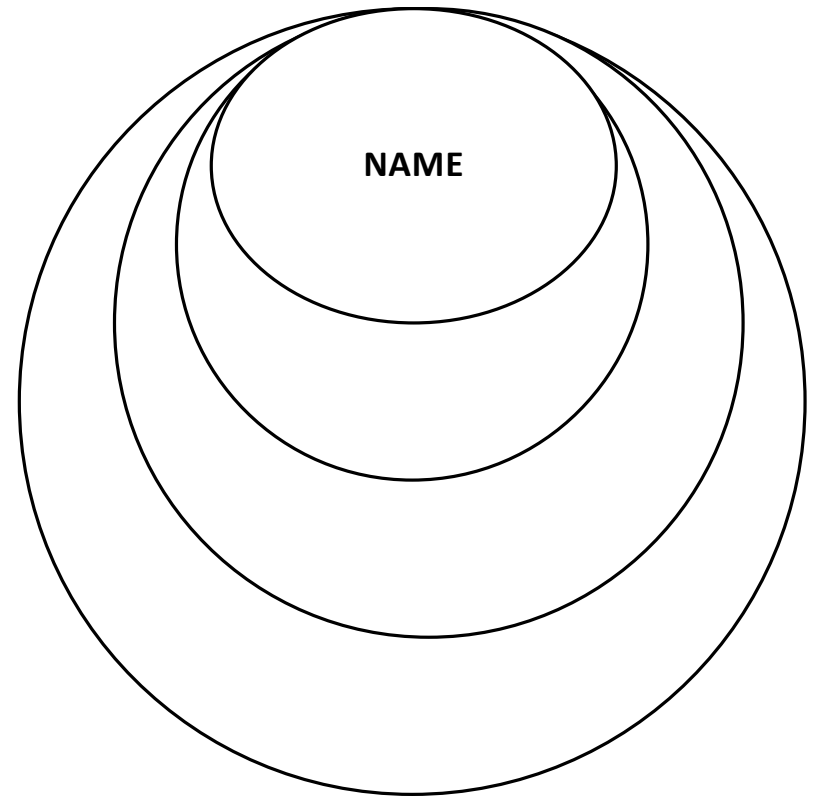
Inner Circle: Write their name

Circle 2: Who are the most important people in their life?

Circle 3: Who/what in their community is their strength?

Circle 4: What keeps them grounded, supported, functioning, etc.?

Circle 5: What connections in their environment, land, animals, etc. that provide safety, well-being, and security?



Cultural Connectedness is Protection

The importance for me is to know where I came from and to know who I am, and just being me, because in this world without my culture, and without my language, and without the stuff know, I feel lost. Who am I? Was I supposed to be someone different? Then I should learn those things and it's just really important to me to know that stuff so I can pass it down to my children, because it's who we are. And it's really important to have with us. ~Sarah (self-selected alternative name)



Connectedness Mechanisms				
<u>Family</u>	<u>Community</u>	<u>Land/Place</u>	<u>Intergenerational</u>	<u>Spirit</u>
Language	Language	Language	Language	Language
Spending time together	Celebrations	Hunting	Part of a continuous history	Ceremonies
Relational Roles	Dancing/Singing	Gathering	Awareness of historical trauma	Cultural values
Responsibility	Ceremonies	Teaching children	Responsibility to future generations	Art
Namesakes & Nicknames	Service to others	Learning from Elders	Learning ancestral teachings to pass on to younger generations	Stories
Adoption	Mentoring	Exploration		Love, Humor, Truth
Togetherness	Rules, values, norms	Observation		Beauty
Trust and safety	Safety nets	Travel		Dance
Sharing and support	Family relationships	Care for animals		Subsistence foods
Helping Elders	Social groups	Stories	Participation in cultural and community activities	Songs/Dance/Drum
Stories, family history	Collective belonging	Playing outside	Knowledge of family lineage	Connection to ancestors and future generations
Recognition of personal talents	Cooperative Teams	Access to clean water		Collective mentality
	Subsistence sharing	Fish camp		Spiritual teachings
	Strong leadership	Survival skills		



Cultivating Cultural Roots

- Promote education of traumatic histories effecting communities**
- Share information and concerns regarding key issues**
- Maintain and reconcile traditional ways of healing**
- Build connections with cultural knowledge keepers and healers**
- Build collaborations and Be an advocate**

EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES

“It’s easy to say, it’s not my child, not my community, not my world, not my problem.”
Then there are those who see the need, and respond, I consider these people as my heroes.”

~ Mister Rogers



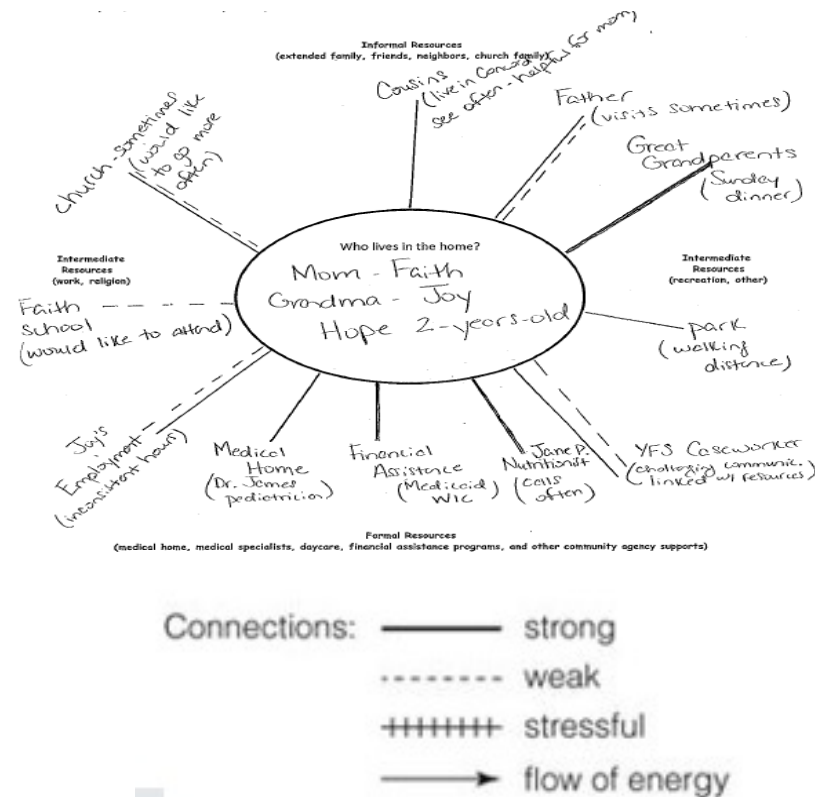
Cultural Tools for Engagement: Eagle Mapping Community Connections

Group Activity Instructions:

Use Handout #3 Eagle Mapping

Draw a circle in the middle and identify their family

Draw lines and ask to identify relationships and resources



Lesboucans.com

PRESERVING FAMILIES

INDIVIDUAL / FAMILY	COMMUNITY
Safe, stable, and nurturing relationships	Access to economic and financial support
Engaging in education	Access to medical and mental health services
Mentors and role models	Safe and stable housing
Basic needs of food, shelter, and health services	Nurturing and safe childcare or caregivers
Financial Stability	Family-friendly workplace
Strong support networks	Partnerships with business, programs, government, etc.
Consistent parenting and discipline	Feel connected to community
Open communication	Violence is not tolerated



*Itti' kapochcha
to'li' ihoo*

lyyikowa



Building Stronger Communities

- A sisterhood of positive, respectful, and honoring relations
- Keeping spiritual connections with ancestors
- Sharing parenting through nurturing and protective circles
- Builds confidence, skill development, strength, healing, and resiliency
- Coaching, mentoring and role modeling for the youth Chikasha Bak Bak
- Revitalizing historical cultural community: Chikasha Toli Ihoo join with Tvskahomma Ohoyo in Mississippi Choctaw Stickball World Series 2017 to today
- Future documentary film by Mark Williams, Digital Feather Media "There is No Crying in Stickball"



Resiliency

“It Starts with
Us!”

- Forgive yourself and forgive others
- If you are hurting, it's okay to seek help
- Own your feelings and let go of the past
- Acknowledge we want better for our children, grandchildren, and relatives
- Remember our sacred or ancestral teachings and values
- Raise awareness, share how this is impacting our communities
- Provide lateral violence and conflict resolution training
- Build strong, healthy relationships and value one another
- Speak to an elder or seek out a healer
- Implement cleansing ways and reconnect with Indigenous beliefs
- Embrace your spiritual, physical, mental, and emotional well-being

Questions or Comments?

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Chi-pisa-lacho
Chi-pisa-lashki
Nzhogo la naanki



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