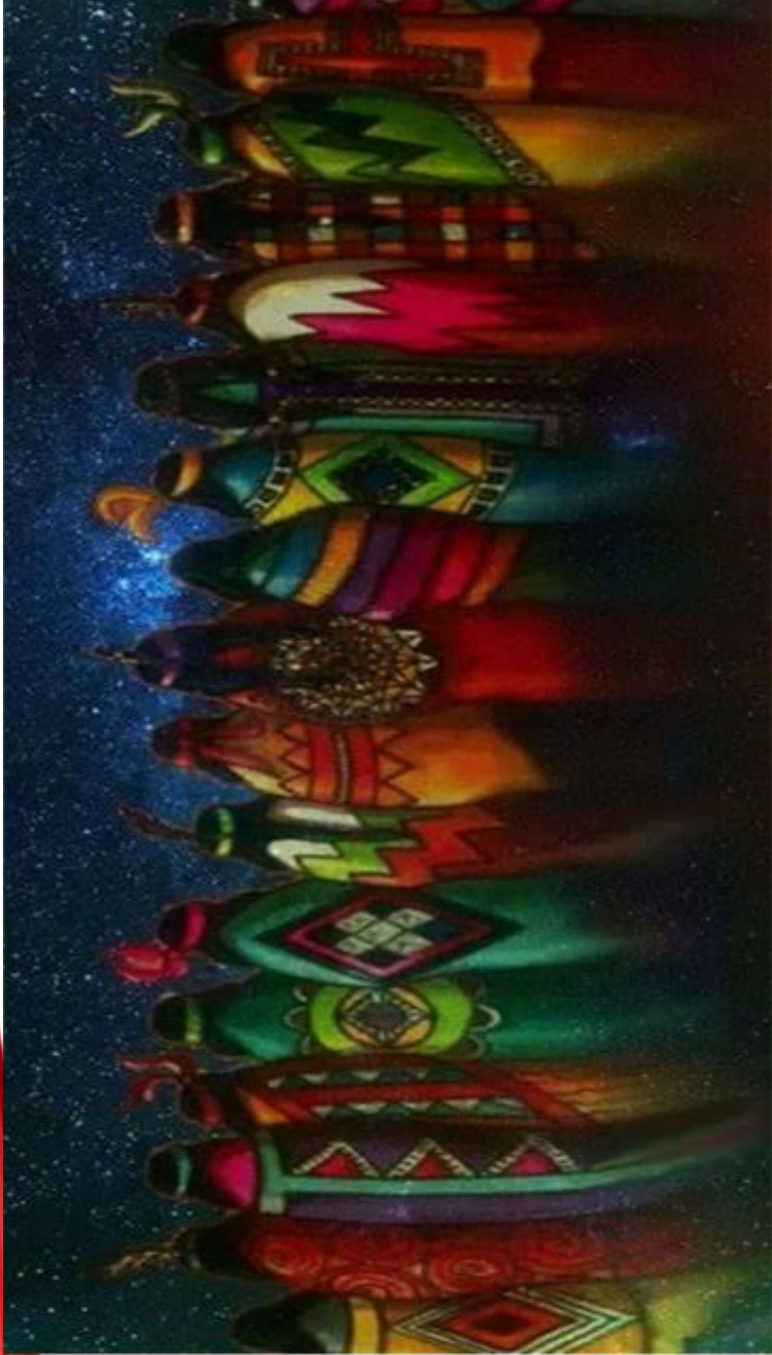


Nitsitaapii Pokaiksi: Wrapping children in a blanket of belonging



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Goal of this presentation:

To understand historical/intergenerational trauma effects on Indian Country and the justice system; and how they can be reversed through participation in community driven indigenous justice models

Historical Nitsiitapii Paradigm

Deep Culture-

- Relationships~ Family/kinship is extensive
- Values (Generosity, Respect for Elders, Fearlessness, Bravery, Fierceness, Kindness, Humor, Gentleness, Respect for Women, Respect for Children, Respect for the gift of life, reciprocity, honesty, perseverance)
- Beliefs (Balance, Energy, Connections, Prayer and offering, Seeking guidance from elders, dreams, spirit helpers, life continues after death (Sandhills), spiritual helpers, lifelong learning)
- Ethics (Community Actualization, Ikakiimaat in all we do)
- Atsimoyi" kaan is our life, Sacredness of everything)
- Powerful beings (strength based model)



Nitsitapii Justice Terms/Practices

- Restorative Justice (Inai'i'yissinni Peacemaking Process)
 - While at Siksika, Abraham Maslow observed that "deviants" were not labeled as such and could redeem themselves if they left that behavior behind (Blood and Heavy Head 2007)
 - Balance- Reaching an equality of understanding and acceptance of resolution that restores peace
 - Energies and action can be changed, but requires acceptance of responsibility, sacrifice , hard work, and willingness to learn
- Restoring victims "Once the traditional alliances have been destroyed, the major interpretation available to tribal people is the interpretation of the colonialists; notions of victimization take the place of ceremonial balancing and the exchange of gifts and offerings (Bastien, 2004)."
 - The energy of a negative action upon their person can be released, cleansed and they can be restored
- Koh'soko- "It's your road"- Respect for Personal Judgment/consequences of action
 - We prepare our people from a young age with the teachings, tools, and support they need but then let them take what they have learned and do what they want with it
- Coup Stories-
 - Respected individuals share stories of when they "escaped danger" or how they didn't get caught as a method of showing we are all human, sometimes we have good luck and sometimes we don't- placing ourselves at the same level as people still traveling that road



Ruth Benedict's "Synergy" (1939)

High Synergy Cultures- social structures provide for acts that are mutually reinforcing

- Individual achievements and success are the boast of the group, and the prestige of the group is also the individual's boast
- Individuals are disciplined by the group, but are given many chances to reform first; the community is waiting with wisdom and discretion, in great patience, for his growth; and there are readily available ways to "fix" or "right" the behavior
- Extended kinship and society kinship leaving non-threatening universe where one need not fear abandonment or humiliation, and the absence of anxiety or fear is the norm
- Prayers, ceremonies, and rituals are for the benefit of the collective and are both socially pleasurable and sacred experiences; praying to protect and strengthen oneself so that one could help the group
- Blackfoot the most highly synergistic in the world ~ Benedict



Code of Indian Offenses of 1883

- “Sundance, Scalpdance, Wardance, and any other feasts assimilating thereto are hereby declared Indian Offenses”
- “The usual practices of so-called “Medicine Men” shall be considered Indian offenses



Disconnection from Culture as a Protective Factor

- Montana Native American Domestic Violence Fatality Review Findings
 - MMIP
 - School to Prison Pipeline
 - Inadequate Systems: underfunded, overworked, underpaid, untrained
 - Removal and separation through corrections and treatment models
- Epidemic SUD (50% of infants exposed in-utero)
- Epidemic violence/victimization



Relearning and Realigning

- We must intervene through accountability and restoration using indigenous ways of knowing and community synergy to find solutions that work for indigenous communities (Healing to Wellness Model)
- Need reform in child safety that utilizes the concepts of kinship and community responsibility
- Need youth healing centers in our communities, not youth jails
- Fund projects that research or increase access to indigenous teachings to strengthen cultural identity of youth as a protective factor
- Disassociate indigenous culture with culture of poverty/violence/addiction/death and train everyone working in Indian country to know the difference
- Fund projects that work to realign systems of safety and justice with indigenous values
- Fund research and projects that identify what is needed to create tribal laws and policies that match community values
- Work to change State and National law and policy to be partners instead of the “Great White Father”
- Work toward cultural perpetuity (7 generations forward how will this grow and be sustained)



More Needs

- Victim advocacy for every community
- Guardian ad litem or child advocacy
- Community policing/CPS models
- Family Treatment/Community and culturally Based
- Women/children shelters
- Teen Drop In Centers
- Cultural Foster System
- Training
- TA should be assistance in strategic planning with only technical guidance
- Healing to Wellness expansion