Integrating Cultural Humility into Clinical and Research Practices with Indigenous People

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Shannon Saltclah PharmD, PhC, BC-ADM, CPH
Joshuaa Allison-Burbank PhD, CCC-SLP, CPH
Introductions
Dr. Timian Godfrey (Diné) DNP, APRN, FNP-BC, CPH

- Nurse Practitioner
- Clinical Assistant Professor at the University of Arizona College of Nursing
- Works with the INCATS grant team
- Healthcare and educational delivery methods while ensuring cultural rigor
Rene Begay (Diné) MS, CPH

- Salina Spring, AZ (15 mins outside of Chinle, AZ)
- Big water clan, born for Red Bottom People, maternal grandfather is Red Running into Water, and paternal grandparent is Towering House
- Geneticist
- Professional Research assistant at the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus, CAIANH
- Involved in ethical and social implications of genetics research in Indigenous populations as well as other research
- Member of the Navajo Nation Policy Development Working Group
- Aims to be a physician scientist
Dr. Shannon Saltclah (Diné) PharmD, PhC, BC-ADM, CPH

- Teec Nos Pos, AZ
- Indian Health Service (IHS) Scholarship Recipient
- Tsehootsoo Medical Center, Fort Defiance, AZ – Pharmacist 2012-2018
- Commissioned Officer; Lieutenant Commander in the Public Health Service
- Project Coordinator, Project Officer at the CDC, Tribal Practices for Wellness in Indian Country (TPWIC) Cooperative Agreement, 2017
- TPWIC supports tribal practices for strengthening resilience and healthy behaviors in AI/AN communities. Cultural serves as a pathway for preventing chronic disease.
Dr. Joshuuaa Allison-Burbank (Diné & Acoma Pueblo) PhD, CCC-SLP

- Speech-language pathologist/lecturer
  - Northern Navajo Medical Center – Shiprock, NM
  - Little Moccasins Education Services, LLC – Waterflow, NM
  - Adjunct Lecturer, University of Vermont

- Developed culturally responsive services for tribal early childhood programs

- Incorporating Indigenous language and teachings into early literacy instruction

- Using traditional storytelling to aid with memory and executive dysfunction in Navajo elders with neurogenerative disease
Cultural humility

• The ability to acknowledge meaningful cultural beliefs, practices, and views in another individual or population.
• Promotes healthy collaboration and improved outcomes.
• Cultural humility goes beyond cultural competence by breaking-down existing power structures and creating an interpersonal stance of understanding.
• Foundational constructs of cultural humility translated into the research and clinical settings has anecdotally had a positive impact on the work being done in Indian Country.

(Burbank-Allison, 2019)
Indigenous People of the U.S.

- 573 federally-recognized tribes and 63 state recognized tribes, and many others that have no designation

- Each tribe has their own unique language, history, customs, physical attributes, culture, spiritual ways of knowing
  - 150 spoken languages/350 total in the U.S.

- 2.1% of the U.S. population are Native Americans

- ~70% live off the reservation, but travel on/off the reservation frequently

- Over 160 urban/rural health facilities

- *Tribal sovereignty* ensures that any decisions about the tribes regarding their property and citizens are made with their participation and consent

(IHS, 2019); (Koyfman, 2017); (NCAI, 2020)
COVID-19

• Unique implications of the pandemic in Native communities and preparing for the long-term effects from the pandemic

• In 2009, American Indians and Alaska Natives died from H1N1 at four times the rates of all other racial and ethnic groups combined.

(Groom, 2009)
Navajo Nation

- Call ourselves Diné, means “the People”
- 174,000 live on reservation (U.S. Census, 2010)
- Navajo Nation expands across 3 states
- Largest reservation
- 241 confirmed positive COVID-19 cases, as of April 3, 2020

(Navajo Epidemiology Center, 2020)
Response of Native communities
Navajo Nation COVID-19 Public Notice

All Navajo Tribal Parks and Points of Interest are temporarily closed.

PLEASE HELP KEEP EACH OTHER SAFE AND HEALTHY BY PRACTICING SOCIAL DISTANCING AND SELF-ISOLATION

Health Command Operations Center Hotline: (928) 671-7944
Comorbidities and living conditions put AI/AN population at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>AI/AN collectively have:</strong></th>
<th>Lower life expectancy; Higher rates of mortality</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Highest rates of Diabetes, Heart Disease, Asthma and related illnesses in the country</td>
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<td>Higher risk than others for Pneumonia, influenza, bronchitis, and hospitalization</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>AI/AN living conditions:</strong></th>
<th><strong>Median household income is $45,448</strong></th>
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<tr>
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<td>1 in 6 households on reservations are overcrowded Intergenerational families</td>
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<tr>
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<td>No running water/or electricity; Native American households are 19x as likely to lack indoor plumbing</td>
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<td>Transportation Issues - access to care; &gt; 1 hour from nearest IHS/or tribal facility</td>
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(IHS, 2019); (CDC, 2017); (OMH, 2018); (Newland, 2020)
Clinical Barriers

• Indian Health Service (IHS) provides care to 2.2 million Native Americans annually.
• IHS is consistently funded at 50% of need.
• Underfunding results in limited available services.
• Funding would have to double to match the level of care provided to federal prisoners and even higher to match benefits by Medicaid or Medicare.

(NCAI, 2016)
Workforce Shortage

- Significant barrier in achieving improved health outcomes.
- IHS physician annual turnover rate is 46%
- Native American tribes receive automatic HRSA designation of ‘Health Professional Shortage Area’

- Challenges in recruitment and retention include:
  - Remote and rural locations
  - Lower pay
  - Lengthy hiring processes
  - Limited equipment

(NIHBI, 2015)
## Social Determinants of Health

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Poverty</th>
<th>Stable employment</th>
<th>Educational attainment and literacy</th>
<th>Safe housing</th>
<th>Access to healthy food</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quality healthcare</td>
<td>Community infrastructure, such as safe roads and drinking water</td>
<td>Environmental health</td>
<td>Self-determination</td>
<td>Access to traditional land</td>
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<tr>
<td>Historical trauma</td>
<td>Racism</td>
<td>Culture</td>
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Principles of kinship create barrier for social distancing
Education for Navajo communities in response to COVID-19

Education on infection control measures:

- Precautions translated for Navajo community (CDC video)
  - Knowledge in hygiene practices (English to Native language)
  - Knowledge in symptoms of COVID-19 (English to Native language)

- Marketing
  - Radio – Navajo KTNN
  - Social Media
  - Newspaper, Clinic

- Consideration for the Social Determinants of Health

(NODH, 2020); (OMH, 2018)

Long-term effects of school closures
School closings

• Numerous issues:
  • Access to internet/phones in rural areas
  • Location
  • Food insecurity
  • Other family stressors

• Outcomes:
  • Students fall behind?
  • Students don’t learn as much?
  • Academic achievement will drop?
Do not refer to this period as students experiencing learning loss. Everyone is learning. This is the time to deconstruct our understanding of what learning is and what type of learning is privileged.

@DECOLONIZELITERACY
It’s a time for language learning.

Hiish’i
It’s a time for exploring how young Indigenous children learn.
It’s a time for reconnecting with the earth.
It’s a time for kinship.
It’s a time for self-identity.
Social consequences?
Recommendations
Practice cultural practices:
- Practice ceremonial methods
- Practice praying
Balance = Hozho
COVID-19 Relief Bill

IHS financial support
= $1.032 billion
Preventative efforts from clinical and public health: Partnerships and collaboration
Multidisciplinary research teams – clinical, public health, and areas of bench research
Cultural humility and knowledge embedded into ways of life
Call to action
“Everyone has a role in ensuring social justice and health equity.”
(D. Warne, 2015)
Resources

• Indian Health Service, https://www.ihs.gov/coronavirus/
• Center for American Indian Health, http://caih.jhu.edu/news/covid19
• Protect the Sacred, Native campaign https://www.facebook.com/protectthesacrednow
• Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, www.CDC.gov/coronavirus
Questions? Feel free to contact us:

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Indian Health Service (2019, October). *Indian Health Disparities*. https://www.ihs.gov/newsroom/factsheets/disparities/


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