

Suicide Prevention in Native Populations: A Cultural Introduction

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Funding and Disclaimer



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Disclosures

No financial relationships or conflicts of interest to report.

About SPRC

The Suicide Prevention Resource Center (SPRC) is the only federally funded resource center devoted to advancing the implementation of the *National Strategy for Suicide Prevention*. SPRC is supported through a grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).

SPRC builds capacity and infrastructure for effective suicide prevention through consultation, training, and resources for state, tribal, health/behavioral health, and community systems; professionals and professional education programs; and national public and private partners and stakeholders.



CME Credit

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This activity has been planned and implemented in accordance with the accreditation requirements and policies of the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education. The APA is accredited by the ACCME to provide continuing medical education for physicians.

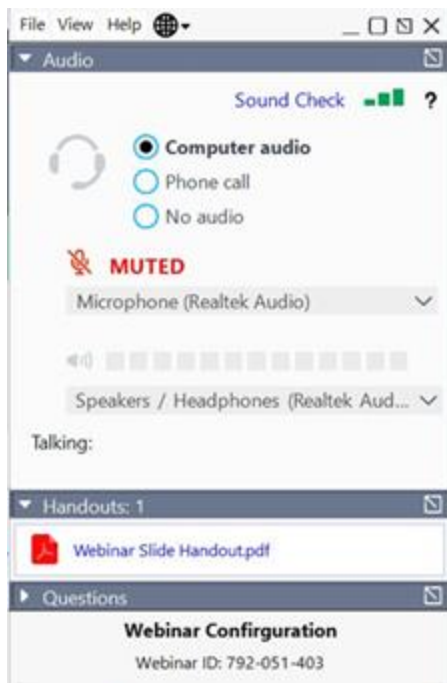
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How to Download Handouts

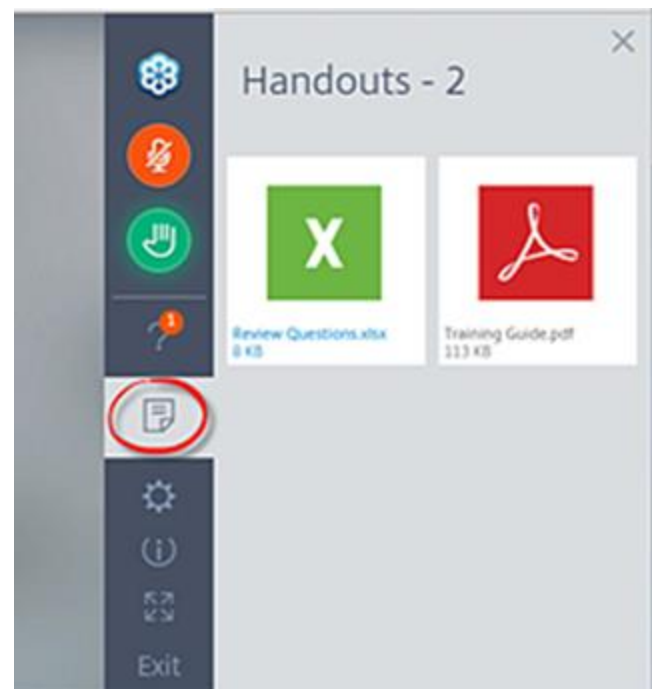
Desktop

Use the “Handouts” area of the attendee control panel.



Instant Join Viewer

Click the “Page” symbol to display the “Handouts” area.



How to Participate in Q&A

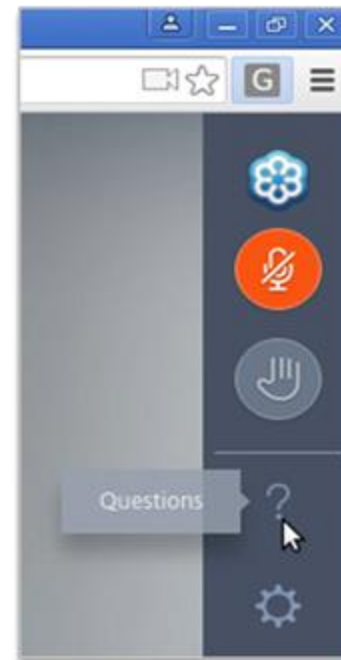
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Use the “Questions” area of the attendee control panel.



Instant Join Viewer

Click the “?” symbol to display the “Questions” area.



Suicide Prevention in Native Populations: **A Cultural Introduction**

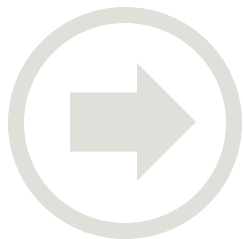
Land Acknowledgement

We acknowledge that the land that now makes up the United States of America was the traditional home, hunting ground, trade exchange point, and migration route of more than 574 American Indian and Alaska Native federally recognized tribes and many more tribal nations that are not federally recognized or no longer exist.

We recognize the cruel legacy of slavery and colonialism in our nation and acknowledge the people whose labor was exploited for generations to help establish the economy of the United States.

We honor indigenous, enslaved, and immigrant peoples' resilience, labor, and stewardship of the land and commit to creating a future founded on respect, justice, and inclusion for all people as we work to heal the deepest generational wounds.

Overview

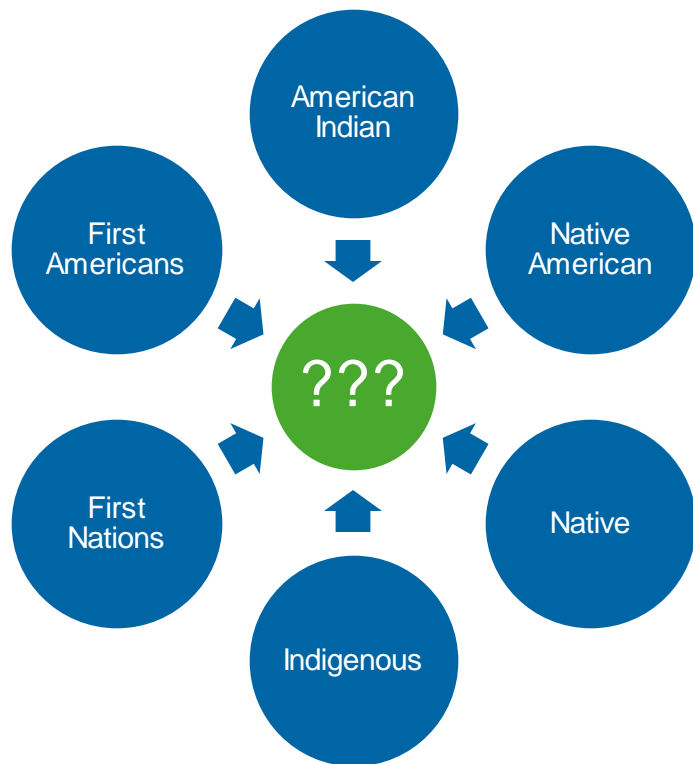


- Common terms and definitions
- Brief history of U.S./tribal relations
- Tips for working with tribal populations



Common Terms and Definitions

What is the right term to use?



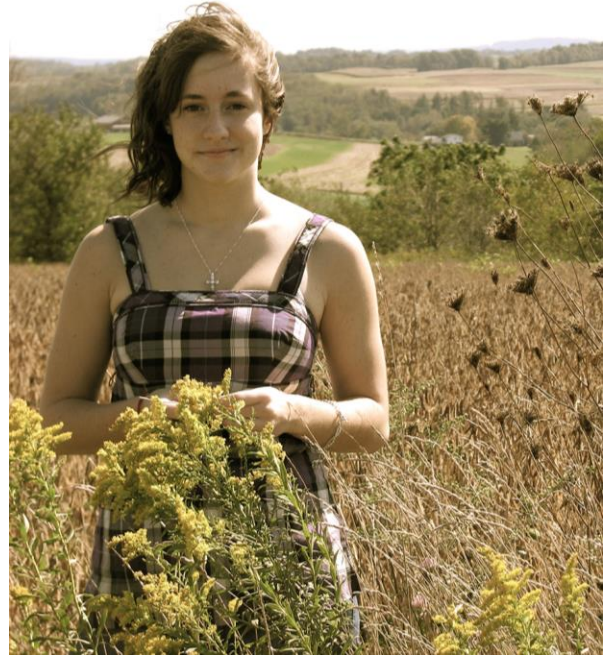
There are several frequently used terms, and it can be difficult to know which is best to use.

Helpful Tips:

- If possible (and appropriate), use the name of a specific tribe.
 - Example: “They are Yurok.”
- When in doubt, just ask.

What is a federally recognized tribe?

A **federally recognized tribe** is an American Indian or Alaska Native tribal entity that is recognized as having a government-to-government relationship with the United States, with the responsibilities, powers, limitations, and obligations attached to that designation, and is eligible for funding and services from the Bureau of Indian Affairs.



Source: Bureau of Indian Affairs, 2022

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What is a federally recognized tribe? Cont'd

Furthermore, federally recognized tribes are recognized as possessing certain inherent rights of self-government (i.e., tribal sovereignty) and are entitled to receive certain federal benefits, services, and protections because of their special relationship with the United States. At present, there are 574 federally recognized American Indian and Alaska Native tribes and villages.

574

Source: Bureau of Indian Affairs, 2022

www.sprc.org

Who are American Indian/Alaska Natives?

Tribal citizenship for each federally recognized tribe is determined by specifications in their unique treaty with the U.S. government, and is commonly based on:

- Blood quantum limits
- Established descentance
- Can only be an enrolled citizen of one tribe, even if descended from multiple

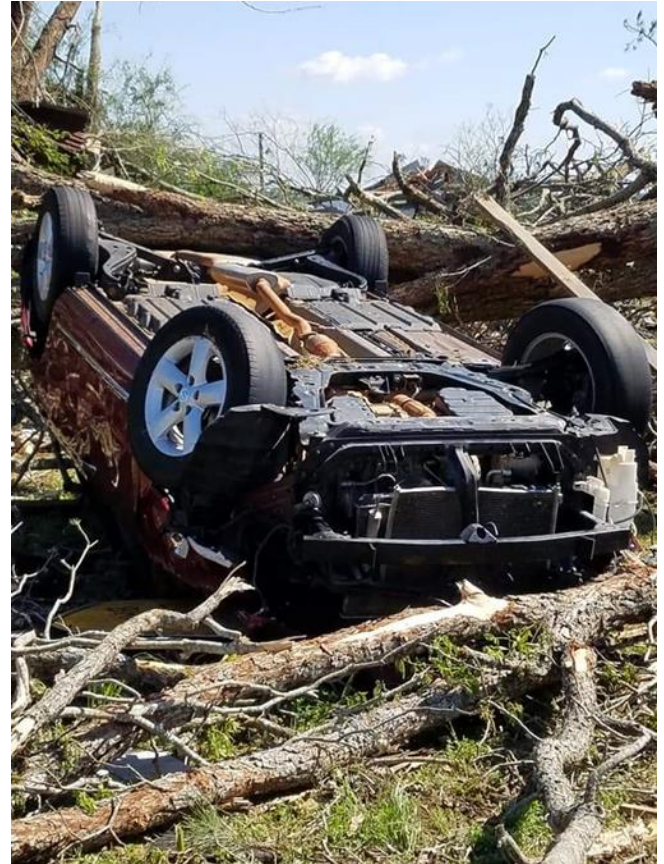
It's Complex

- Tribal community members are not always tribal citizens.
- Tribal citizens do not always belong to a tribal community.
- Being “Native” can be a cultural, political, and/or racial identity.



Brief History of the Relationship Between the United States and Tribes





You cannot have trauma-informed
suicide prevention or mental health care
without justice . . .

Justice

. . . and for the peoples indigenous to the North American
continent, there has never been justice.

**“ . . . the only good
Indians are the dead
Indians . . . ”**

Source: Project Gutenberg, 2022

“I don’t go so far as to think that the only good Indians are the dead Indians, but I believe 9 out of every 10 are, and I shouldn’t like to inquire too closely into the case of the 10th.”

Theodore Roosevelt, 1886

Source: Project Gutenberg, 2022

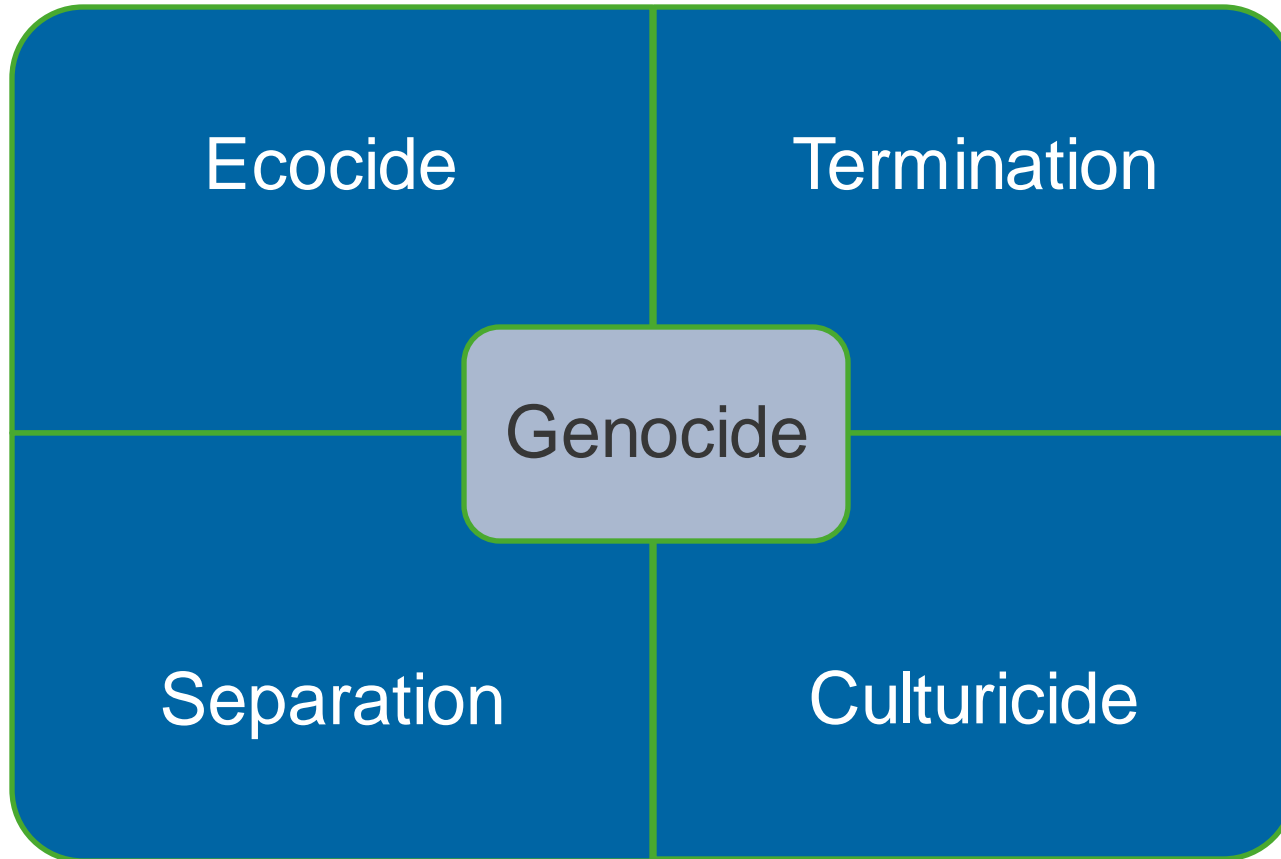
Kill the Indian, Save the Man



The Goal of Residential School

"We instil in them a pronounced distaste for the native life so that they will be humiliated when reminded of their origin. When they graduate from our institutions, the children have lost everything Native except their blood."

- Bishop ^(St.) Vital Grandin, 1875



Important Dates in U.S. Native Oppression

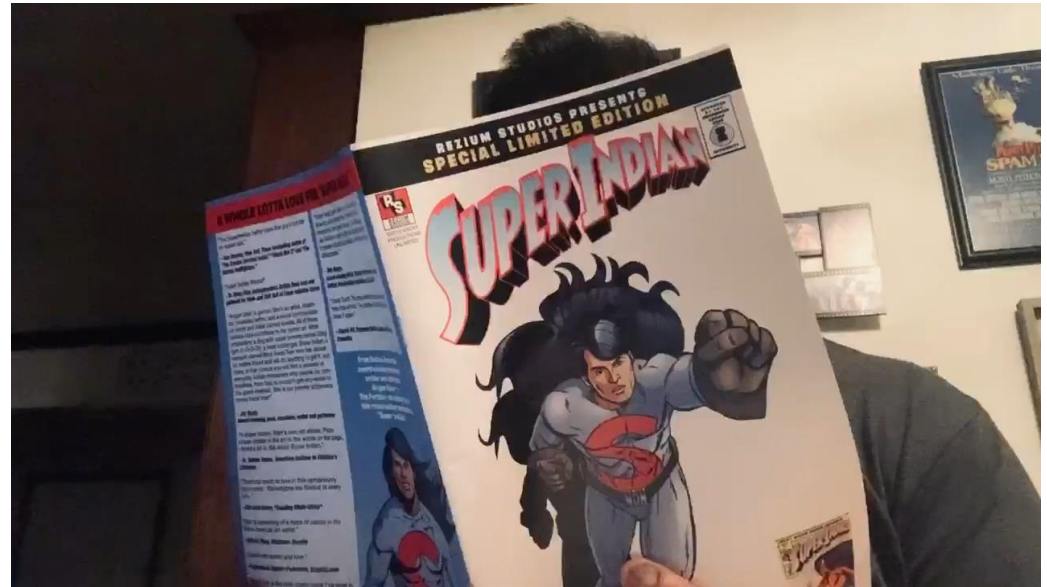
- 1776 – Declaration of Independence
- 1830 – Indian Removal Act
- 1830 – “Indian Territory” created
- 1860 – Boarding school era begins
- 1884 – “Pagan” ceremonies banned
- 1887 – Dawes Act
- 1892 – Prison or death for advocating Indian beliefs, dancing, or performing ceremonies
- 1902 – Ban on indigenous hairstyles



**This is getting heavy:
Let's add some music!**

Indian Relocation Act of 1956

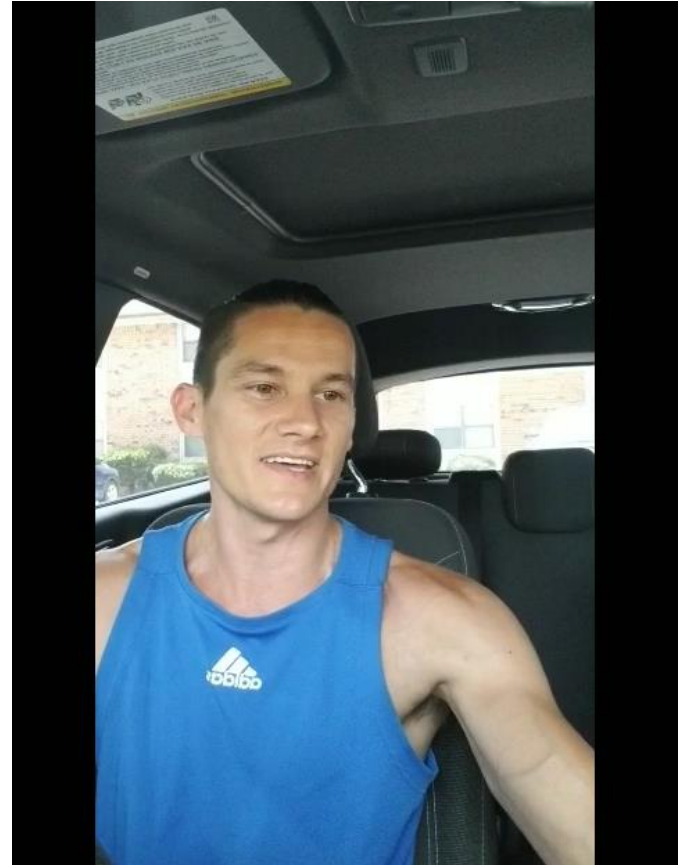
Today, up to 70% of tribal citizens live in urban areas, and 78% do not live on tribal reservation lands.



Pictured: Tommy Cummings

Family Planning Services and Population Research Act of 1970

- Forced sterilization of Native women and other women of color.
- Up to 25% of Native women of childbearing age were sterilized.
- Ended in 1976.



Pictured: Austin Greer



Pictured: Tabitha Littlefield (*My beautiful niece!*)

1978

- American Indian Religious Freedoms Act
- Indian Child Welfare Act



Pictured: Angelina Villegas-Cummings

1990

Native American Graves and Repatriation Act



Pictured: Kristen Ellis

Dakota Access Pipeline Protests

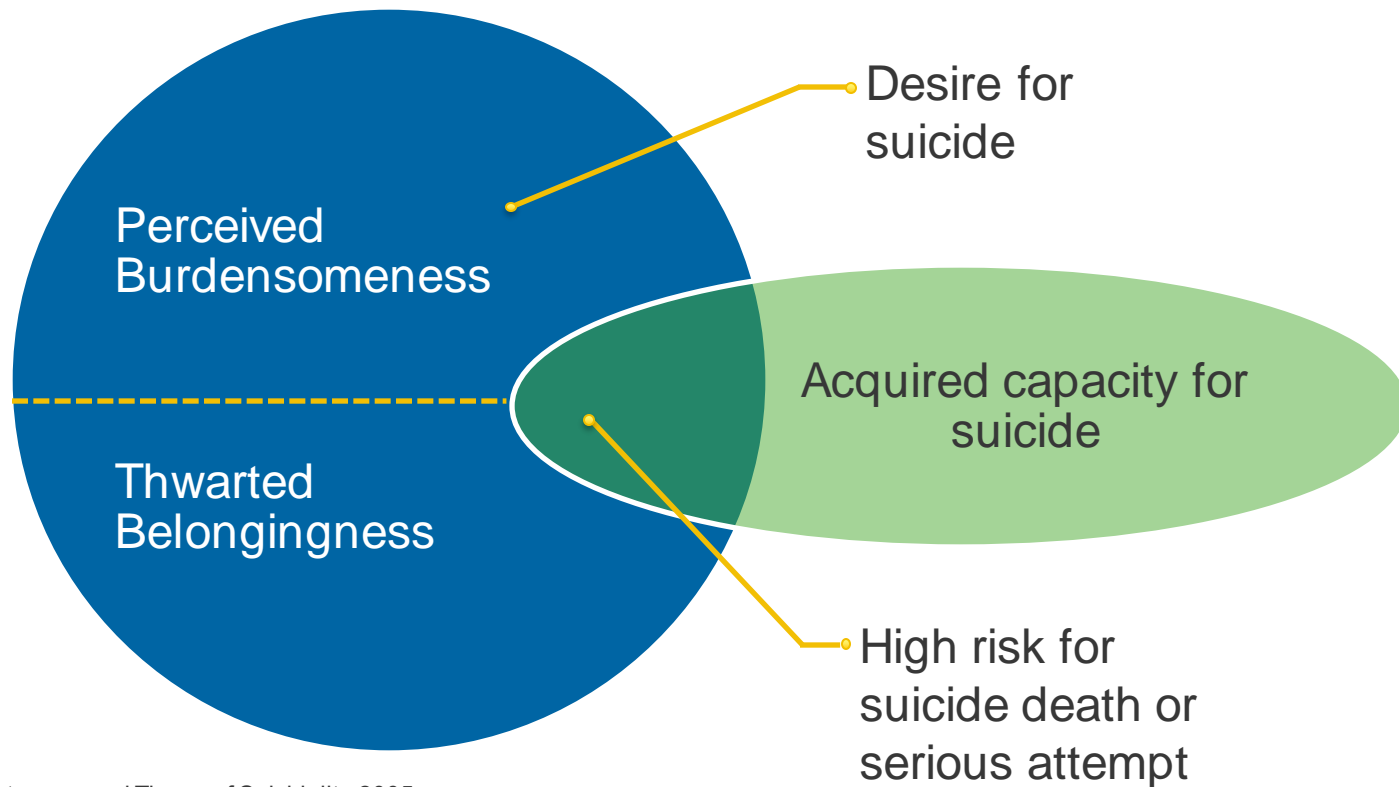
April 2016 – February 2017



Pictured: Betsey Grace Waller

In 2020, the Bureau of Indian Affairs attempted to revoke the reservation status of the 312 acres in Cape Cod occupied by the Mashpee Wampanoag Indians for 12,000 years.

What Causes Suicide?



Source: Joiner's Interpersonal Theory of Suicidality, 2005

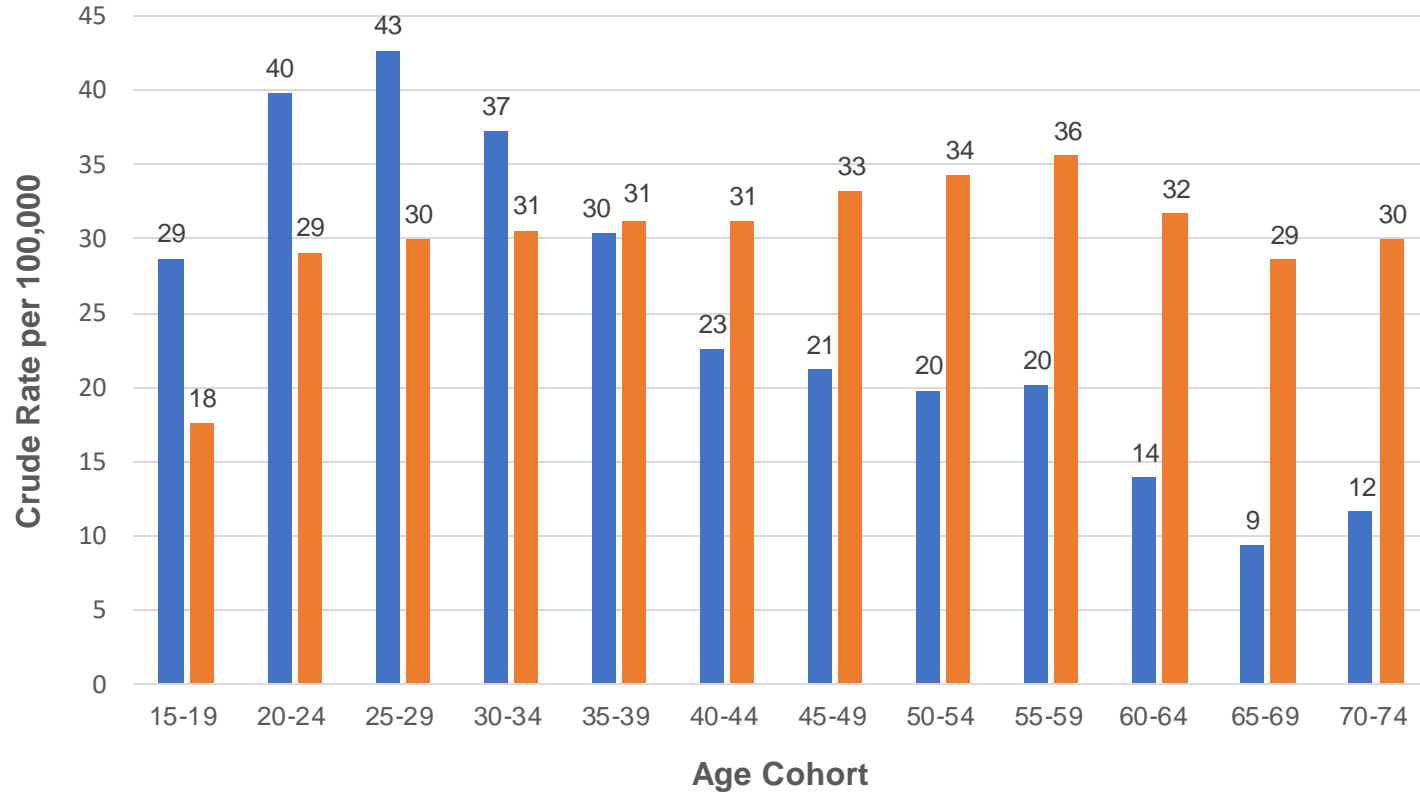


Artist: Steven Paul Judd (Kiowa/Choctaw)

Big (Not So Surprising) News

Killing the Indian
Actually DOES Kill the
Man

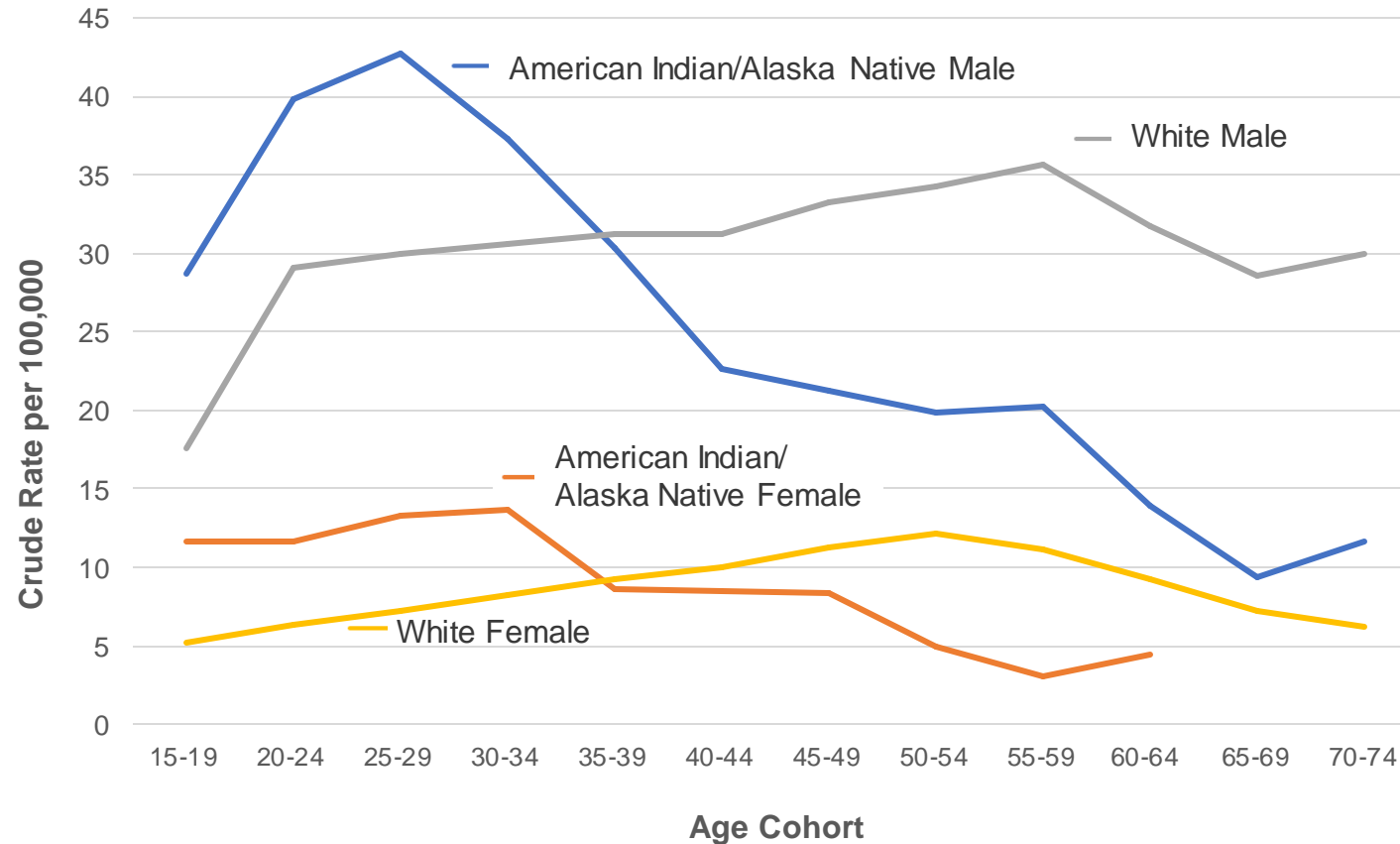
Male Suicide Rates by Race/Ethnicity and Age



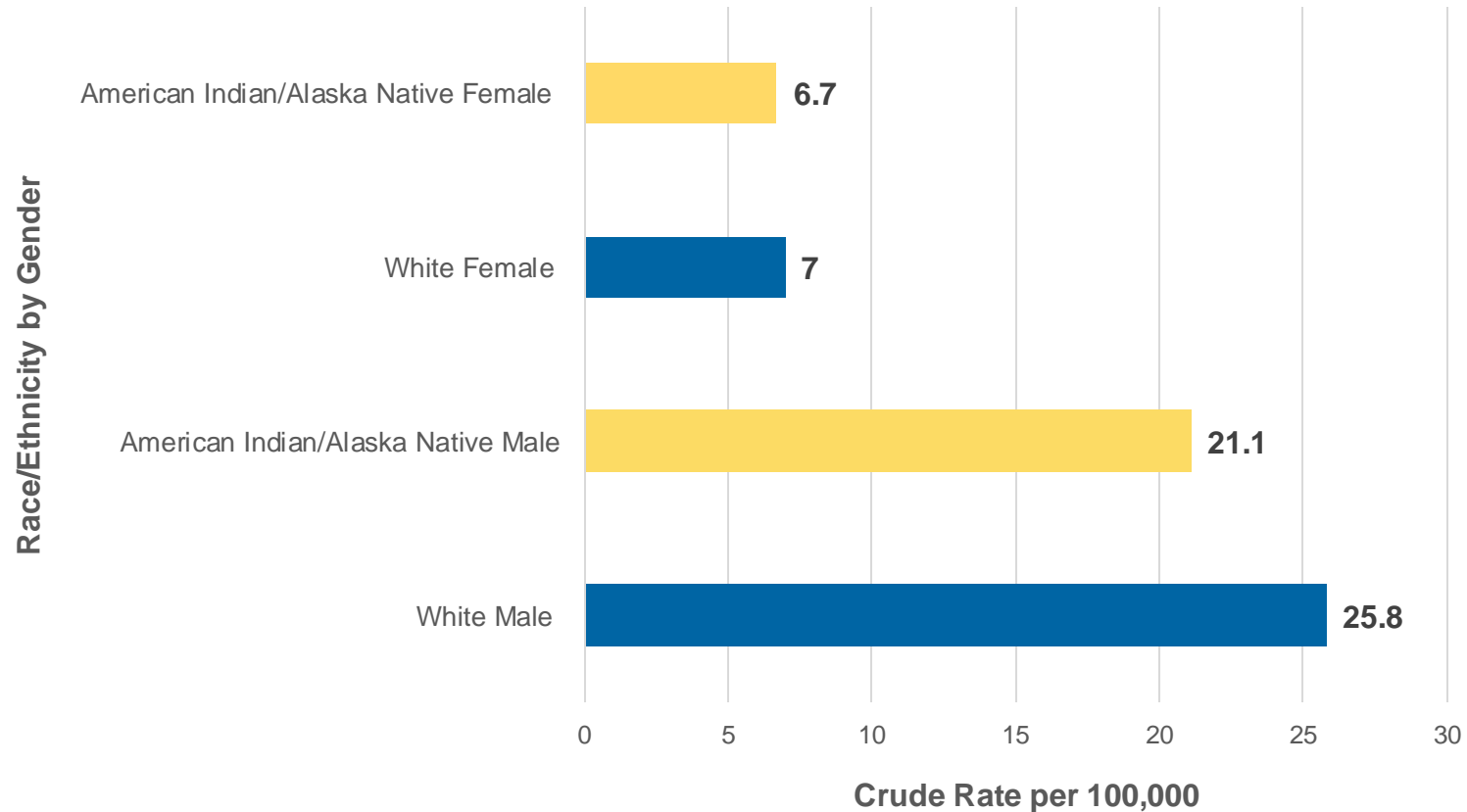
Source: Centers for Disease Control
and Prevention, 2021

■ American Indian/Alaska Native Male ■ White Male

Suicide Rates by Race/Ethnicity, Age, and Gender



Suicide Rates by Race/Ethnicity and Gender



Question the Stereotypes

From 2009 to 2014, among American Indian/Alaska Native people living in urban areas, 40% reported using alcohol in the past month, which is significantly lower than the percentage of non-Hispanic White people (53%).

Source: Urban Indian Health Institute, 2022

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It's Time to Tell a Different Story

The difference between a tragic tale and an inspiring story is how it is told.



Artist: Steven Paul Judd (Choctaw/Kiowa)

Our Cultures Continue to Evolve



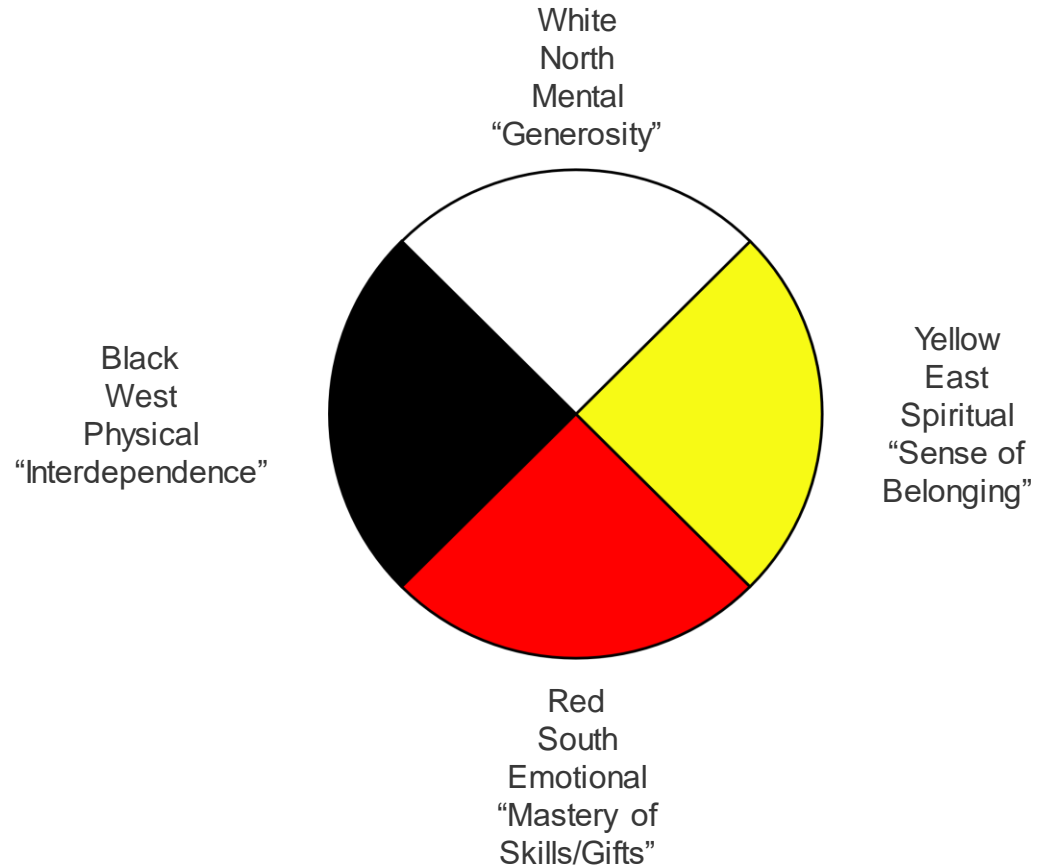
Cultural Strengths

- Extended family/kinship ties
- Wellness as balance, not just the absence of illness
- Shared sense of collective community responsibility
- Physical resources (food, plant, animal, water)
- Indigenous knowledge/wisdom
- Survival skills and resiliency in face of multiple challenges
- Retention and reclamation of traditional language and cultural practices
- Ability to walk in two worlds
- Community pride



Youth Personal Balance Tool

- Self-assessment tool
- Developed by the Fresno American Indian Health Project
- Grounded in the Medicine Wheel, a framework and theoretical orientation for teaching wellness in many tribal communities
- Strengths-based, holistic, and youth-friendly



Source: Barraza, R. & Bartgis, J., 2016

Selected Items from the Youth Personal Balance Tool

- I take responsibility for my mistakes and actions.
- I feel connected to my family.
- Each day I do something positive that I enjoy. I'm usually happy.
- I do things in my life just to help others (such as being there for someone in a tough time, volunteering, or helping elders).
- I can usually control my reactions and emotions so that I don't do anything I will later regret.
- I make an effort to learn something new every day.
- I'm not afraid to step up to be a leader, role model, or mentor in my community.
- I take care of my body (such as exercising, watching my diet, and/or choosing to be drug free).

Source: Barraza, R. & Bartgis, J., 2016



Helpful Tips for Cultivating Collaborative Relationships with Tribal Members

“Can you tell me more about that?”

Open-ended questions can help eliminate and overcome language barriers.


- American Indians/Alaska Natives can often speak about emotions indirectly or vaguely.
 - “I felt some kind of way when that happened.”
 - “He was bothering me.”
- Body language can have different meanings.
 - Eye contact.
 - “Stoic”/flat affect.

Respect Cultural Norms

Speaking about suicide without saying the word suicide is sometimes needed.

- For some tribes, there is no word for suicide.
- For some tribes, it is taboo to use the word suicide.
- For some tribes, it is taboo to say the names of those who died by suicide or other causes.

Follow their lead and reflect their language for effective communication.



Cultural Knowledge:
The **Chickasaw** word for
suicide is **illebi**

Assess Affiliation, not Acculturation

Some examples of affiliation:

- High tribal affiliation with strong tribal identity and sense of belonging to tribal communities
- Little or no tribal affiliation with strong non-tribal ethnic identity (Hispanic, Black, Italian, etc.)
- Little or no tribal affiliation with strong cultural identity not tied to race/ethnicity (religious faith, sports, location, etc.)
- Little or no tribal affiliation with strong desire for tribal identity and belonging



Source: Indian Country Child Trauma Center, 2022

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Appreciate the Diversity Among Cultures

- 574 federally recognized tribes, each with unique traditions, beliefs, and practices
 - Origin stories
 - Iconic imagery
 - Family structure
 - And more!
- Extensive diversity among members of the same tribe
- There is no “one size fits all” cultural practices among tribal populations
- Honor every individual experience



Source: Bureau of Indian Affairs, 2022



We Are Extraordinary Survivors

Q&A

How To Claim Credit

Simply follow the instructions below. Email LearningCenter@psych.org with any questions.

1. Attend the virtual event.
2. Submit the evaluation.
3. Select the CLAIM CREDITS tab.
4. Choose the number of credits from the dropdown menu.
5. Click the CLAIM button.



Claimed certificates are accessible in My Courses > My Completed Activities

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Thank you!

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