

Childhood Trauma Series in Indian Country

7-Part Series

Presenter

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DS BigFoot, 2013



American Indian/Alaskan Native National Statistics

- Approximately 4.1 million self-identified AI/AN in the 2010 Census
- 38% of the AI/AN pop. is under the age of 18; 9% of the population is under the age of 5. with AI/AN child population at 1.1% of total child population

American Indian/Alaskan Native National Statistics

- Of single-mother homes, 50% live below poverty level
- Of single-father homes, 32.8% live below poverty level
- Of 2-parent homes, 18.5% live below poverty level

Service Delivery System in Indian Country

- Complex and inconsistent set of tribal, federal, state, local, and community-based policies and services
 - Indian Health Service
 - Bureau of Indian Affairs
 - Department of Veterans Affairs
 - Other programs providing services are the DOJ – Office for Victims of Crime and the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency
 - Tribal health programs, urban Indian health programs, and state and local service agencies and schools, including non-profit, and/or religious, and traditional healing resources

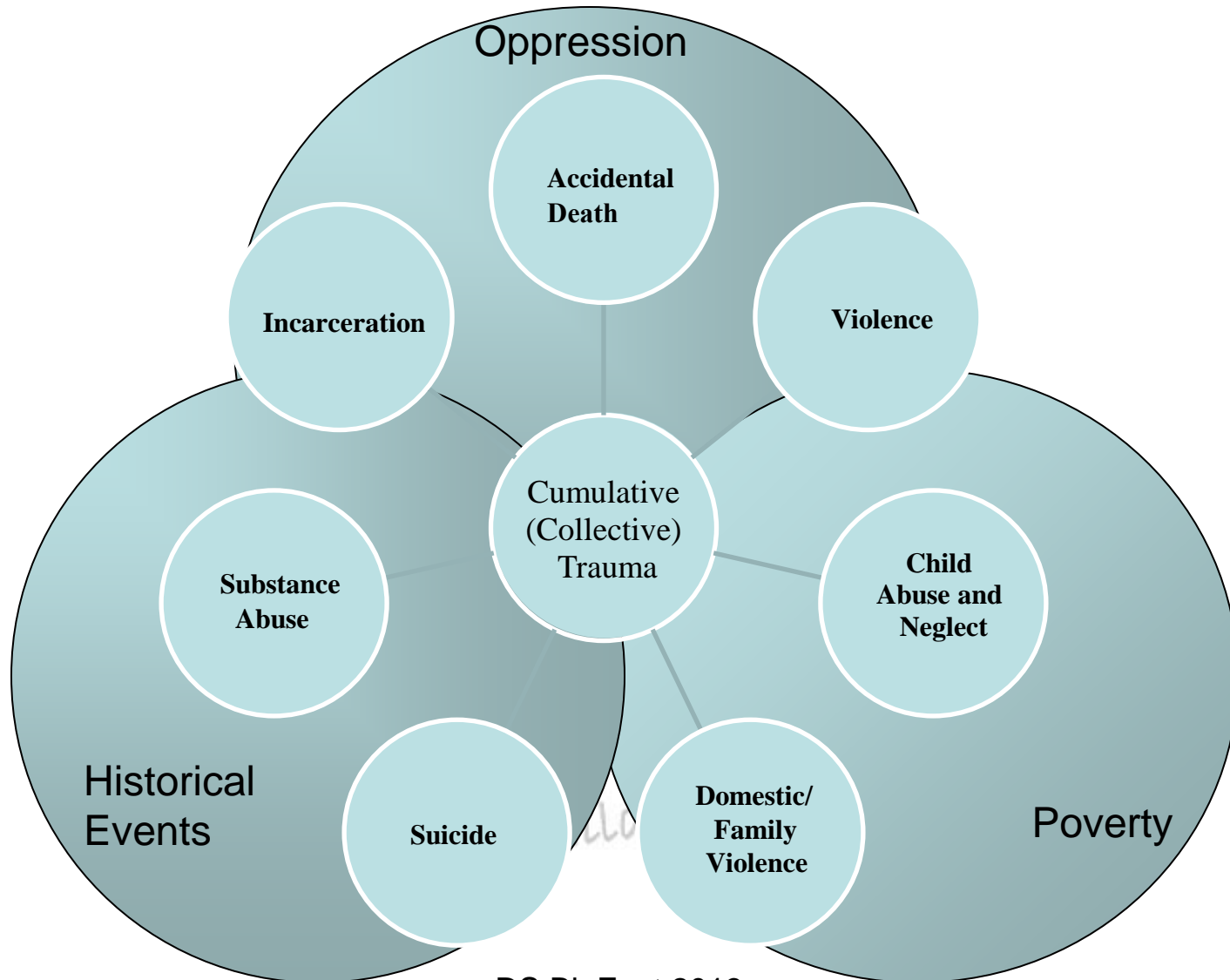
Access and Mental Health Services

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- Report lists problems in service utilization patterns that include AI/AN children as being more likely to:
 - 1) receive treatment through the juvenile justice system and in-patient facilities than non-Indian children;
 - 2) encounter a system understaffed by specialized children's mental health professionals, and
 - 3) encounter systems with a consistent lack of attention to established standards of care for the population

TRAUMA

- Any physical damage to the body caused by violence or accident such as a fracture, open wound, etc.
- An emotional wound or shock producing fear and panic resulting in short term imbalance but may often have long-lasting effects that impairs normal functioning.
- Trauma is a common occurrence
- Trauma exposure has varying effects

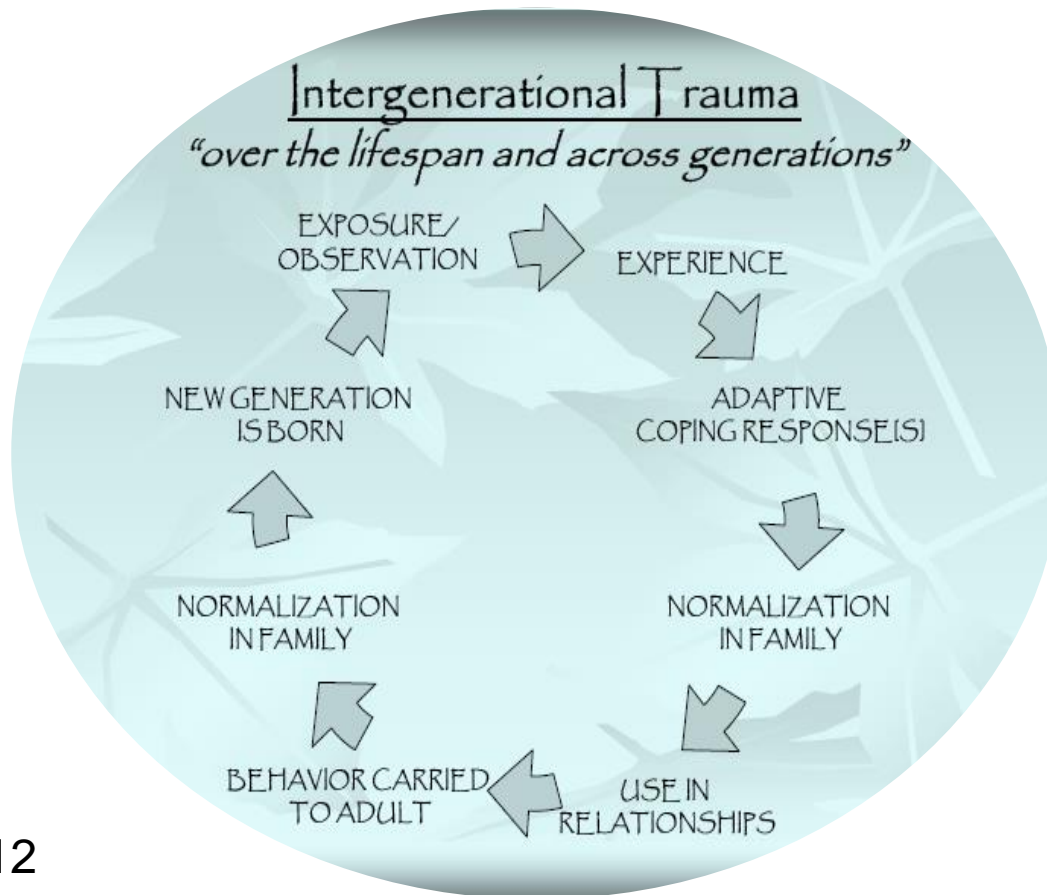
Trauma in Indian Country



Trauma

- Cultural trauma:
 - is an attack on the fabric of a society, affecting the essence of the community and its members
- Historical trauma:
 - cumulative exposure of traumatic events that affect an individual and continues to affect subsequent generations
- Intergenerational trauma:
 - occurs when trauma is not resolved, subsequently internalized, and passed from one generation to the next
- Present trauma:
 - What vulnerability youth are experiencing on a daily basis

Intergenerational Trauma



G. Packard, 2012

How is Trauma Experienced in Indian Country

- As a single event (car accident, death, natural or man-made disasters)
- As a prolonged experience (life threatening, chronic illness)
- As a cumulative effect (interpersonal violence)
- As a historical event with prolonged impact (relocation, war, disasters)
- As a personal event that continues its impact over several generations (war, boarding school)

Mental Health Disorders and Trauma

- Higher rates of exposure to traumatic events coupled with the over-arching cultural, historical, and intergenerational traumas make this population more vulnerable to PTSD
- Rates of substance abuse disorders and other mental health disorders, particularly depression, are also elevated (e.g., Beals, et al, 2001).

Youth, Violence, and Ethnicity

- American Indian and Alaska Native racial or ethnic status was associated with an almost four-fold increase in multiple victimization likelihood.
- American Indian and Alaska Native communities has suggested that girls are at higher risk for child maltreatment than boys.
- American Indian and Alaska Native families had the highest re-referral rates for sexual abuse, physical abuse, and neglect relative to other ethnic categories.

Incarcerated American Indian Youth

- AI Youth comprise 0.9% of the national youth population (Coalition for Juvenile Justice, 2004)
- In 1994, 60% of incarcerated young offenders under federal jurisdiction were AI (Coalition for Juvenile Justice, 2004)

Developmental Disabilities and Academic Achievement

- Fetal alcohol spectrum disorders among AI/AN population indicate some of the highest rates (1.5 to 2.5 per 1,000 live births)
- Highest dropout rate of any racial or ethnic group (36%) as well as the lowest high school completion and college attendance rates of any minority group (Clark & Witko, 2006)

Suicide in the US Population

- Subjects with a history of any type of maltreatment were 3 x more likely to become depressed or suicidal than those with no maltreatment history.



Domestic Violence in Indian Country

- AI/AN women report more domestic violence than men or women from any other race (CDC 2004)
- One study found AI/AN women were twice as likely to be abused (physically or sexually) by a partner than the average woman (CDC 2004)
- Risk is greater for AI women who live in very poor socioeconomic conditions

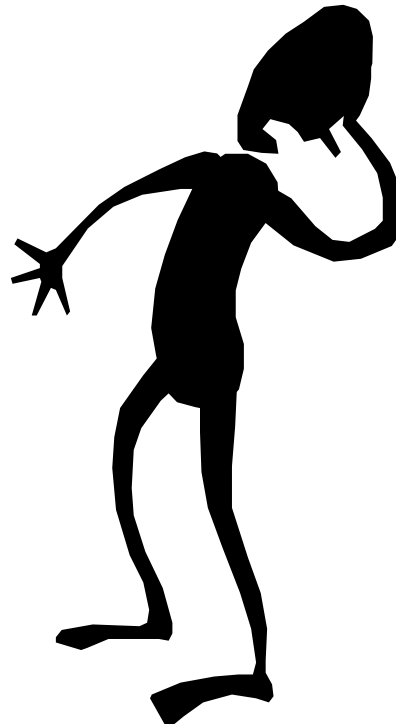


Factors that Affect Children's Responses to Violence

- Child's immediacy to the violence
- Age of child at time of exposure
- Availability of adults to emotionally protect the child
- Child's disposition
- Severity and continual nature of the violence

Reactions to Witnessing Violence Over Time

- Yelling
- Hiding
- Stuttering
- Shuddering
- Irritability
- Depression



Children's Responses to Violence

- Anger
- Guilt, helplessness
- Sense of responsibility for the violence
- Extreme fright
- Fear of death or loss of parent
- See the world as erratic, unfriendly, and threatening

Children's Responses to Trauma

- Withdrawal
- Mistrust, Fearful
- Social Anxiety
- Poor Interpersonal Boundaries (too rigid or too loose)
- Oppositionality, Delinquency
- Increased Risk-Taking

Common Parental Issues in Child Traumatization

- Self-blame and guilt
- Inappropriate blame toward child
- Confusion about how to respond
- Underestimate trauma impact on child and family relations
- Reminder of own trauma history

Fear and Trauma

What should a child learn about fear and trauma:

- Fear is adaptive, helpful, normal
- Three ways to respond to fear: fight, flight, freeze
- Fear experienced in 3 channels: physically, mentally, behaviorally
- Trauma reactions vary.
- Recovery is possible.

Children and Trauma

The brains of traumatized children develop as if the entire world is chaotic, unpredictable, violent, frightening, and devoid of nurturance...

Bruce Perry, M.D., Ph.D

Trauma-Informed Principles for Children in Indian Country

- Need for Safety
- Need for Supervision
- Need for Protection
- Need for Guidance
- Need for Monitoring
- Need for Teachings
- Need to know they are Connected
- Need to know they are Sacred
- Need to know they are Honored