

Integration of Historical Trauma with Evidence Based Treatment in Urban AI/AN Communities

USET Best Practices Conference Nashville, TN~ August 15, 2019



Kerry Hawk Lessard, MAA (Descendant, Shawnee/Assiniboine) Executive Director Native American Lifelines

Our Mission

The mission of Native American Lifelines is to promote health and social resiliency within Urban American Indian communities. Native American Lifelines applies principles of trauma informed care to provide culturally centered behavioral health, dental, and outreach and referral services.

Who is an Urban Indian?

Urban Indians are tribal members or descendants who are currently living outside of federally-defined tribal lands in U.S. cities.

- government policies that forced relocation in the 1950s
- termination policies that forced assimilation into Non-Native culture

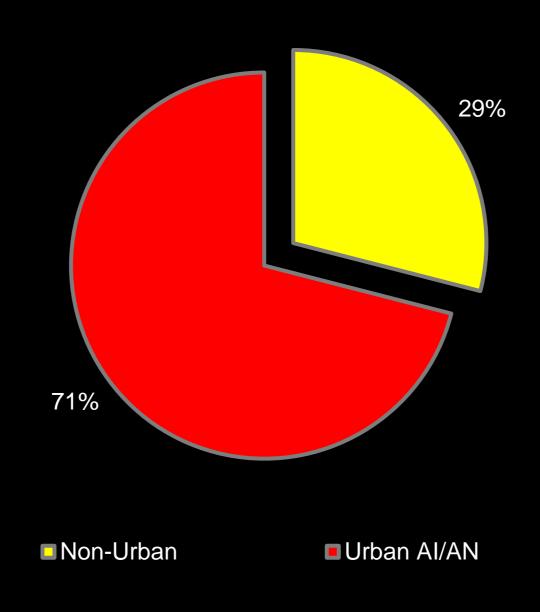
These policies have resulted in long-term health consequences for Urban Indian people.

History of Urban Indian Health Services

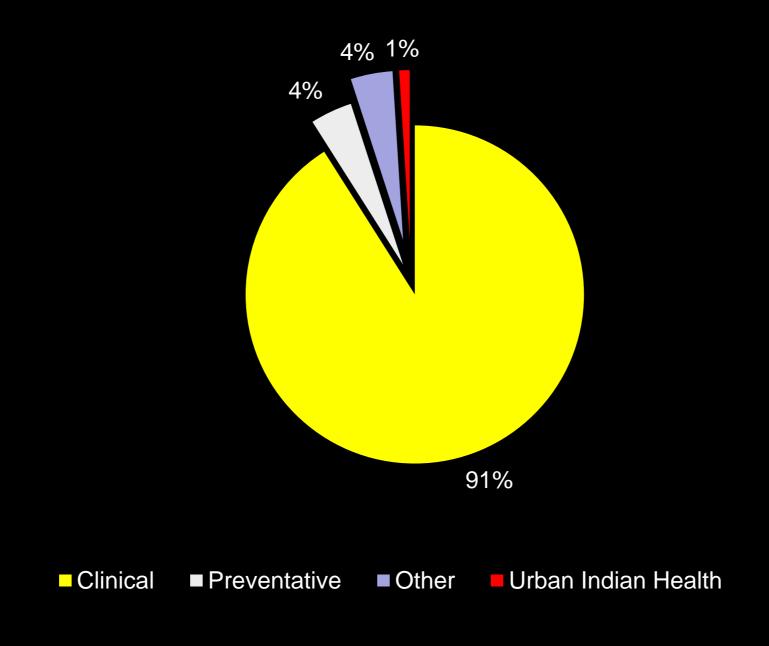
- 1950s 1960s: B.I.A. relocated over 160,000 AI/AN to selected urban centers across the country.
- late 1960s: community leaders advocate for culturally appropriate health programs for AI/AN
- 1966: pilot UIHP in Rapid City, SD
- 1973: Congressional study of unmet needs in Urban AI/AN community in Minneapolis, MN > appropriate funding under Snyder Act of 1924
- 1976: Indian Health Care Improvement Act (PL.94-437)
- Title V: direct medical services, alcohol services, mental health services, HIV services, health promotion, and disease prevention services



Location of Residence (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010)



2016 Indian Health Service Budget



Urban American Indians



- 20.3% of Urban Indians live in poverty compared with 12.7% of urban population in general
- profound health disparities (DM, cancer, cardiac disease, SA/ETOH abuse, mental distress, etc.)

American Indians in Baltimore, MD (American Community Survey, 2010-2014)

- AI/AN alone: 7,076
- •AI/AN in combination: 25,548
- 0.3% of total population
- AI/AN Under 25: 33.9%
- •AI/AN Over 65: 9.9%
- Majority tribe(s): Cherokee*,Lumbee, Piscataway

* U.S. Census Bureau (2010), By Self-Report



American Indians in Boston, MA (American Community Survey, 2010-2014)

- •AI/AN alone: 7,617
- AI/AN in combination: 253,727
- 0.2% of total population
- •AI/AN Under 25: 41.3%
- •AI/AN Over 65: 8.1%
- Majority tribe(s): Cherokee*,Wampanoag, Micmac

*U.S. Census Bureau (2010), By Self-Report



Who We Serve

- citizens of federally recognized tribes
- enrolled members of state recognized tribes
- descendants of either above group

HIV/Hepatitis C/ STIs CSAP: Johnson, et al. (2007,2008)

Risk Factors

- community disintegration
- pride, shame, & stigma
- urban lifestyle & peer influences
- socioeconomic disadvantage



Historical Trauma

- "the cumulative emotional and psychological wounding, over the lifespan and across generations, emanating from massive group trauma experiences," (Brave Heart, 2008).
- "the loss of language and culture that has left so many Aboriginal people bereft of their unique place in the world. It is these disorientations and their psychosocial correlates ... that the term [historical trauma] was intended to capture," (Gone, 2009).

"I think if I'd had stronger culture, we would've lived differently."

"We would be better if we had those values. We would be stronger as a community."

"When I was little I thought it was normal. My mom woke up with a beer. And I thought that's what you did. I didn't know. So maybe we need to show kids that they don't need to do that."

historical trauma



health demoting behavioral practices



poor somatic / BH / social outcomes

Program Philosophy Decolonial Praxis

- "the intentional, collective, and reflective selfexamination undertaken by formerly colonized peoples that results in shared remedial action" (Gone, 2009)
- retribalization: the bringing together of the tribal community for healing (Vernon & Thurman, 2009)

Program Philosophy Decolonial Praxis



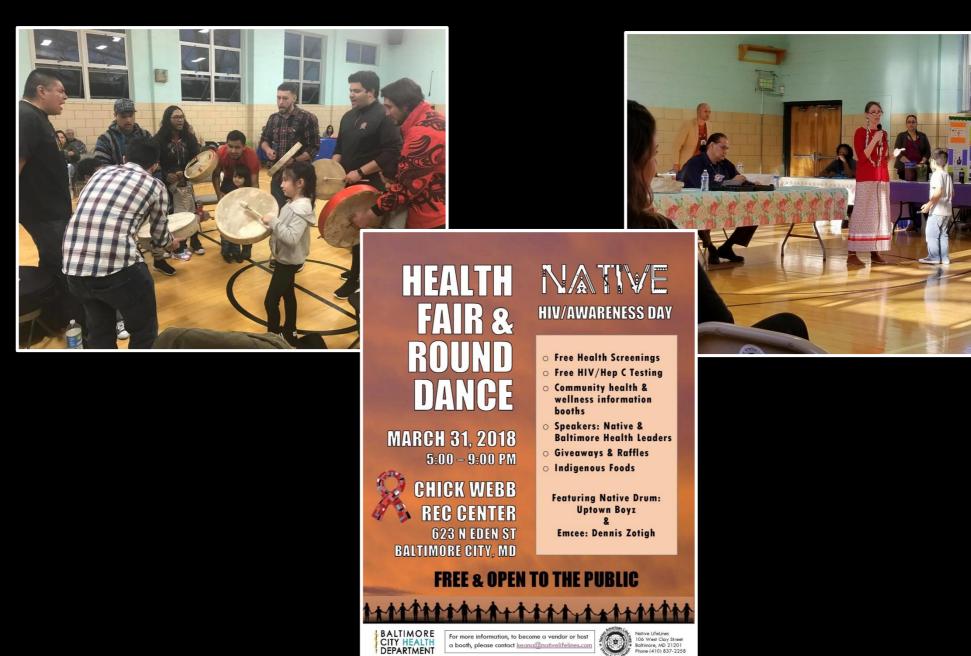
the struggle "to reclaim and regenerate one's relational place-based existence by challenging the ongoing, destructive forces of colonization."

- Jeff Corntassel

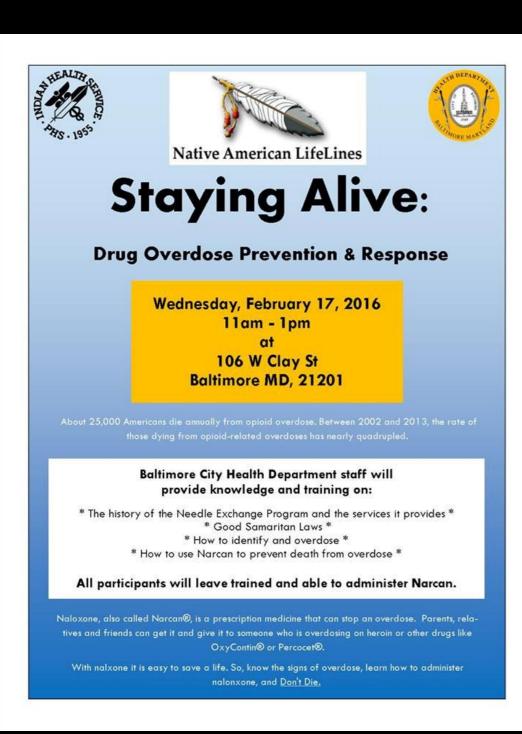
Culturally-Grounded Interventions:

- Disseminate accurate HP/DP information
- Connect community to trusted resources
- Support Native identity
- Promote community & cultural cohesion
- Increase resiliency

National Native HIV/AIDS Awareness Day



Naloxone Training / Immunization Clinics





Intimate Partner Violence / MMIWG

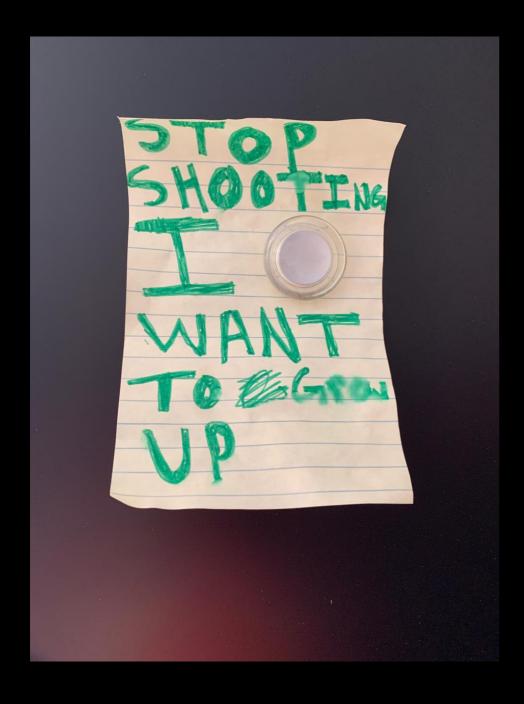


Two Spirit Support





Community Violence Prevention





Food Sovereignty / Indigenous Diets





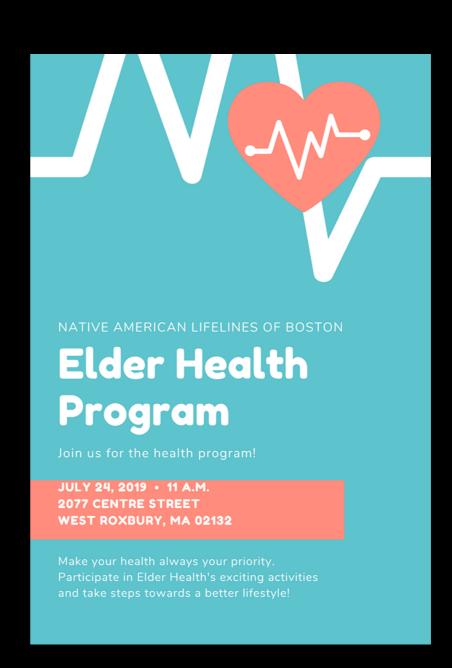
Physical Activity / Obesity Reduction



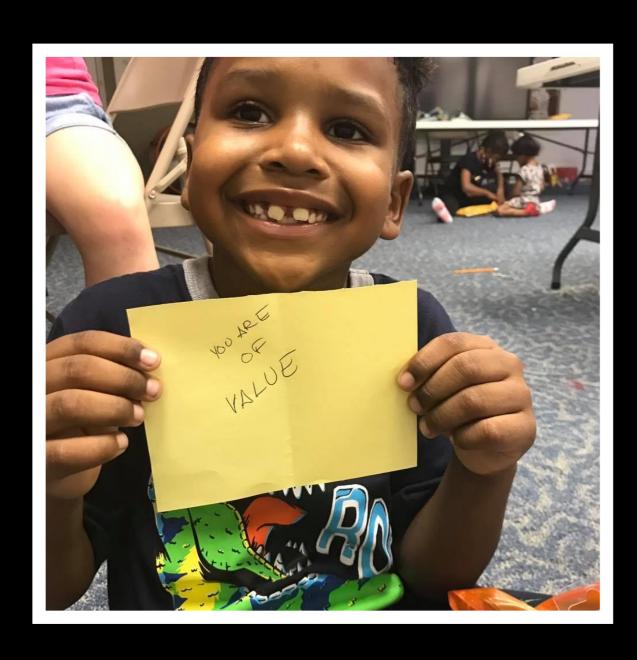


Elder Health





Youth & Families





Oral Hygiene





Boarding School Memorials







promoting healthful living

remembering our ways





promoting sobriety

strengthening indigenous identity





strengthening families

strengthening our community







Native American Lifelines

1 E. Franklin Street, Suite 200, Baltimore MD 21202

410.837.2258 x.103

kerry@nativelifelines.org