Understanding the Gift of Legacy and Lessons Learned

WABANAKI PEOPLE

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LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Designing and delivering health care services/programs requires:
  - Understanding resiliency
  - Cultural Awareness
  - Understanding the impact of Historical Trauma
  - Shared vision to address the social determinants of health
SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH

The conditions in which people are born, grow, work, live, and age, and the wider set of forces and systems shaping the conditions of daily life.
SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH

- Income and social status
- Employment and working conditions
- Education and literacy
- Childhood experiences
- Physical environments
- Social supports and coping skills
- Healthy behaviors
- Access to health services
- Biology and genetic endowment
- Gender
- Culture
- Race / Racism
- Historical Trauma*

RESILIENCY: THE CAPACITY TO RECOVER QUICKLY FROM DIFFICULTIES; TOUGHNESS.
PASSAMAQUODDY TRIBE

- Lived in this region for 12,000 years
  - 3600 Tribal Citizens with approximately 2300 living in Maine
  - One of the first to have European Contact
- Extensive socio-economic factors that directly impact our health status
  - 60% of the population is under 35 years of age
  - Average age of death is about 50 years of age.
- Maintains strong traditions that have ensured survival
  - The Passamaquoddy language is still spoken
  - Ceremonies still practiced
  - Traditional crafts

AI/AN HISTORY

Did you know...

- Native Americans did not become US Citizens until 1924. Black people were granted citizenship in 1868.
- States were not required to allow AI/AN to vote in elections until 1965, after the passage of the Voting Rights Act.
- Back when black slavery was abolished, having Native American slaves was still in practice.
- American Indians serve in the US Military in greater numbers per capita than any other ethnic group. This has continued since the Revolutionary War.
WABANAKI RESILIENCY

ECHOES OF THE PAST....

- **1000** Norsemen visit Passamaquoddy Bay and kill a Wabanaki
- **1498** Explore Cabot visits Passamaquoddy Bay and kills 3 tribal people.
- **1600** Wabanaki Population total 32,000
- **1602** France formerly plans to colonize Passamaquoddy lands
- **1694** Massachusetts Governor issues scalping proclamation
- **1700** Wabanaki Population total 10,000
- **1794** Land set aside for Passamaquoddy
- **1820** Maine becomes a State
- **1832** Maine authorizes Passamaquoddy land to be seized for right away.
- **1852** Tribal governmental structure changed to match State system
- **1883** Federal law enacted prohibiting the practices of traditional ceremonies.
- **1892** Maine Court declares the Passamaquoddy Tribe no longer exists
- **1892** Maine court rules against the Passamaquoddy regarding their right to sustenance hunt & fish.
- **1921** Federal policy issued requiring full assimilation and eradication of tribal culture
- **1932** Indian Reorganization Act issued but excludes the Passamaquoddy
- **1967** Maine Indians receive right to vote in state elections.
- **1978** American Indian Religious Freedom Act passed
MUWIN ISLAND

S. Phips, Esq.

Lieutenant-Governor and Commander in Chief, in and over His Majesty's Province of the Massachusetts Bay in New England

A PROCLAMATION.

WHEREAS the Tribe of Pawnee Indians have repeatedly in a peaceful manner offered to come to this Province with their families, and have repeatedly expressed their desire to reside here, and do no injury to any person or property.

NOW, THEREFORE, in consideration thereof, this Province is hereby declared to be open to the entire and peaceful settlement of such Indian tribes as may choose to reside therein, without any interference or molestation.

GEORGE MASON II

Governor of the Province of Massachusetts Bay in New England

[Image of Spenser Phips and early American settlers]
Historical Trauma

The echo of the past, the pain of the present, and the ravages of the future.

HISTORICAL TRAUMA

Defined as the cumulative emotional and psychological wounding, extending over an individual lifespan and across generations, caused by traumatic experiences.
IMPACT OF HISTORICAL TRAUMA

Many present-day health disparities (of Native Americans) can be traced back through epigenetics to a “colonial health deficit”, the result of colonization and its aftermath.”

Bonnie Duran
Associate Professor in the Department of Health Services
University of Washington School of Public Health; and
Director of Indigenous Health Research

EPIGENETICS

• Research shows poverty, neglect, hunger and racism can all have epigenetic effects, especially in childhood—and these are all issues that face the Native American community, with racism in particular being a pernicious problem that contributes to other social injustices.

• Starting with the “colonial health deficit,” Native American communities have been enduring generations of negative epigenetic influences, and their bodies as well as their communities are paying the price, often creating a vicious cycle.
IMPACT OF LOSS

• Subsequent generations have been left with feelings of shame, powerlessness and subordination (Brave Heart and DeBruyn, 1998)

• Losses impact service delivery and program design today.

EXAMPLE OF HISTORICAL TRAUMA: ICE STORM OF 1998

• Storm caused significant damage; causing power outages that lasted several days.
• Post-storm, emergency response planning was highlighted in the community.
• Planning and response efforts included equipment and materials needed to survive future periods without heat or electricity.
• Lack of trust and high levels of fear prevented the disbursement and use of blankets.
IMPACT OF HISTORICAL TRAUMA ON HEALTHCARE SERVICES

In 1982, Passamaquoddy Indian Township had high rates of tooth decay in both adults and children.

• Opened a Dental Clinic that was fully equipped and staffed.
• Regardless of the need and extensive outreach efforts, no-show rates remained high.
• Examination of barriers identified traumatic dental experiences within the adult population was impacting service delivery to the younger generation.
• Solutions to address dental care for the community included a change in how dental services was offered to those adults having experienced dental trauma.
• Outreach and marketing efforts were changed in order to engage young children.

THE STRUGGLES REMAIN

In 2019….

• High rates of poverty: 60% of households make <$25,000
• Life expectancy est. 63 years; average age of death is 50 years.
• IHS funded at less that 50% level of need
• High rates of chronic disease
• 65% not-employed rate for 8 month/year

Blatant Racism
Impact of different factors on risk of premature death

- Individual Behavior: 40%
- Genetics: 30%
- Social & Environmental Factors: 20%
- Healthcare: 10%


"Snowballs? I thought we were discussing coconuts."
ONE LAST STORY...

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