INCORPORATING CULTURAL PRACTICE INTO TRIBAL FAMILY SERVICE PROGRAMS

Season Brown: Pala Band of Mission Indians- Social Services Director
Traditionally, the teaching and rearing of children, treating trauma, loss, and troublesome behaviors were approached collectively within the Tribe.

These approaches promoted wellness through a relational approach of treating the person’s emotions, mind, spirit, and body to achieve healing and balance.
TRADITIONAL VALUES

• Women: Incredibly sacred and valued
• Children: Viewed as gifts from the creator
• Elders: Holders of wisdom and our best storytellers
• Land and Resources: Respect for the earth and all life
TRADITIONAL ROLES OF WOMEN

Healers: Gathered herbs to create healing medicines for those who fell sick within the Tribe

Leaders: Many Tribes were matriarchal; the women would make key decisions for the Tribe and were advisors to the men going into battle

Craftsmen: Made beautiful blankets, baskets, jewelry, weapons, and pottery

Givers of Life: Respected and considered sacred because of their ability to bear children

“A nation is not conquered until the hearts of its women are on the ground.”

-Cheyenne Proverb

EFFECTS OF COLONIZATION

Lack of Autonomy: Men were taught to view women as property; roles that were previously honored became “expected” and women were objectified

Inequality: Religion and western culture introduced the idea that women were inferior

Cultural Interference: Western education practices were given priority over traditional cultural teachings; roles, crafts and Tribal practices were changed or not passed on to future generations
TRADITIONAL
ROLES OF MEN

Hunters: Provided primary food sources for survival of Tribe; hunt prey also used for other purposes within the Tribe (furs, bone, etc.)

Warriors/Protectors: Leaders in battle, served to protect Tribal members and to expand Tribal territories

Traders: Conducted trade with other Tribes and settlers

“"When I was a boy, the Sioux owned the world. The sun rose and set on their land; they sent ten thousand men to battle. Where are the warriors today? Who slew them? Where are our lands? Who owns them?""

-Eating Bull

EFFECTS OF COLONIZATION

Lack of Autonomy: With the loss of lands, men lost the ability to hunt and provide for their Tribe

Lack of Purpose: Men were not able to serve in their traditional roles and were denied equal status to settlers in similar roles in Western culture

Loss of Respect: Men began to mirror the Western views towards women
CULTURAL PROTECTIVE FACTORS

• Those customs and traditions which are underutilized are protective factors which promote resiliency
  
  • Family connectivity
  • Sense of community
  • Bicultural competence
INCORPORATING IDEAS

- Native language
- Traditional ceremonies
- Storytelling
- Arts & Crafts

- Drumming & Singing
- Traditional medicines (sweats, herbs, etc.)
- Elder guidance
- Grounding
BREAKOUT GROUPS

• What is currently being done to incorporate cultural practices within your Tribe or agency?

• What are your ideas on what can be introduced?

• What are your barriers to this process? (financial, knowledge of practices/language, resources, etc.)
INCORPORATING IDEAS

• Storytelling through use of videos/CDs/social media tools
• Native languages used in school curriculum and social service programs
• Creating quilts for children in foster care
• Talking circles
• Honoring ceremonies, presenting traditional gifts (medicine pouches, sage, pendleton blanket)
• Naming ceremonies
RESOURCES

• Grants (SAMHSA, OES, DOI, DHHS)
• Online tools (researching programs from other Tribes, networking)
• Collaboration (other Tribes, agencies, community partners)
• Community Volunteers
• Natural Resources & Supplies (medicinal herbs, sage, gourds, fabric)
• Low or No Cost Facilities/Locations (schools, churches, community rooms, parks)
Any questions?