

Native American DV Offenders: A Proposed Treatment Manual

Paul Flack, DMFT, LMFT
2019 UADVT Annual Conference

Presenter Disclosures...

- 50-year-old straight white cisgendered male
- Biases:
 - Midwestern Christian (LDS) background
 - Benefitted from college-educated parents in middle-class family
 - Educated from "conqueror" perspective
- Not even a drop of Native American blood (Ancestry.com, 2018)
- No books to sell or profit to be had from the content of this presentation



Paradigm Shifting: Doing What Scares You

LDS Mission to Argentina

Liberal Education in Spanish
history/culture

4 years working with Latino low-
income population.

5 years DV, MH, SA treatment with
Latino Clients

6 yrs MH & SA treatment with Native
Americans/Alaska Natives

Cultural Competency: “Woke”



VS.

Cultural Humility: Waking



Psychotherapy: Cultures, Convictions, Cults and Contentions



Practitioners of psychotherapy have a history fierce loyalty to treatment models (and their figureheads)

Historical Context is Everything

- Mysticism (spirits and curses)
- Mesmerism (power of suggestion)
- Psychoanalytic Analysis
- Behaviorist
- Humanist
- Systems
- Modernist “this is the right way”
- Postmodernist “let’s find your right way”

Domestic Violence Treatment: a Tyranny of Tradition & Transference



- “Duluth Model” men’s groups is predominant model, emphasizing:
- Patriarchal attitudes cause violence
- Change sexist attitudes and beliefs
- Move toward egalitarian relationships in terms of Power and Control
- Mandated in many states
- Cottage industry of BIPP providers

(Babcock, 2015)

One Size Fits Most?

- The most methodologically-sound research suggests that these [gender-specific, psychoeducational, “batterer intervention”] programs are minimally effective in reducing domestic violence. ...A consensus has emerged, that for treatment to be effective it needs to be tailored to client needs, based on a sound assessment, in contrast to the standard “one-size-fits-all” models currently in existence. (John Hamel, 2017, Association of Domestic Violence Intervention Programs)



Evidence-Based Practice in Psychology (EBPP)

- EBPP is defined by the APA as “...the integration of the best available research with *clinical expertise in the context of patient characteristics, culture and preferences*” (2006, p. 273, italics added)

What happens when there is a scarcity of relevant treatment effectiveness research for a given population?

In the absence of evidence to base our practice on, who might have the most “clinical expertise” to draw theory from?

Perpetrator Treatment Models with Some Effectiveness Research. Are they effective?

- Feminist/Sociocultural View
 - Duluth Model

NOT REALLY

- Intergenerational Transmission
 - Family Systems, etc.

SORT OF

- Psychological Treatment, i.e., Personality Disorders, Early Trauma

PROMISING

- Substance Abuse Tx

CORRELATED



Differences in Culture Make Things Even More Complicated

“...We affirm that having a list of treatments...considered to be established in efficacy or to be “possibly efficacious,” which were actually *based on predominantly white, middle-class, English-speaking [participants]*, is of **questionable** use for ethnic minorities.

(Bernal & Scharrón-del-Río, 2001)



**There are more possibilities than
you have thought of yet.**



Domestic Violence in Native Communities

- Rosalinda Strong, a descendent of the Yakima nation, was missing for nearly a year; her remains were found in a freezer in July 2019.
- Conservative estimates indicate 84.3 percent of AI/AN women experience violence in their lifetime
- More than half of all AI/AN women have experienced physical violence by their intimate partners (almost all male)



White Eyes for the Native Guy

78% of the Native population currently live outside reservations in mainstream culture communities

Native domestic violence offenders in these communities are mandated to treatment in programs that are likely to be based on Western culture

Concepts based on Western male/female power dynamics are less likely to be internalized by Native men

Native Gender Role Foundations

- Creation stories feature benevolent, powerful divine feminine figures
 - As a life-giver, the earth is considered feminine (sky is masculine)
 - Grandmother Spider teaches the People to weave (literally & metaphorically)
 - White Buffalo Calf Woman brought seven sacred rites to save Lakota

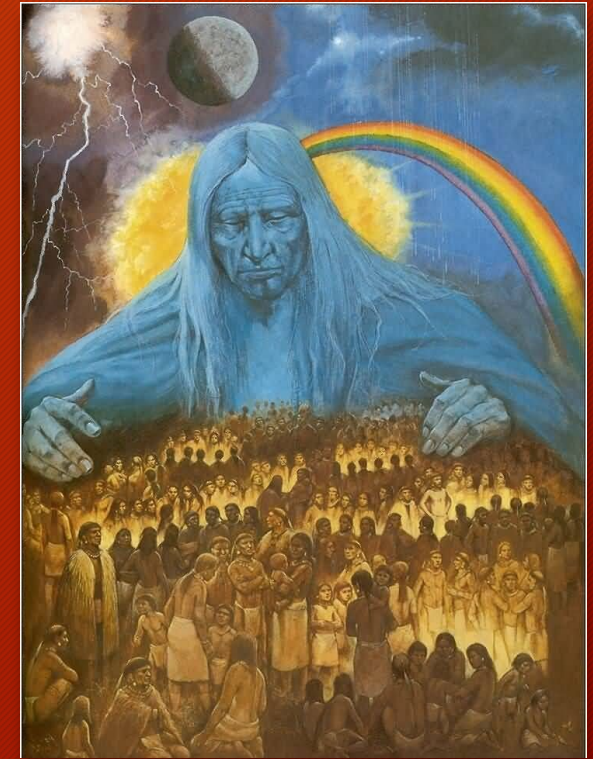


Native Gender Role Foundations

Interdependence of Gender

“Indian children were taught that Sky is Father and Earth is Mother and that the Great Mystery is neither male nor female, but aspects of both. Sky and Earth - one cannot flourish without the other. Each has a separate role, but each is equal to the other.”

White Deer of Autumn in
“The Native American Book of Life”



Native Gender Role Foundations



Wicasa Was'aka: Lakota Warrior Society

- Code: “Ensuring the good of the nation through generosity, self-sacrifice, humility, respect, compassion, hunting skills, assisting with care of children”
- Warriors who abused tribal women were disciplined by the society by removing traditional male privileges, sometimes exiled
- Painted faces in black during war because it was understood that war and violence was “not a good thing”

Heart, Elkins, Tafoya, & Spence (2012)

Sitting Bull: Lakota Chief considered to be the last of the Wicasa Was'aka

Native Gender Role Foundations

Matrilineal Societies

“Women had autonomy and sexual freedom, could obtain divorce easily, rarely experienced rape or domestic violence, worked as producers/farmers, owned their own homes and fields, possessed a cosmology that contains female supernatural figures, and had significant political and economic power. ...Cherokee women’s close association with nature, as mothers and producers, served as a basis of their power within the tribe, not as a basis of oppression. Their position as ‘the other’ led to gender equivalence, not hierarchy.”

Carolyn Ross Johnston, 2002

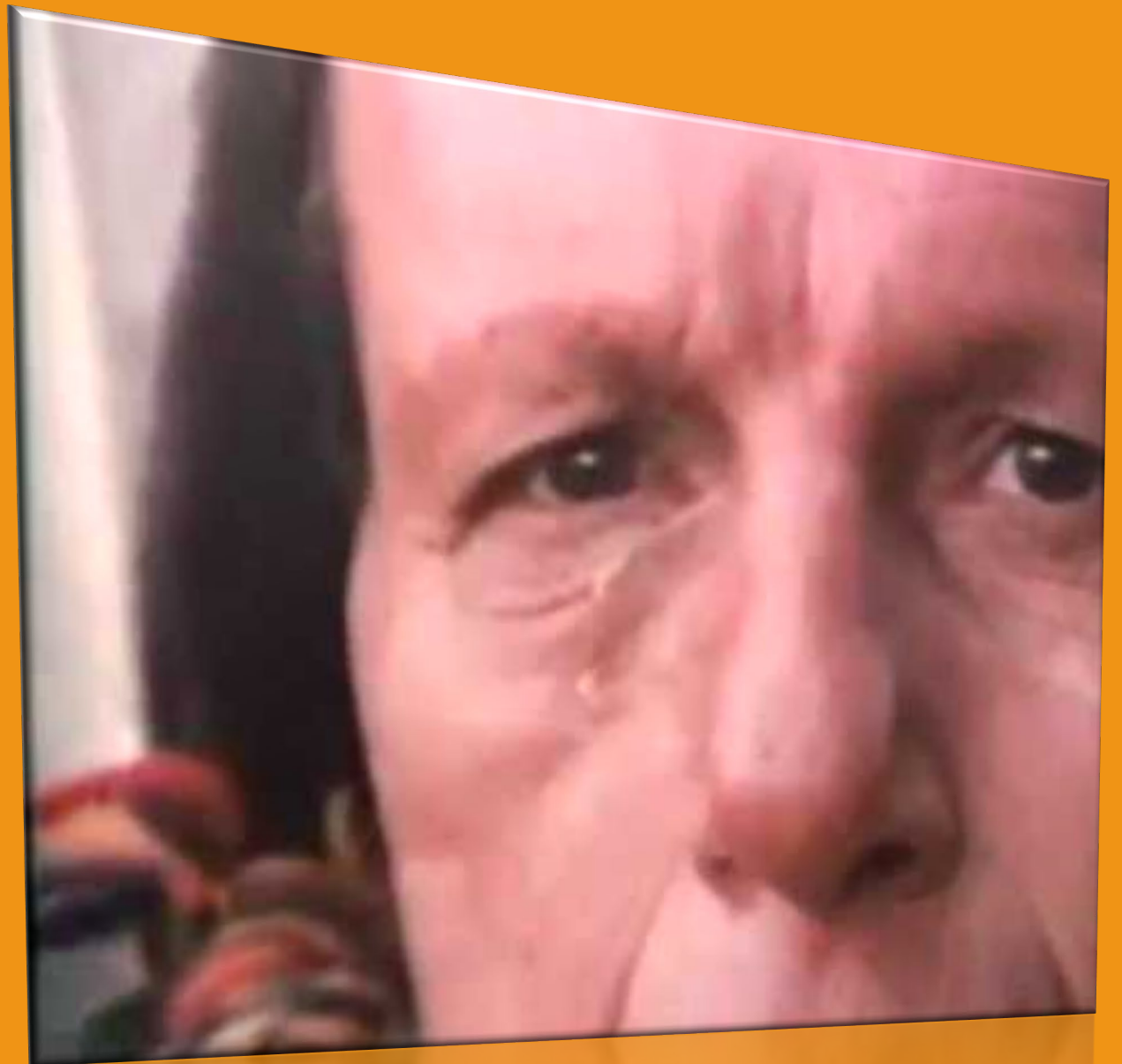
<https://www.chickasaw.tv/videos/the-five-tribes-matrilineal-societies?ref=durl>

Effects of Colonization

Catastrophic changes from European missionaries, soldiers, governments, & settlers

- Near-total extinction, down to 1% of pre-colonization Native population at one point
- European gender norms taught, enforced
- Violence, rape, subordination of women modeled by authority
- Forced conversion to religion(s) that reinforced male hierarchy
- Forced relocation and imposed treaties rendered many traditional male roles irrelevant

Intergenerational
Trauma as a
primary factor in
Native American
Domestic Violence



Historical/Intergenerational Trauma

Traumas are NOT “historical” to many Natives

- Mid 1940s to 60s: Bureau of Indian Affairs terminates official status of many tribes, violating treaties and whittling away sovereignty (termination policy not repealed until 1988)
- Between 1952 and 1956 BIA sold 1.6 million acres of Native American land to developers
- Forced removal of children to boarding schools (“Kill the Indian, Save the Man”) continues through 1978 when the Indian Child Welfare Act was passed
- Violence and sexual abuse increases dramatically in tribes where forced removal occurred most, attributed to widespread abuses in boarding schools
- Freedom to practice traditional “religions” only restored in 1978 (Religious Freedom Act), 190 years after Free Exercise Clause in constitution was ratified.

Survival-Based Living

“Living for the now”

“I got mine”

“Use it or lose it”



Maslow's hierarchy of needs

Psycho-Cultural Confusion



- Often masked by being unmotivated with inconsistent behavior
- Caught between two worlds: primary and secondary cultural expectations

Jerry Tello, 2018

Anger

- Internalized
- Expressed through false boastfulness
- Generalized fear (rigidity)
- Hypersensitivity (reactive, moody)

Jerry Tello, 2018

Hate/Shame

- Choose companions who reinforce behaviors
- Distrust in self and others (controlling, jealous, territorial)
- Outwardly hostile, acting out
- Self-medicating (drugs, alcohol, violence)

Jerry Tello, 2018

Self-Hate

- Anger turned inward (self destructive behavior)
- Internalized Shame (Projection of Hate on those that are similar or connected)
- Established alternative rules (gangs, DV, child abuse, survival)
- Fatalism (lack of hope)

Jerry Tello, 2018

Rage

- Disconnected, reactive behavior
- Unremorseful destructive behavior
- Addictive Patterns
- Direct/indirect suicidal tendencies

Jerry Tello, 2018

Adapting DV Offender Treatment for Native Men

- Native Offenders not homogenous
- Multiple influences
 - Native
 - Mainstream
 - Family
 - Internal (psychological, biological, genetic, epigenetic)
- Need not throw out Evidence-Based practices entirely

Reviving the Traditional Warrior

Treatment Guidebook

- “Reviving the Traditional Warrior” is designed to help Native men rediscover themselves as heroes in a very real story that portrays them as strong, capable, sensitive to the needs of others, a protector and a provider for their families and communities. It is a forgotten story for many Native men, not from neglect but because it was taken from them over and over for centuries. The story that colonizers have created about them --“lazy,” “savage,” “drunk”-- is offensive and painful but no alternatives are readily offered.
- Native clients’ families can’t remember the warrior stories any better than they can; elders whose role it was to teach them to be men are often too busy trying to cope with stories of inferiority and discrimination told them in mainstream society and boarding schools.

It is our opportunity as treatment providers to remind Native men of their warrior legacy, and why domestic violence is *not their tradition*

Section 1:

To the Non-Native Treatment Provider

- Native Offenders not homogenous
- Throw out most of what you learned in Grad School
- Curiosity
- Humor
- Native providers are NOT automatically experts

Section 1:

To the Non-Native Treatment Provider

Do's & Don'ts

- DO build trust by being warm & welcoming
 - DO be non-directive whenever possible (save it)
 - DO allow for more silence and thought from clients
 - DO use self-disclosure *judiciously*
 - DO employ a *subtle* “match-and-mirror” body language
- DON'T attempt to provide ceremonial healing.
Just..Don't.

Section 2: *Using the Guidebook*

- “Warrior” does not carry a EBP stamp of approval, so content may not be reimbursable (though a case might be made)
- May be used as supplement or 16-week program
- If used as a program, use modules in order
- Preparation is almost always needed, i.e. collaboration with local elders, arranging for guests, inviting family
- Collaboration with client’s individual therapist is crucial
- Postmodern orientation is recommended

Section 3: Individual/Family Trauma Counseling

- Traditional Duluth/psychoeducation programs do not promote MH treatment for fear of unintentional collusion
- Treating *trauma* is an essential component of the package
- Individual and group treatment should naturally flow
- Collaboration between group & individual counselor essential to track messaging and document progress (or lack thereof)

Section 4: Modules

Consistency

- Preparation
- Goals
- Education
- Discussion
- Experiential
- Commitments
- Follow up (Individual sessions, beginning of next group)



Sample Modules

Introduction Session:
“No Beginnings,
Just Turns of the
Wheel”

Preparation

- Arrange Chairs in a Circle (always)
- Large paper sheets & markers
- Prepare small raised altar in center of circle (always). (May be as simple as a blanket)
- Bring appropriate medicine for region, situation, topic of group, etc. (sage, cedar, sweetgrass, etc.)

Introduction Session:

“No Beginnings, Just Turns of the Wheel”

Goals for Session

- Establish clear expectations
- Negotiate cultural traditions based on participants' traditions, regional preferences
- Define legal/safety based expectations vs. group-specific expectations (negotiate the latter)
- Establish role and expectations of facilitator

Introduction Session:

“No Beginnings, Just Turns of the Wheel”

Education

- Explanation of medicine: history, significance of specific choice for this session
- Explanation (if needed) of altar and its use in THIS CONTEXT. Include issues of respect, i.e., group time is sacred, items on altar serve as reminder of why they're here.
- History, function, forms and procedures of Talking Circles; differences and similarities to group functioning

Introduction Session:

“No Beginnings,
Just Turns of the
Wheel”

Experiential

- Enlist group members to record/express in words or symbolically all non-negotiable expectations AND negotiated expectations on large sheets of paper as they are discussed in previous education piece
- These are displayed permanently around walls and/or integrated into altar

Introduction Session:

“No Beginnings,
Just Turns of the
Wheel”

Guided Discussion

- Conduct a 20-minute (adjust as needed) talking circle ceremony in which participants are given uninterrupted (but time-limited) opportunity to express themselves about their situation **WITHOUT FEEDBACK**, other than thanks for giving of themselves.

Introduction Session:

“No Beginnings,
Just Turns of the
Wheel”

Commitments

Participants are committed to selecting one or more items that represent an important person or persons in their life (a picture, a figuring, a piece of cloth or jewelry, etc.) and bring it to the next group session.

Introduction Session:

“No Beginnings, Just Turns of the Wheel”

Rationale

In this Module, several key Native-specific topics are addressed:

- a) respect for participants' varied traditions and levels of cultural knowledge,
- b) the importance of reinforcing disenfranchised and institutionalized men's identities as PEOPLE capable of making appropriate choices
- c) establishing that although participants will have enforced expectations for behavior and participation, they do have some control in shaping how group will proceed

Module 5: “Taking Responsibility”

Preparation

- If available, invite an elder man or woman to attend at least a part of this session and share an experience, offer a blessing or prayer, smudge ceremony, or simply sit in position of honor. Offer him (non-commercial) tobacco in gratitude and respect.
- Prepare enough room on the altar for participants to display pictures they were asked to bring last session

Module 5: “Taking Responsibility”

Goals

- Assist participants to explore the possibility that violence against their own loved ones furthers colonization and the destruction of their culture
- Assist participants to recognize and express their respect and honor for the women in their lives
- Assist participants in acknowledging their personal responsibility for maintaining sexism and violence in their families & communities
- Assist participants in making measurable, realistic goals regarding their behaviors and how they can make changes at all levels of their system

Module 5:
“Taking
Responsibility”

Education

- With the help of the invited elder, describe pre-colonization beliefs and customs regarding the balance between genders in Native communities.
- Describe specific ways that Native women have suffered disproportionately as a result of colonization, including slavery, forced sterilization, sexual violence, abduction and murder

Module 5: “Taking Responsibility”

Discussion

- Discuss the quote from Paula Allen (1986) with participants “While women still play the traditional role of housekeeper, child bearer, respect nurturer they no longer enjoy the unquestioned positions of power, respect, and decision making local and international levels that were not so long ago their accustomed functions

Module 5:
“Taking
Responsibility”

Experience

Ask elder guest to offer words, blessings, and or a smudging ceremony.

Questions?



Contact Info

Paul Flack, DMFT, LMFT
paulsflack@hotmail.com
435-503-4441