

American Indian and Alaska Native Children and Youth: CHILD WELFARE AND TRAUMA

Dolores Subia BigFoot, PhD
Indian Country Child Trauma Center
University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center
Oklahoma City, OK

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<http://www.icctc.org>

dee-bigfoot@ouhsc.edu



Current Status of American Indian and Alaskan Native Youth

- Today's youth are faced with overwhelming need for basic safety
- Youth became the recipients of poor coping behavior when their parents lack appropriate parenting skills or life skills
- AI/AN youth are at greater risk for preventable injury-related death than other youth in the US

Current Status of Mental Health and Trauma

- AI/AN children and youth have not benefited to the same degree as white children and youth from interventions in areas such as traffic safety
- In states with reservations, an estimated 75% of suicides, 80% of homicides, and 65% of motor-vehicle-related deaths among AI/ANs involved alcohol.
- Young drivers are at risk particularly for dying in a car crash as a result of driver inexperience, nighttime driving, and alcohol use

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

Current Status of Mental Health and Trauma

- AI/ANs more likely have exposure to trauma than members of more economically advantaged groups
- Impact of high suicide rate on siblings, peers, family members, community
- Violent deaths (unintentional injuries, homicide, and suicide) account for 75% of all mortality in the second decade of life for AI/ANs (Resnick et al., 1997)

Current Status of Mental Health and Trauma

- Youth with a history of any type of maltreatment were 3 x more likely to become depressed or suicidal than those with no maltreatment history.
- AI/AN population is especially susceptible to mental health difficulties
- Native American families had the highest re-referral rates for sexual abuse, physical abuse, and neglect relative to other ethnic categories (Stevens et al., 2005)

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).

Access and Mental Health Services

- Need for mental health care is significant, the services are lacking, and access can be difficult and costly
- 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

Incarcerated American Indian Youth

- AI Youth comprise 1.1% of the national youth population (US Census Bureau, 2006)
- More than 60% of incarcerated young offenders under federal jurisdiction were American Indian (OJJDP, 2006)
- Due to different jurisdictions, federal and tribal criminal laws may apply to same offense
 - An individual can be tried for the same offense in tribal and state or federal court; it not be considered double jeopardy
- Number of suicides while incarcerated major concern



AI/AN Juvenile Delinquency Rates

- North Dakota, South Dakota, Iowa, Wyoming, and Minnesota have significant rates of incarceration of AI/AN youth.
- Iowa has a ratio of 1,025 per 100,000 drawing from bordering states with a high number of Indian reservations (ND=1,240; WY=1,285; SD=1,575; MN=1,712; NB=1,682)
- Minnesota and Nebraska having the highest rate of incarceration of AI/AN than for any other group

Developmental Disabilities and Academic Achievement

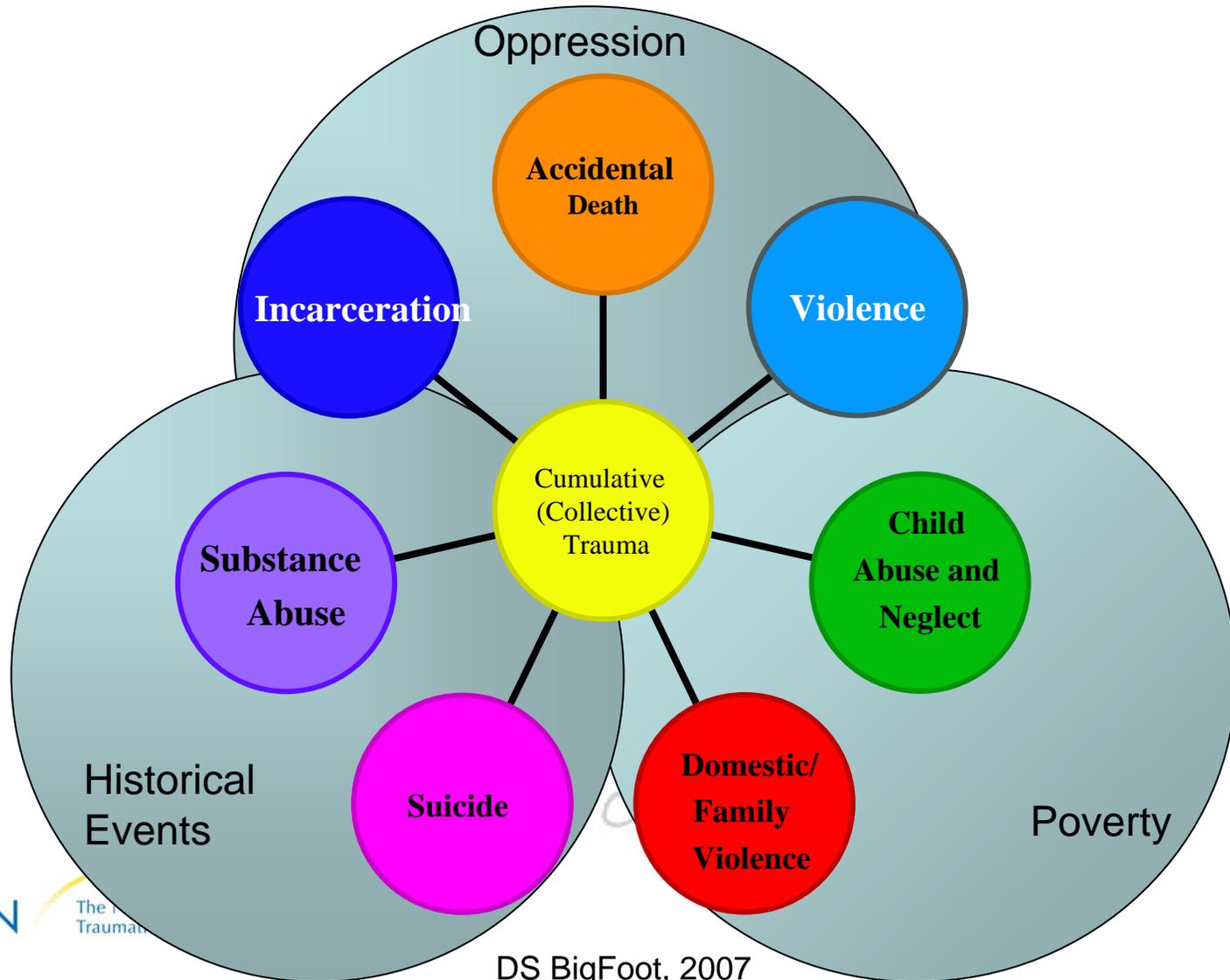
- Fetal alcohol spectrum disorders among AI/AN population indicate some of the highest rates (1.5 to 2.5 per 1,000 live births)
- Highest dropout rate of any racial or ethnic group (36%) as well as the lowest high school completion and college attendance rates of any minority group (Clark & Witko, 2006)

Suicide in Indian Country

- AI/AN between ages 15-24 have highest rates than other age range or ethnic group
- Males age 15-24 account for 64% of all AI/AN suicides (CDC, 2004)
- American Indian youth, 12 and over have higher risk of committing suicide than being murdered (US DHHS, 1999)
- 50-60% of those suicides used a firearm



Trauma in Indian Country



Trauma 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 Sacred
- Need to know they are Honored



Honor Based Society

