



## Trauma in Native Children

Dolores Subia BigFoot, PhD

Barbara L. Bonner, PhD

Janie Braden

Indian Country Child Trauma Center

Center on Child Abuse and Neglect,

University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center

Oklahoma City, OK

### Native American Children

- 4.1 million American Indian/Alaska Native in US; 1% of the U.S. population
- 562 federally recognized tribes, 225 Alaska Native entities
- Approximately 1.4 million American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) children under the age of 18 in the United States (Census 2000)

### What is Trauma?

A unique individual experience associated with a traumatic event or enduring conditions, which can involve an actual death or other loss, serious injury, or threat to a child's well-being. (NCTSN, 2004)

### How Trauma is Experienced in Indian Country

- As a historical event with prolonged impact (relocation)
- As a personal event that continues to impact over several generations (boarding school)
- As a prolonged experience (removal)
- As a single event (car accident)
- As a cumulative effect (violence)

### Factors that Increase Vulnerability in Native Youth

- Breakdown of cultural values and belief systems
- Poverty

- AI/AN children live in single parent families at the highest rates in the country (Census 2000)
- About 26% of AI/AN live in poverty, compared with 13% of the general population and 10% of White Americans (Census 2000)
- Chronic Health Problems
  - *2.2 times more likely* to have diagnosed diabetes than white children (National Diabetes Fact Sheet, 2002)
- Violent Crime
  - On average, American Indians experienced an estimated 1 violent crime for every 10 residents age 12 or older (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2004)
- Victimization
  - 2% of the foster care population are AI/AN children (Child Welfare League of America, 2005)
  - Children who are removed from their homes are at an increased risk for mental health problems (Child Welfare League of America, 2005)
  - Youth victims at high risk for subsequent victimizations (Stevens et al., p. 211)
  - Victimization rate of AI/AN children is 20/1000 compared to 10/1000 of non-Hispanic white children (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2004)

### Major Mental Health Problems in Native Youth

- Lack of Mental Health Services
  - 100 AI/AN mental health professionals available per 100,000 AI/ANs, compared to 173 per 100,000 for whites (Satcher, 1999)
  - In 1996, fewer than 30 psychiatrists in the U.S. were of AI/AN heritage. (Satcher, 1999)
- Depression
  - Depression among AI/AN children ranges from 10-30%. (Satcher, 1999)
- Substance Abuse
  - 50% of Indian youth in treatment for substance abuse have significant untreated psychiatric comorbidity. (Novins, Beals, Shore, & Manson, 1996)
  - Children of substance abusing parents have increased risks for car accidents, behavioral problems, neglect, suicide, and personal substance abuse. (SAMHSA, 2002)
- Suicide
  - Survey of AI adolescents (N=13,000), 22% of females and 12% of males reported having attempting suicide at some point. (Blum, Harmon, Harris, Bergeisen, & Resnick, 1996)
  - Highest rate of suicide in the 15 to 24 age group. (CDC, 2004)
- Child Abuse and Neglect
  - In 2002, only group to experience increase in the rate of abuse or neglect of children under age 15 (National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System, 2002)

- Data indicate approximately 1 substantiated report of a child victim of abuse or neglect for every 30 AI/AN child (National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System, 2002)

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