

Historical Overview of Child Abuse and Neglect in Indian Communities





Contributing Factors

- Different Native communities experience different degrees of child maltreatment:
 - stress
 - unemployment
 - limited resources (personal, family & community)
 - harsh punishment
 - alcohol/drug abuse
 - no role models



Contributing Factors (cont)

- ▶ anger
 - ▶ shame/grief/pain
 - ▶ no sanctions against abuse
 - ▶ limited tribal/native jurisdiction for non-tribal/native members
 - ▶ children not valued
 - ▶ helplessness/hopelessness
 - ▶ lack for teachings and limited reward for teachings
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Historically Native families used the extended network of family members to rear children.





The survival of the family depended on the interdependent relationships among its members.






Historical Overview of Critical Events

- Prior to 1492 - Independent tribes
 - (separate territories & histories)
 - 1492 - Spanish contact
 - 1519 - Aztec Empire
 - 1534 - French contact
 - 1607 - Jamestown established
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Historical Overview of Critical Events

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- 1620 - Pilgrims at Plymouth Rock: Manifest Destiny
 - Prior to 1684 - Independent Tribes
 - (viewed by foreign entities as separate nations)
 - 1684-1880 - Exploration of New World and Expansion of Settlements






Historical Overview of Federal Policies

- 1684-1880 - Termination of Treaties, Removal, Indian Wars
 - 1774 - Education provisions established in treaties
 - 1776 - Establishment of New Democracy
 - 1880-1934 - Allotment of Reservations Lands, Forced Acculturation
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Events contributing to destruction of many tribal cultures

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- retaliation for forming alliances
 - removal from the traditional homelands
 - introduction of new diseases
 - murdering of tribal people for bounties
 - justification of behavior in support of westward expansion
 - discarding or destroying the Native lifestyle



Events contributing to destruction of many tribal cultures (cont)

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- emerging governmental regulations of Indian tribes and families
 - disregard for traditional leaders and tribal consensus in decisions
 - encouragement of alcohol use
 - confinement to limited locations with limited resources
 - removal of children



Historical Overview of Federal Policies

- 1832 - Law prohibiting drinking of alcohol by Indians
- 1863 - Congress terminated treaty claims
- 1879 - Establish Carlisle Indian School
- 1906 - Law extended power to government to sell Indian land
- 1920 - Law sanctioning Native American Church

IHS/BIA Child Protection Team Handbook-2002

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Two Critical Factors

- Methods employed to provide for children:
 - ▶ education
 - Purpose of boarding schools and missions was “to provide for the U.S. government a method to educate and civilize Indian children away from the influences of their savage lifestyle and unchristian ways.”
 - ▶ child safety (protection)
 - Purpose of protection of children was to offer children an “opportunity out of poverty.”





What Children Experienced in Boarding School

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- Schools
 - Chained
 - Whipped
 - Beaten
 - Denied medical care
 - Denied contact with family
 - Poor preparation for adulthood
 - Used as indentured servants
 - Isolated for infractions
 - Lack of adequate food/clothing/shelter
 - High death rate (burials without notification to parents)



Indian People Were Conditioned Not To Fight Back, Each Time They Fought Back, Something Was Taken Away...

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- Children
 - Food
 - Shelter
 - Land
 - Warmth
 - Tools
 - Religion
 - Language
 - Homes
 - Elders
 - Signature
 - Teachings



Types of personalities attracted:

- Missionaries/religious individuals
 - ▶ sincere desire
 - ▶ seeking to help
 - ▶ no understanding of Indian lifestyle
 - ▶ no understanding of removal of children
 - ▶ possessed the mentality of the era
 - ▶ zealous in effort to “christianize” Indians
 - ▶ rigid and punitive





Types of personalities attracted:

- Social “rejects and misfits”
 - ▶ alienated from dominate American culture
 - ▶ high level of idiosyncratic traits/characteristics
 - ▶ high level of aberrant behavior
 - ▶ behavior less tolerated in dominate culture
 - ▶ behavior more tolerated in isolated areas
 - ▶ less likelihood of confrontation with peers
 - ▶ rigid and punitive





Types of personalities attracted:

- Ex-military/authoritarian
 - ▶ Placement for former military leader/soldiers
 - ▶ appeal of isolated locations
 - ▶ valued independence
 - ▶ valued freedom to interpret law/justice
 - ▶ justice was self-serving
 - ▶ income generating
 - ▶ rigid and punitive
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Historical Overview of Federal Policies

- 1924 - Granted US Citizenship
 - 1928 - Merian Report
 - 1930 - Congressional Hearing on Status of American Indians
 - 1949 - 92,000 Indian children enrolled in public schools
 - 1934-1950 - Indian reorganization
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Historical Overview of Federal Policies

- 1948 - Russia publicly denounced US treatment of Indian tribes
- 1950-1968 - Termination/Relocation (200 tribes terminated)
- 1953 - Public Law 280: State jurisdiction





Overview Of Federal Policies

- 1954 - Law Re: IHS & policy on “disallow services to competent Indians”
- 1968 - Self-determination: Contracting & Compacting
- 1970 - Closing of BIA boarding schools



Overview Of Federal Policies

- 1978 - American Indian Religious Freedom Act
 - 1978 - Indian Child Welfare
 - 1981 - AI Infant Mortality rate = US population
 - 1981 - First Annual American Indian Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect
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Overview Of Federal Policies

- 1983 - Sobriety Encampments
- 1983 - Indian Civil Rights Act
- 1987 - NANACOA
- 1988 - OVC Discretionary Grant Program in Indian Country
- 1990 - 1.9 M population (48% <18)
- 1994 - NAGPRA



NATIVE CULTURE IS AN HONOR BASED SOCIETY