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Counseling Interventions for Native American Adolescents

Kathryn Burger

A Capstone Project submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements of the Master of Science Degree in

Counselor Education at

Winona State University

Spring, 2019

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Winona State University
College of Education
Counselor Education Department

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

CAPSTONE PROJECT

Counseling Interventions for Native American Adolescents

This is to certify that the Capstone Project of CE-695 Capstone Project

Course Instructor in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

Master of Science Degree in

Counselor Education

Capstone Project Supervisor: Robin Alcala Saner

Approval date: April 30, 2019

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Abstract

Native Americans in the United States have faced discriminatory practices in multiple institutions since the rapid colonization of the continent by White Europeans. These discriminatory practices include unfair treaties, forced movement onto reservations and other practices. Even in education, Native American youth faced discrimination including assimilation schools. Traditional counseling practices were designed with white clients and students in mind, thus they are not best practice for all clients. The American School Counselor Association (ASCA) Professional Standards and Competencies expect school counselors to work in the best interest of all students, including Native American students. School counselors are further expected to understand and respect the different cultural backgrounds of their students (ASCA). To work in the best interest of all students' school counselors must become multiculturally competent and utilize counseling interventions suited for students of all cultures. The best practices when working with Native American youth include trauma-informed schools, strength-based and resiliency practices, Indigenous ways of knowing, mindfulness-based interventions, medicine wheels, and motivational interviewing. These practices have been proven to be effective when working with this unique population because the practices are more aligned with traditional Native American values.

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Introduction

Native Americans make up about 5.2 million people in the United States (Garrett et. al, 2014). Over 566 Native American tribes are recognized by the federal government with 228 of the tribes being in Alaska, and 324 Native American reservations recognized by the federal government as well (Garrett et. al). The largest tribes in the United States are referred to as the Navajo, Cherokee, Choctaw, Sioux, Chippewa, Apache, Blackfeet, Iroquois, and Pueblo (Garrett et. al). Tribal members can be found on and off reservation land all across the country.

Native Americans have a young population, with 33.9% of the total population being under the age of 18, 30.9% are between 25 and 44 years of age, and only 5.6% are over the age of 65 (Garrett et. al). The medial age for Native Americans was only 31 in 2011, compared to the median age of the general US population which was 37 (Garrett et. al). Native American youth make up the largest portion of the general Native American population (Garrett et. al). This young group is the future of this population, thus the importance of gaining a better understanding of counseling techniques that better fit the specific needs.

Literature Review

Native Americans suffered greatly in the past and today's Native American youth still suffer from traumatic events that took place (Garrett et. al). Native American youth live in a world that is very different from their tribal cultures and are at a higher risk for adverse experiences like substance abuse, maltreatment, suicide, violence, accidental death, and mental health problems than peers of other ethnicities (Garrett et. al). In addition, many Native American youth are raised in communities suffering from poverty, violence, lower education levels, mental and physical health inequalities (Garrett et. al). Native Americans suffer from high rates of substance abuse, suicide, homicide, and mental health problems (Stumblingbear-Riddle

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& Romans, 2012) There are large disparities that exist between white students and students of color in education, with the largest inequalities existing for Native American students (Flugaur-Leavitt, 2017). About ninety percent of Native American students go to public schools, and they make up about 1.2 percent of public-school students nationally (National Congress of American Indians, 2018). Compared to their white peers in schools, Native American students' educational attainment and academic achievement is behind. Nationally, in grades four and eight Native American students have been the only population that has not improved math and reading scores in the last ten years. Few Native American youth go on to college as well as graduate from high school (National Congress of American Indians, 2018). In 2011, less than one-fourth of Native American students graduated from the Minneapolis Public Schools, with only 23.7 percent graduating (Flugaur-Leavitt). Low education levels can also impact life-expectancy. There is a positive correlation between life-expectancy and education attainment as it has been found that people with higher education attainment live longer than those without (Flugaur-Leavitt). The average life expectancy is 61.5 years for Native Americans, a nearly 20-year difference compared to the 81- year life expectancy of the white population (Flugaur-Leavitt). Helping Native American students in schools could truly then become life-changing for students. While the work of school counselors can have positive impacts, it is beneficial to understand the history of Native American students in schools and the interventions that have been proven to have positive impacts on this population.

History of Native American Youth in Schools

The history of Native American youth in schools is unpleasant and should not be forgotten. Between 1880 and 1930 Native children were removed from their families and tribal communities and put into residential schools to assimilate them (Evans-Campbell et al., 2012).

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Children were removed from their tribe as young as four years old and were often away for at least eight years (Garrett & Pichette, 2000). During the mid-1800s, tens of thousands of Native Americans and Alaska Natives were forced from their homelands and families (Evans-Campbell et al.). Thousands of Native American children were then forced into boarding schools off of reservations where their family members were moved and forced to live (Evans-Campbell et al.). This was the beginning of the “boarding school era,” when almost half of all Native American and Native Alaskan children were moved into institutions, hundreds to thousands of miles away from family (Evans-Campbell et al.).

Assimilation schools began with Captain Richard H. Pratt, as he began the Carlisle Indian school in Pennsylvania. Pratt is quoted saying “Kill the Indian in him, and save the man” (Dawson, 2012, p. 83). Pratt created the system used for the federal off-reservation boarding schools (Dawson). The boarding schools were segregated from white students and restricted Native students from visiting their relatives or home (Dawson). To speed up the assimilation process, schools were established far from Native American communities and reservations (Dawson). Native American students were not allowed to engage in any cultural activity, including speaking their native language. Engaging in any such practices resulted in punishments (Evans-Campbell et al.). Many reports of child abuse and neglect taking place at the boarding school exist (Evans-Campbell et al.). Students were made to take on a completely new way of life with no family or role models (Evans-Campbell et al.). Students were forced to cut their hair, wear new clothes, and learn a foreign language (Garrett & Pichette, 2000). The Native children were forced to learn to read in English, farm, and practice the Christian religion (Dawson). All of this was done to “civilize” Native American children when they would not easily comply with White cultural standards (Garrett & Pichette). These practices caused

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intergenerational trauma and identity issues for many Native Americans (Garrett & Pichette, p.4). The history of Native American youth in schools is dark and laid a challenging foundation for Native American students in the school setting. However, Native American students deserve to be authentic and receive an education and counseling services that work in their best interest.

School Counseling Practice

School counselors aim to work in the benefit of all students, including Native American students. School counselors “provide direct services to students, staff and community to facilitate self-understanding, interpersonal relationships, problem-solving and decision-making skills and responsibility in education, career and avocational development” (American School Counselor Association, 2019).

The American School Counselor Association (ASCA) Professional Standards & Competencies state that school counselors are to understand and respect the culture, race, religion, of cultural, social and environmental impact on student success and opportunities.

School counselors are to have a basic understanding of the communication systems, traditions, values, and customs of other races, religions, ethnicities, and nationalities, including Native Americans (American School Counselor Association). The work of school counselors includes understanding and explaining how cultural background affects student performance in school both in academics and in social/emotional behaviors (American School Counselor Association). The role of the school counselor is to also have high standards and expectations for all students, including Native American students, or students of any race, ethnicity, culture, economic, or social standing (American School Counselor Association).

It is essential and expected that school counselors respect the different cultures of their students. One way to show this respect and help students achieve the high standards expected of them is through counseling interventions that support students’ culture. Native American

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students come from a rich culture with unique beliefs and traditions that are expected to be respected by school counselors. School counselors should respect, and gain understanding of the Native American students' culture and utilize research-based interventions proven to aid counseling efforts with the Native American population. Historically, assimilation schools worked to destroy the Native American way of life and change the Native American students (Garrett & Pichette, 2000). However, school counselors must respect the culture, tradition, and beliefs of their students and incorporate interventions that work well with the Native American way of life to be effective.

Counseling Interventions

Trauma-Informed schools. Researchers have worked to explain the problems Native Americans face through psychological, sociocultural, and biological explanations (Stumblinger-Riddle & Romans). It has been thought that the historical trauma experienced by generations of Native Americans plays a major role in the issues they deal with today (Stumblinger-Riddle & Romans). Trauma is any incident that is perceived as threatening to one's safety or integrity, and is sudden, shocking, or terrifying (Wiest-Stevenson & Lee, 2016). Whether an event is traumatic or not is determined by the individual, therefore what is considered traumatic to one individual may not be to another (Wiest-Stevenson & Lee). Native Americans have experienced multiple traumas including grief, loss, genocide, colonization, and assimilation (Stumblinger-Riddle & Romans). These historical traumas have resulted in intergenerational trauma, or trauma that is passed down generationally because they have not been grieved (Stumblinger-Riddle & Romans). Intergenerational trauma may cause the symptoms or problems experienced today by Native Americans. Stumblinger-Riddle and Romans stated that "unresolved emotional distress

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may manifest itself in many of the seemingly chronic problems (e.g., alcoholism and suicide) that exist among American Indian adults and adolescents today” (p.2).

Childhood trauma or trauma-related events has been found to impact development and learning and is linked with anti-social and delinquent behaviors (Black et al., 2012). A study by Burke et. al (2011) found that children were 32 times more likely to be receive a learning disability label if exposed to four or more traumas. Further, one in three children experiencing four or more traumatic events were more likely to experience Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) symptoms (Wiest-Stevenson & Lee, 2016).

These problems may be the result of deeper issues connected to historical trauma of the past (Stumblinger-Riddle & Romans). The trauma experienced by Native Americans during the time of assimilation schools may still be impacting Native Americans today. A study by Evans-Campbell et. al (2012) found that Native Americans who “attended boarding schools were significantly more likely to be living with an alcohol disorder and to have used illicit drugs more than once in the past year” (p.425). This research suggests that trauma from boarding school may influence intergenerational health and mental health outcomes on American Indian/Alaskan

Native people. The physical health and mental health of later generations may be impacted by such traumatic events like attending assimilation schools (Evans-Campbell et. al). Further, it was found that Native Americans raised by someone who attended a boarding school were “significantly more likely than others to report having experienced suicidal thoughts at some point” (p.426). These same participants were found to be more likely to experience symptoms of Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and generalized anxiety symptoms (Evans-Campbell).

Intergenerational trauma from historical emotional events like attending assimilation schools may be affecting Native American adolescents in school as well. Flugaur-Leavitt (2017)

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stated that “public schools represent centuries of oppression, genocide, and the historical trauma of the Indian boarding schools, which stripped Native children of their families, culture, and language” (p.188). To help students dealing with trauma, schools can adopt trauma informed models and practices Trauma-informed practices in schools can positively change educational outcomes and trauma-informed schools can help better support the needs of Native American students (Flugaur-Leavitt). When students’ needs are met they are more likely to experience educational success. One school social worker trained her staff on trauma and adverse childhood experiences, which resulted in an increase in the use of mindfulness practices, calming strategies, and restorative practices in the classroom. This helped students learn to practice self-regulation and repair relationships with students (Flugaur-Leavitt). In a trauma informed school, staff is aware of the symptoms of trauma such as self-isolation, attention deficit and hyperactivity, and aggression, which can lead to difficulties both schoolwide and for individuals (Frydman & Mayor). Trauma and exposure to trauma has also been associated with higher rates of special education placement, absenteeism, and grade retention, as well as lower academic performance, cognitive functioning, and school connectedness (McIntyre, Baker, & Overstreet). Providing staff information about trauma and trauma informed approaches may improve the level of motivation and enthusiasm of teachers to implement such approaches (McIntyre, Baker, & Overstreet).

One approach to trauma-informed schools is the Animating Learning by Integrating and Validating Experience (ALIVE) model which is based on a public health framework (Frydman & Mayor). The ALIVE model focuses on psychoeducation, cognitive differentiation practices, and stress reduction techniques to encourage academic progress and socioemotional development (Frydman & Mayor). The aim of utilizing the ALIVE model is to provide interventions that

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promote prevention and early identification of underlying causes of cognitive, emotional, and social maladjustment (Frydman & Mayor). The model begins with psychoeducation discussions with all students on trauma and how it impacts social, emotional, academic, and cognitive domains (Frydman & Mayor). The discussions are followed by informal assessments that aim to identify students that need further support (Frydman & Mayor). After assessing which students require more support, one-on-one counseling is provided to students to discuss students' adverse experiences and how the trauma may be affecting their behaviors or performance in schools (Frydman & Mayor). School counselors can provide this counseling to students and encourage fellow educators to better understand trauma and how trauma-informed practices can improve school climate.

Strength-based and resiliency practices. Today's Native American adolescents face challenges in life but have strengths that help them through just as their ancestors did in the past living through forced relocation, genocide, and racism (Garrett, et al.). Garrett, et al. (2014) stated that "today, the Native American population is not just surviving, but thriving many areas" (p. 472). The literature about Native Americans often focuses on the challenges and struggles of the population rather than the strength and resilience of the group (Garrett, et al.). However, it is important to acknowledge the many strengths of this population, this can be especially effective in counseling (Garrett, et al.). "The strength-based perspective has been utilized in the fields of counseling, psychology, social work, and nursing for some time" (Rountree and Smith, 2016, p. 217). Strength-based counseling is a perspective that uses ideas and techniques that are still growing, but it has been found to be effective (Garrett, et al.). A major factor of the strength-based approach is to empower clients or students by focusing on their positive traits and innate strengths instead of their problems (Rountree and Smith). The power of this approach comes

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from empowering clients or students with the right to heal, create healthy alliances, and help their environment (Garrett et al.). Identifying strengths and empowering clients and students is important, while acknowledging the hardships and risk factors faced by this population including higher rates of suicide, alcoholism, and poverty (Garrett et al.). Utilizing this approach will require a balance between acknowledging the difficult past of Native American ancestors and the racism they still face today with the many strengths of this culture and the individual at hand.

Resiliency has been defined as “a dynamic process that enables the individual to respond or adapt under adverse situations” (Stumblingbear-Riddle and Romans, p.2). Approximately 50-70% of adolescents who identified as being at-risk were resilient despite facing adversity (Stumblingbear-Riddle and Romans.). Recent research on resiliency has begun to include culture’s role in how resiliency affects different groups of people (Stumblingbear-Riddle and Romans.). While cultural resilience is a newer term, Native Americans have practiced resiliency for years, long before the term was coined, as they have been long been confident in the gifts of their people (Garrett et al.). Due to the hardships of the past that Native Americans were forced to endure, they had to be resilient. Recognizing this resiliency could be a beneficial strategy when working with Native American students as it would help students identify strategies that have worked in the past that could help again in the present or future. Garrett et al. (2014) found that resilience theory used in conjunction with a strength-based approach may be a good tool for researchers and helping professionals to adopt when striving to understand and work with a Native American population.

Strength-based counseling may look different for Native American students than it would for students of other ethnicities as Native Americans have been taught strength and resiliency by their elders (Garrett et al.). In Native American culture, it is taught by the elders that children are

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“gifts from the Creator” and the family and community, including the school, are responsible for nurturing them (Garrett et al., p. 472). In contrast, conventional organizations and researchers in the U.S. have historically reported on the deficits of the Native American population based on cause and effect (Rountree and Smith, 2016). This has resulted in policies and practices that do not consider the strengths of the population that effect their well-being (Rountree and Smith).

Utilizing strengths in counseling practice, especially those described by Indigenous communities, will provide more insight into the well-being of the population (Rountree and Smith). This could not only benefit clients and students, but also lead policymakers to find more meaningful solutions to problems (Rountree and Smith). Using strength-based and resiliency practices in a school counseling practice that are connected to the Native American culture and specific culture of the tribe you are working with could be beneficial for Native American students. For example, counseling a Native American student and discussing resiliency and the cultural resiliency of their ancestors could foster a better outcome for the student. Using strength-based and resiliency practices would allow the student to see and understand their assets and what they are good at, which can help them improve their weaknesses and make strategies for the future.

Indigenous ways of knowing. Indigenous Ways of Knowing (IWOK) are defined as “a multidimensional body of lived experiences that informs and sustains people who make their homes in a local area and always takes into account the current socio-political colonial power dimensions of the Western world” (Garrett et al., 2014, p. 474). Understanding the multidimensional experiences of Native Americans in today’s society is critical to working with this population (Garrett et al.). It is important to know the history that has taken place and cultural loss experienced by Native Americans (Garrett et al.). However, it is also extremely

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important that no assumptions be made about the client's experience (Garrett et al.). Applying many of the typical counseling theories and models without considering Native American culture would not be as beneficial for the well-being of Native American youth (Garrett et al.). The concept of IWOK is important to consider in counseling work with Native American adolescents as it could improve the relationship, which could in turn improve the overall experience.

A main focus of IWOK should be for the helping process to encourage Native American clients to increase one's engagement and awareness of nature, a basic construct of health and well-being (Garrett et al.). Native Americans built a strong relationship with nature that is heavily involved in their beliefs and value system and speaks on harmony and balance (Garrett et al.). "From the perspective of the IWOK, the true purpose of the helping process would be to promote engagement in activities that increase one's awareness of nature as a basic and fundamental construct of health and being well" (Garrett et al., p. 474).

A major component of Native American culture is maintaining a balance between body, mind and spirit, which will bring harmony (Hunter and Sawyer, 2006) It is important for school counselors to acknowledge this aspect of Native American culture, albeit different from typical mainstream American mindset, perhaps it may be beneficial to include in counseling sessions. School counselors can encourage Native American students to incorporate nature into their lives and even find resources for them. One strategy that could be utilized is Pet Therapy, which ties into the Native American idea of being one with nature and all beings (Hunter and Sawyer). Hunter and Sawyer stated that "through interaction with animals, children learn to understand not only the feelings and needs of animals but also the feeling and needs of fellow human beings" (p.238). Pet therapy has been found to help increase self-esteem, empathy and autonomy for children, while lessening feelings of alienation (Hunter and Sawyer, p.239). School counselors

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can encourage students who own pets to spend time with them and see the positives of having an animal around. Hunter and Sawyer stated, “counselors and teachers can promote nurturance by keeping pets in the classroom and in the counseling center” (p. 239). Schools may also be able to incorporate therapy dogs to reduce student stress, which could be beneficial for Native American students as well. The love from animals can provide lonely children with love, teach positive affection, and help students learn to read nonverbal cues (Hunter and Sawyer). Pet therapy is just one strategy of helping Native American students connect to their culture in schools.

Nature therapy is another strategy that could be used with Native American students (Hunter and Sawyer). This could consist of gardening or helping the environment like yardwork or cleaning a park. Helping children interact with nature “allows modern day children to acquire the mastery that their Native American peers were able to achieve naturally” (Hunter and Sawyer, p. 240). Connecting students to nature can both connect them to their traditional practices as well as help them develop healthy coping strategies for the present and future.

Another important aspect of IWOK is to understand the difference in perspectives between Native American culture and Mainstream American society. In Native American culture, it is desirable to be in harmony with nature, while in Mainstream American society, it is viewed that humans have power over nature (Garrett et al.). Acknowledging cultural differences like this are important in counseling sessions, even in a school setting.

Additional example and significant aspect of IWOK for school counselors to understand is the importance of the tribal community (Garrett et al.). “The tribe is an interdependent system of people who perceive themselves to be connected members of the greater whole (i.e. the tribe) rather than to be a whole consisting of individual parts (Garrett et al., p. 474). Cultural identity is embedded in the tribal community and membership for many Native American people (Garrett et

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al.). The tribal community is considered more central than personal achievements, material possessions, and financial or social status (Garrett et al.). Another difference between Mainstream American society and Native American culture is that for Native Americans it is not what you do or what you have that makes it who you are, “who you are is where you come from” (Garrett et al., p. 474). It is essential for school counselors who do not come from a collectivist culture to acknowledge this concept when working with Native American students and to better understand their different worldview and values.

Spirituality is another essential part of IWOK, as Native American adolescents may practice traditional tribal belief systems or any number of religion or spiritual belief system (Garrett et al.). Understanding the basics of traditional Native spiritual practices could be beneficial for any school counselor working with a Native American student. School counselors can encourage students to engage in spiritual practices that add positivity to their life, as well as ask students to share information with them about their spiritual practices. This can build rapport and help students engage in healthy coping practices.

Mindfulness-Based Interventions. Throughout the last decade mindfulness-based interventions (MBIs) have become more popular in schools (Renshaw & Cook, 2017).

Mindfulness is nonjudgmentally and purposefully being in the present moment and paying attention in a specific way (Renshaw & Cook). Mindfulness is the ability to concentrate on stimuli in the moment without reacting or judging (Le and Gobert, 2015). These stimuli could include experiences, thoughts, events, or sensory phenomena (Le and Gobert). Mindfulness requires self-regulation of thoughts and the ability to focus on what is happening in the here and now while being positive and purposeful when responding to these feelings (Renshaw & Cook). Renshaw and Cook suggest using this in schools with language that children can understand,

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such as asking “*what is happening with you at this moment and are you being kind and friendly to thoughts and feelings today?*”

Mindfulness can be conceptualized as a skill set that students can learn (Renshaw & Cook). Mindfulness skills can help students cope by creating a therapeutic effect and reducing stress (Renshaw & Cook). Examples of MBIs include mindful breathing or a mindful body scan exercise, where one focuses on how each part of the body feels and then relaxes the muscles (Renshaw & Cook).

A study by Le and Gobert (2015) looked at the impact of using mindfulness techniques and suicide prevention for Native American youth. Native American youth are 2.5 times higher than the national average for suicide and the highest suicide rate of any cultural or ethnic group (Le and Gobert.). Programs for suicide prevention for Native American youth are extremely limited (Le and Gobert). Native American adolescents are at such a high risk for suicide due to the accumulation of intergenerational and historical trauma, family substance abuse, high poverty rates, unemployment, alcohol and dependency disorders (Le and Gobert). Mindfulness has been found to potentially be effective for suicide prevention as it helps individuals identify and manage self-destructive thoughts and emotions. People with suicidal tendencies typically have a more difficult time with emotion regulation (Le and Gobert). In over 125 clinical randomized trials mindfulness has been found to be effective for mental health conditions like anxiety, depression, and physical ailments (Le and Gobert).

It is believed that individuals that are not connected to their own inner wisdom and spiritual ground are more likely to suffer (Le and Gobert). Native Americans with a strong commitment to their native spirituality exhibit significantly less suicidal behavior than their peers (Le and Gobert) Mindfulness appears to be somewhat consistent with Native American spiritual

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practices and ways of being (Le and Gobert). Le and Gobert (2015) found that mindfulness could become a possible way for youth to connect to their inner wisdom and to the traditional, ways of being found within their tribe (Le and Gober). Le and Gobert further stated that mindfulness could be useful a suicide prevention strategy for Native American youth because it is consistent with Native American spirituality practices (Le and Gobert).

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Mindfulness-based interventions being used in schools can be used with Native American students in conjunction with other counseling interventions as well. Helping Native American students connect MBIs with their traditional tribal practices may be beneficial in preventing suicide and improving mental health. A meta-analysis performed by Klingbeil et. al (in press) looked at data from 76 studies that included 6,121 participants and found that MBIs produce a small overall therapeutic effect for participants. MBIs were found to have the same level of effectiveness in school settings as in clinical settings and created a therapeutic effect across several different domains including school functioning, academic achievement, externalizing problems, internalizing problems, subjective distress and negative emotion, positive emotion, social competence, and prosocial behavior and self-appraisal (Klingbeil et. al). The results from this meta-analysis provide strong evidence of utilizing MBIs in schools (Le and Gobert).

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Mindfulness techniques can benefit students dealing with an array of issues, including Native American students and can broaden their skillsets for dealing with mental health issues.

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Medicine wheels. A medicine wheel is made of stones that represent different features of creation, depending on the culture or occasion. The wheels are divided into four quadrants representing north, south, east, and west and used for teaching, decision-making, restoration, reflection, healing, and celebration (Gilgun, 2002). Medicine Wheel model focuses on different

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aspects of Native American belief system, the mind, body, and spirit (Hunter & Sawyer, 2006). Spiritual meanings are often attributed to components of the wheels (Gilgun).

One example of a medicine wheel is Lowery's (1999) model of Indian Women's Recovery from chemical dependency, this wheel represents spiritual recovery where the center of the wheel is "Reclaiming the Spirit and whose quadrants include processes such as rebirth, re-rooting, and re-connecting" (Gilgun, p.67). Another example is Brendtro et al.'s (1990) Circle of Courage, a medicine wheel that represents spiritual tasks rather than physical space (Gilgun, 2002). Native values are often learned through spirituality (Gilgun). The Circle of Courage has four themes: belonging, mastery, independence, and generosity to signify the different quadrants of a medicine wheel (Gilgun). The four themes are significant values to Native Americans and central to the ideas of child socialization in Native American societies (Gilgun). "Like other Native wheels, the elements of the Circle of Courage are interdependent" (Gilgun, p. 68). When one element of the circle is well developed the other elements are more likely to be doing well, on the other hand, difficulties in one element can cause problems in the other elements (Gilgun). Native American adults play a role in the lives of Native American youth but feel that it depends on the willingness of the youth to listen and learn from others (Gilgun). The circle then relies on reciprocity and trust between youth and who they relate to (Gilgun). The socialization of children and youth occurs from examples and explanations from others in their lives (Gilgun).

The Circle of Courage is also an ecological model, meaning that it applies to different environments (Gilgun). These environments include families, schools, communities, and peer groups (Gilgun). Adults help maintain the quality of these environments and are meant to model behavior and give guidance and affirmations (Gilgun). It is important to consider how adults are fostering these elements as well how the youth are blocking positive interventions and guidance

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(Gilgun). “This ecological perspective protects against tendencies to adopt blame-the-victim interventions which can happen when individuals are viewed as sites of problems” (Gilgun, p. 69). This is important for school counselors to remember and consider as children should not be viewed this way, and helps students

The four components of the Circle of Courage, Belonging, Mastery, Independence, and Generosity and the use of medicine wheels could be utilized in counseling practices with Native American adolescents (Gilgun). Belonging focuses on connections to family and attachment figures that may be damaged (Gilgun). Belonging then becomes about coming to terms with these difficulties and developing a connection to one’s ethnicity and culture (Gilgun). Mastery involves doing something well and feeling prideful about it (Gilgun). Helping Native American youth develop mastery and competence could be included in counseling practices as part of the Medicine Wheel to promote positivity when working with Native Americans (Gilgun). In Native American culture mastery is promoted in different ways like story-telling, ceremonies, art, team games, caring for younger siblings and household tasks (Gilgun). Incorporating these aspects of the Medicine Wheel into a school counseling practice could be beneficial for Native American students. Native American youth are taught to not only take pride in their own achievements, but also those of others, as well as have their achievements also belong to others (Gilgun). “are riddled with the sense of being defective-that is, shame-because they view the adversities they have endured as evidence that something is wrong with them” (Gilgun, p. 75).

Independence

Independence, another component of the medicine wheel, is having the ability to make one’s own decisions and have control over your life while also understanding how your behaviors and attitude affect those around you (Gilgun). Independence requires gradual

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development, beginning with planned dependency on caregivers and respect for elders who provided guidance from a young age (Gilgun). However, young people are taught and promoted to make their own decisions and take control of their destinies (Gilgun).

Generosity involves giving to others, which can be done in the way of caring, time, recognition, material goods, and services (Gilgun). In Native American cultures, elders often communicate and display the value of generosity (Gilgun). Incorporating this component from the medicine wheel could help bring in positivity to the session and ultimately the student's life.

Gilgun stated that the "the integration of the Circle of Courage with theories of human development results in a complementary set of ideas that can be transformed into guidelines for assessment" (p. 76). The Greater Circle can be used to help students develop self-awareness and self-esteem, which is useful for students at any age or grade level (Hunter & Saywer, 2006). Using Medicine Wheels in a school counseling practice could help connect the counselor to the traditions of the student's tribe, as well as connect the student's culture to his or her life at school.

Motivational interviewing. Motivational Interviewing (MI) is a counseling theory that has been used for many reasons but has found success when used with alcohol and substance abuse (Venner, Feldstein, & Tafoya, 2006). The theory focuses on relationship, by treating counseling as partnership where the counselor acts compassionate, empowering, and empathetic (Dickerson et al., 2017). It is one of the most used evidence-based practices and has been adopted by Native American programs for this reason (Nebelkopf et. al, 2011). MI appears to be a good fit for the Native American provider because certain elements of MI are similar to existing Native American practices and values (Venner, Feldstein, & Tafoya, p.8). For example, Native Americans utilize a positive way of thinking, which is found within MI techniques

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(Venner, Feldstein, & Tafoya). The theory has also been found to be consistent with Native American culture and interactional styles (Nebelkopf et. al, 2011). A treatment program for Native Americans located in the southwest does not use words like “patient,” “client,” or “substance abuser.” The program instead uses the term “relative” to avoid labeling a person (Venner, Feldstein, & Tafoya). Researchers Venner, Feldstein, and Tafoya created a prayer to describe MI in a less academic way (Appendix A). The prayer is meant as a suggested way to begin a counseling session and can be modified or left out (Venner, Feldstein, and Tafoya). It was thought that a prayer may help Native Americans decide whether or not to accept MI techniques (Venner, Feldstein, and Tafoya). MI techniques focus on joining the client and meeting them where they are as opposed to being in charge or authoritative (Venner, Feldstein, & Tafoya). MI is a brief therapy, usually about 1-4 sessions and can also be used to make other treatments more effective (Venner, Feldstein, & Tafoya).

Venner, Feldstein and Tafoya believe that MI can be used with all tribes and tailored to fit each tribe’s unique culture. A study in California asked Native American tribal leaders their view on using MI interventions with reservation-based Native American adolescents (Dickerson et al., 2017). The many tribal leaders in the study believed that adolescents would be accepting of MI interventions and would be beneficial as a way to prevent adolescent drinking (Dickerson et al., 2017).

Motivational Interviewing appears to be a good fit with Native American ways of life, values, and beliefs (Venner, Feldstein, & Tafoya). The level of effectiveness of using MI with Native Americans could change depending on the tribe and the culture (Venner, Feldstein, & Tafoya). MI techniques can be used in conjunction with other counseling techniques to support students in schools dealing with an array of issues (Venner, Feldstein, & Tafoya). MI

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requires the counselor to be a good listener, respect the students, provide a caring and warm atmosphere, be genuine, and believe that the client or student has the motivation and answers within themselves (Venner, Feldstein, & Tafoya).

Conclusion

The Native American population has a dark past with education, but that does not mean the future cannot be bright. During the nineteenth century many Native American children suffered from forced assimilation at boarding schools (Evans-Campbell, 2012). The traumatic experiences of these students may still be affecting Native American students today through intergenerational trauma (Stumblinger-Riddle & Romans, 2012). School counselors providing a multiculturally competent school counseling practice can be allies for Native American students and help by providing counseling services, interventions, and resources that align with Native American culture. These interventions include trauma-informed schools, strength-based and resiliency practices, Indigenous ways of knowing, mindfulness-based interventions, medicine wheels, and motivational interviewing. These interventions can be used in conjunction with a caring, empathetic environment provided by the school counselor to create a more positive academic experience for Native American students. Help can be provided to students needing more social/emotional support in ways that align with their values. It is important to consider the individual student and tribe when choosing what counseling interventions to use. Utilizing interventions that align with Native American culture could result in a more positive educational experience for Native American students and in turn help school counselors better understand the unique culture.

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Appendix A

Using Prayer to Describe MI

This prayer was written with the goal of capturing the essence of MI in a less academic way. It was suggested that if we provided a prayer, song and ceremony for MI, that Native people might have an easier time deciding whether to adopt it. We offer this prayer as a suggestion. In preparation for your session, you may choose to use it, modify it or leave it. In preparation for a session, prayer might be thought of as helping you get centered and feel right with the world or spiritual realm. It might help you find a place where you feel best able to heal. If you decide to use it, you might use it before the counseling session or as an opening to the counseling session if the client would like to include prayer. We understand that different people and cultures pray differently or not at all. Please do what is comfortable for you and for your clients. Please use at your client's discretion. As one Pueblo elder recommends, "Pray in your way, whichever way you know how."

(You may use your own opening to prayer)

Guide me to be a patient companion ~~to~~ listen with a heart as open as the sky

Grant me vision to see through (his/her) eyes and eager ears to hear his story

Create a safe and open meadow in which we may walk together Make me a clear pool in which he may reflect

Guide me to find in him your beauty and wisdom Knowing your desire for him to be in harmony – healthy, loving, and strong

Let me honor and respect his choosing of his own path and bless him to walk it freely

May I know once again that although he and I are different Yet there is a peaceful place where we are one (your own ending to prayer)

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