

Violence in Native American Communities

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The Intersection of Law and Psychology”**

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Introduction

- Every community—including both tribal and non-tribal communities—experience violence to some degree. That is, violence is not an Indian problem. Violence is a human problem. For tribal communities, we are also part of a larger federal system that has a significant impact on how we are able to protect our communities.



Objectives

- Overview of types of violence;
- Discuss risk and protective factors associated with violence that are unique to tribal communities;



Objectives *continued*

- Identify barriers and challenges to reducing violence within these, including individual, family, community, cultural, and policy factors.
- Identify strategies for increasing the availability of culturally appropriate resources and supports to reduce violence and ameliorate the effects of violence in Native American Communities.

Key Exposures to Violence

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■ Children

- Suicide
- Child maltreatment
- Sexual victimization
- Family violence
- Gang violence
- Bullying
- Conventional crime
- School violence (including school shootings)
- Involvement with juvenile justice system



Key Exposures to Violence

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continued

- Women

- Intimate Partner Violence
- Sexual Assault (including Trafficking)

- Other American Indians and Alaska Natives

- Homicide
- Assault



Overview of Statistics

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- AI/AN are **2.5** times as likely to experience violent crimes;
- AI/AN are **at least 2 times** more likely to experience rape or sexual assault crimes compared to all other races;
- **61%** of AI/AN women have been assaulted in their lifetimes **34%** of AI/AN women will be raped in their lifetimes;

Overview of Statistics *continued*

- **39%** of AI/AN women will be subjected to violence by an intimate partner in their lifetimes;
- **17%** AI/AN women reported being stalked during their lifetimes;
- Among AI/AN women victims of rape or sexual assault, an average of **67%** describe the offender as non-Native;

Type of Violence	White	Black	Other*
Rape/sexual assault	57%	10%	33%

* Other includes AIAN and Asians.

Overview of Statistics *continued*

- Among Native women victims of assault, an average of **63%** describe the offender as non-Native;

Type of Violence	White	Black	Other*
Assault	55%	8%	36%

* Other includes AIAN and Asians.

- **46%** of people living on reservations in 2010 were non-Native.

Protective Factors

- Cultural identity
- Familial relationships
- Education
- Employment
- Community
- Schools
- What else?

Risk Factors

- Several distinct forms of trauma have been identified in Indian Country:
 - Cultural Trauma
 - Historical Trauma
 - Intergenerational Trauma
 - Current Trauma

Trust Responsibility

- An understanding of the unique political status of AI/AN nations is crucial to the development of effective responses to the needs of tribal communities.
- The United States has legal obligations to Indian tribes that are grounded in the United States Constitution, treaties, federal statutes, and Supreme Court decisions.

Trust Responsibility *continued*

- This trust relationship recognizes tribal governments as distinct political entities with the inherent power to govern themselves. One component of the federal trust responsibility, as enumerated in many treaties and codified in the Snyder Act of 1921, is to ensure the “health, safety, and welfare” of AI/AN peoples.

Overview of VAWA 2013 Tribal Provisions

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- **Special domestic violence criminal jurisdiction (SDVCJ)** over non-Indian perpetrators of domestic and dating violence as well as certain violations of protective orders
 - Narrowly defined
- Pilot Project & Effective Dates
- Intertribal Working Group

Violence Against Elders

- Types of abuse and neglect
- Who is at risk for abuse
- What is different about elder abuse in Indian Country
- Barriers to addressing



Violence Against Elders *continued*

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- National Indigenous Elder Justice Initiative



- Vision: “Restore respect and dignity by honoring indigenous elders.”



Violence Against Children

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- The litany of trauma-related social ills in Indian Country is well-documented and paints a stark picture of the daily experiences of AI/AN children and youth.

- There is little comprehensive data on rates of PTSD for AI/AN youth. However, a study of Native American sixth graders from one reservation found that 75% had clinically significant levels of PTSD



Violence Against Children

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continued

- Indian Child Welfare Act
- AG Task Force on AIAN Children Exposed to Violence
- S. 1622 Commission on Native Children



Best Practice Models Working in Communities

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- Implementing a Trauma-Informed Care System in Your Tribal Community
- Coeur D'Alene Youth At Risk Tracking Program (Strengthening The Spirit Program)
- Cheyenne River Youth Project



Best Practice Models Working in Communities *continued*



Thank you

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