



Understanding the Effects of History upon Culture and Behavior of American Indians:

Lecture and Guest Speaker Formats

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## ABSTRACT

The Lecture and Guest Speaker modules are intended to expand Master of Social Work (MSW) students' awareness of cumulative collective trauma and the influence of culture that affects human behavior in this population by providing a menu of lecturettes, and activities that are intended to fill a class period of 1.25 hours. Students will identify trust-based behaviors from a Tribal perspective; compare value systems (Native American vs. Contemporary American); learn about unresolved grief and loss and its impact in current practice; and learn about the effects of myths and stereotypes.

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Understanding the Effects of History upon Culture and Behavior of American Indians:

Lecture Format

*Rationale for Module*

Working with people of diverse cultural heritage requires an awareness of their history; the effects of cumulative collective trauma; and an awareness of the cultural values that guide behavior. Social workers will face predictable barriers when serving American Indians because of cumulative collective trauma and differences in values: these include behaviors that indicate trustworthiness, differences in communication styles, and differing expectations in achieving case planning goals and objectives.

This module is intended to expand Master of Social Work (MSW) students' awareness of cumulative collective trauma and how culture influences human behavior in this population by providing a menu of lecturates, and activities that are intended to fill a class period of 1.25 hours (includes 55 minutes of structured lecture content). This format allows flexibility of each instructor to decide which optional activities will strengthen students' awareness of the subject matter. Students will identify trust-based behaviors from a Tribal perspective; compare value systems (Native American vs. Contemporary American); learn about unresolved grief and loss and its impact in current practice; and learn about the effects of myths and stereotypes.

Although American Indians (including Alaska Natives, hereafter referred to as Natives or Tribal people) are a small percentage of the general population, there is often a disproportional percentage of youth and families served by the Child Welfare Services and Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) systems when compared to other ethnic groups. Federal reviews currently require states and counties to ensure the inclusion of Tribal stakeholders in their System Improvement





Plans and Performance Improvement Plans (SIP's & PIP's). Social workers are often unprepared to reach and serve this unique population.

*Learning Objectives*

1. Students will identify trust-based behaviors from a Native American perspective.
2. Students will compare Tribal traditional values with Contemporary American values.
3. Students will learn about unresolved grief and loss and their transmission to later generations of American Indians. (Historical and Cumulative Collective Trauma)
4. Students will learn the effect of myths and stereotypes on American Indians from both the social worker perspective and the client perspective.

*CalSWEC Competencies*

I. Ethnic sensitive and multicultural practice.

- 1.1 Student demonstrates sensitivity to clients' differences in culture, ethnicity, and sexual orientation.

*Intended Audience*

MSW Students

*Tips For Conducting This Module*

The suggested approach for conducting this module is to begin by understanding U.S. History from an American Indian perspective to create context for the need to develop cross-cultural social work skills.

1. The introduction questions (How might U.S. History affect the behavior of an ethnic group as distinct as American Indians? How do our behaviors differ from theirs?) will





- help gauge students' understanding of U.S. history and its potential impact on behavior.
2. Activity 1 builds on a previous lecturette about the effects of history upon behaviors of American Indians and allows students to see both sides of awareness by identifying commonly known stereotypes about American Indians. Students are then encouraged to identify possible stereotypes American Indians may have about non-Natives.
  3. Multimedia digital story "Wakeem's Story" is brief account about a Tribal youth in the system facing multiple challenges (including developmental) and runs less than 10 minutes. A series of discussion questions are provided.
  4. Optional activities are suggested to further students' awareness and may overlap with activities of other modules. These allow flexibility to address other areas (case studies, community engagement, and others) that may be appropriate to the course syllabus.
  5. Long-Term activities (one to three weeks in duration) can be used to continue awareness over a period of time, tying learning objectives to other modules or other coursework.

*Suggested Tools and Materials*

1. DVD player
2. Values Comparison Chart
3. Wakeem's Story (multimedia DVD)





### Suggested Activities and Lecturettes

Suggested activities are provided for use at the instructor's discretion. Activities are meant to allow for a deeper understanding of the learning objectives.

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Suggested Time</u>
Introduction Questions for Group Discussion	10 minutes
Lecturette: The Effects of History upon the Behavior	10 minutes
Activity 1: Exploring Myths and Stereotypes	35 minutes
Lecturette: A New Frame of Reference	15 minutes
Activity 2: Multimedia DVD-Wakeem's Story & Guided Discussion	35 minutes
Lecturette: Challenges Facing American Indian Youth	10 minutes
Lecturette: American Indian Belief Systems	10 minutes
Long-Term Activity 3: Case Studies Comparing Rural vs. Urban American Indians	1 week
Long-Term Activity 4: Community Interaction Activity	2-3 weeks







*Introduction Questions for Group Discussion*

(Suggested Time: 10 minutes)

1. How might U.S. History affect the behavior of an ethnic group as distinct as American Indians?
2. How do our behaviors differ from theirs?

*Lecturette: The Effects of History upon the Behavior of American Indians*

(Suggested Time: 10 minutes)

Because of a long history of broken treaties, attempted genocide (California policy in 1848), and federal policies that broke apart Native families, Native communities are hesitant to collaborate with health departments, non-Tribal social service agencies, and academic institutions. In both the distant and recent past, the “words” spoken by Non-Natives when forming agreements were not honored which today results in much of the distrust and anger held by Natives toward Non-Natives. Additionally, with the recent success of Tribal enterprises (e. g. gaming, etc.) many Tribal members expect that any effort to build relations include a hidden agenda to seek financial support from them.





*Activity 1: Exploring Myths and Stereotypes*

(Suggested Time: 35 minutes)

Discuss and explore possible answers and outcomes for the following questions (20 minutes), and be prepared to report back your answers (15 minutes). Refer to the handout on pg. 7-8: Traditional Tribal Values of American Indians vs. All American Values.

1. What are some stereotypes of American Indians?

(Examples: They all look like Sitting Bull; they all live on reservations; they all get government subsidies; they are all rich because of the casinos; they don't have to pay any taxes; they are all spiritual)

2. What are some stereotypes American Indians have toward non-Indians?

(Examples: They never tell the truth – they lie; they only care about money; they are selfish [compare with Tribal value on emphasis on family]; they always take what they want [compare with Tribal value of sharing vs. taking].

3. What communication techniques and behaviors are needed to cultivate trusting relationships with Tribal clients?

(Examples: Not being in a hurry to do things or get an answer – being patient; listening for and responding to the expressed needs [even when it may be unrelated to one's role]; eating together; asking about one's family and well-being before attempting to get information).





**Handout 1**

## **Traditional Tribal Values of American Indians vs. All American Values**

American Indians have a set of values that are different from mainstream America. It is important to understand and respect the traditions of the American Indian. Below is a list of traditional Indian values that differ from mainstream America.

### **10 Core Values and Beliefs**

<b>Tribal Traditional Values</b>	<b>All American Values</b>
Family, clan, communal emphasis	Individual emphasis
Sharing	Winning / Taking
Present-time orientation	Future orientation
Spiritualistic	Materialistic
Time non-awareness	Time awareness
Harmony with nature	Conquest of nature
Passive	Aggressive
Giving/spending	Acquiring/saving
Appreciates/honors silence	Avoids silence
Respect of other religions	Converting/proselytizing





The potential for inner conflict for a person in one value system trying to live by the rules of the other is obvious. If American Indians had been able to maintain their traditional beliefs and values at least then the problem of values conflict would be definable. Most of the American Indians, like other minority populations, are living between two value systems. For some American Indian parents it may be hard to watch their children assimilate into mainstream American values, which are directly opposed to their own traditional beliefs. These non-Indian values have encouraged American Indian children to live a lifestyle that is in conflict with their beliefs (i.e. alcoholism, substance abuse).

*Lecturette: A New Frame of Reference for Social and Personal Interaction*

(Suggested Time: 15 minutes)

Tribal protocol requires behavior that demonstrates humility, respect, the awareness that all things are connected, and that our individual and group behaviors can help and hurt current efforts to solve community problems. Tribal values emphasize family/clan/group/Tribe, not the self or individual as in contemporary mainstream society. When working with Tribal entities it is important to behave as if one is acting on behalf of the group's greater good. Questions are best framed in a manner that conveys awareness that the "family" (or greater whole) may be affected, positively or negatively by the answer. For example, when asking Tribal leaders to participate in an advisory capacity (or give input in a decision-making process) it is best to ask for the "help and advice that will help impact the well-being and future of Tribal youth within the community". When hosting an event, one should approach their role as though they were leading a large family reunion, making sure every individual is acknowledged, and that the group





discussion and decision process is conducted in a respectful and harmonious manner, with an emphasis on ensuring the entire group benefits from each individual that is present.

*Activity 2: Multimedia Presentation-Wakeem's Story*

(Suggested Time: 35 minutes)

*Show DVD*

(Suggested Time: <10 minutes)

*Wakeem's story group activity: Small group discussion questions.*

(Suggested Time: 15 minutes)

Discuss and explore possible answers and outcomes for the following questions, and be prepared to report back answers.

1. What values, myths, and stereotypes are evident in Wakeem's Story?

(Example: Values-Elders as mentors [Phil's role] to guide through life challenges; focus and emphasis on family connection through Aunt; emphasis on reconnecting with one's history and culture through Aunt; focus on eating together as a familial and relational activity [Phil bringing burritos]).

2. How might grief and loss affect outcomes for Wakeem?

(Example: Wakeem may lose interest in following through on case plans; Phil may encounter distrust with Wakeem or when interacting with Wakeem's family; Wakeem may never visit his ancestral homeland or know all his tribal family relations).





*Students report back*

(Suggested Time: <10 minutes)

*Lecturette: Senator Ben Nighthorse Campbell on the greatest challenges facing American Indian youth....*

(Suggested Time: 10 minutes)

Senator Ben Nighthorse Campbell (2000) reported:

The greatest challenges facing American Indian youth are overcoming the obstacles to living a normal childhood, receiving a sound education, and being equipped to compete for jobs in the modern economy. Obstacles such as violence, drug and alcohol use, poorly funded schools, discrimination, and racism place incredible burdens on American Indian youth. If parents, tribal leaders, and elected officials do not address these problems and look for real solutions, I am afraid that the cycle of neglect in our communities will be passed on to the next generation. Challenges experienced by the parents and families who reside on reservations in tribal communities also have an impact on our youth. Issues such as unemployment, poverty, and lack of housing—not to mention poor housing conditions—create an environment of stress and anxiety that does not encourage youngsters to learn, to play, and to live healthy lives. Ultimately, such conditions lead many American Indian kids to depression and, tragically, some of these children even commit suicide. I get upset when I see children who may never have the opportunity to discover their potential or develop their skills because of the inadequate family structures and environments in which they are growing up. Many children are nurtured and provided with appropriate care by family and relatives. Far too often, however, more is





needed to provide the kind of environment that children need. We need to encourage and cultivate environments that facilitate positive growth, making it possible to teach children and youth that they can accomplish anything they set their minds to (Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 2000).

*Possible discussion questions:*

1. What is the effect of cumulative collective trauma upon Senator Nighthorse Campbell?
2. What other systems (and service agencies) may be interacting with American Indian families?

*Lecturette: American Indian Belief Systems and Traditional Practices*

(Suggested Time: 10 minutes)

American Indian values lean toward a cosmic identity, a harmony of the individual with the tribe, the tribe with the land, and land with the spirit of the universe. Central to this quest for harmony is a sense of constancy – the timelessness and predictability of nature as the foundation of existence. Indian values are interwoven throughout American Indian culture, lifestyle, religion, and daily activities. Many values are re-enforced through the use of ceremonies. Tribal ritual and ceremonial practice provides a code for ethical behavior and social organization which contribute to the meaning of life. It also provides a means for intervening in individual and social dysfunction. Traditional American Indian beliefs about health, as well as all aspects of living, evolved from Indian religion. Health is not just the absence of disease; it is harmony with oneself, including body, mind, and





spirit, harmony with others, and harmony with one's surroundings or environment.

Therefore the concepts of spirituality and religion are inseparable from one's health

(Edwards & Edwards, 1980).

*Possible discussion questions:*

1. How might belief systems (conveyed in the above reference) affect individual and family and community behavior?
2. Based on the American Indian beliefs how would a social worker interact differently with a Tribal family that is more traditional vs. urban or acculturated?

*Long-term Activity 3: Case Studies Comparing Rural vs. Urban American Indians*

(Suggested Time: 1 week)

Review the following case studies. Identify differences of value-based communication and interaction for working with individual, family / group, and community; and be prepared to explain your conclusions.

*Handout for case studies comparison (see pages 13-14)*







### Vignettes: Case Studies

#### SHELIA

Sheila is a 17-year-old, girl from a local reservation, who is the fourth child of seven. Her mother, who is non-Indian, has never been legally married and Sheila's siblings are from three different relationships. The responsibility for seven children was too much for Sheila's mother. She sent Sheila's older sisters to be raised by their "rich" aunt and left Sheila and two younger brothers with their father's mother on the reservation for the last 2 years. Sheila has contact with all of her siblings about every two months, but would like to see them more often. Sheila is a good student and has won several awards for academics. Sheila wants to go to college, but is not sure what degree she would like to pursue. Sheila would like to get a part time job, to start saving for college. She has no previous work experience and does not want to work fast food unless she has to.

#### JOSEPH

Joseph was voluntarily placed in foster care in San Diego County at the age of three by his mother. His mother was 20 years old and felt that she could not care for him due to severe depression. There was a history of suicide in her family, and she had attempted to take her own life when Joseph was two. Over the years, Joseph has been in his current foster home for 2 years now. His skin is very dark, but no tribal connection could be established. Paternity is listed as "unknown" in Joseph's file. However, Joseph associates with the Native American students in school and regularly attends tribal functions with his friends. His best friend's family considers him as part of their family. Joseph is in a special education class and making progress in school. He is likely to remain with the Jones family until he graduates. Joseph is interested in the computer and Native American history, traditions, and customs. Joseph is a regular volunteer at the local Indian community center during events for the elders.

*Note: These vignettes have been created for training purposes only and do not represent any particular family. The names are fictitious. Any resemblance it may bear to a real family is pure coincidence.*

*Vignettes Adapted from:* Becker, I., et al., CalSWEC's Indian Families and Child Welfare: A Training Curriculum. San Diego, CA: Public Child Welfare Training Academy.





<b>Sheila</b>	<b>Joseph</b>
<b>Personal Interaction Considerations</b>	<b>Personal Interaction Considerations</b>
<b>Social Interaction Considerations</b>	<b>Social Interaction Considerations</b>





*Long-term Activity 4: Visit an American Indian Service Organization*

(Suggested time: 2-3 weeks)

Students will visit an American Indian Service Organization and offer to volunteer for a day: While there they will explore possible answers for the following questions:

1. What are some stereotypes of American Indians?
2. What are some stereotypes American Indians have toward non-Indians?
3. What communication techniques and behaviors are needed to cultivate trusting relationships with Tribal clients?

Students will write a two page report on their experience and findings.





References

- Duran, B. (2002, April). *Traditional vs. Western therapies for the treatment of substance abuse among American Indians/Alaska Natives*. Session presented at the American Indian/Alaska Native HIV/AIDS and Substance Abuse Conference, Ft. Lauderdale, FL.
- Edwards, D., & Edwards, M. (1980). American Indians: Working with individuals and groups. *Journal of Contemporary Social Work* (Oct), pp. 498-506.
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- Munsell, G. (2004). The John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program: Tribal approaches to transition. Tulsa, OK: University of Oklahoma, National Resource Center for Youth Services.
- Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. (2000). Challenges facing American Indian youth: On the front lines with Senator Ben Nighthorse Campbell. *Juvenile Justice Journal*, 7(2), pp. 3-8.
- Orrantia, R.M. (1991). *The Indian Child Welfare Act: A Handbook*. Temecula, CA: Indian Child and Family Services.





Understanding the Effects of History upon Culture and Behavior of American Indians:

Guest Speaker Format

*Introduction*

This alternate format provides an outline for guest speakers from the American Indian community to share first hand experience and first person perspective with students. It is strongly suggested that faculty and gatekeepers share the entire module including learning objectives, alternative lectorettes and suggested activities so guest speaker(s) may understand how their contributions can support the learning objectives.

*Rationale for Module*

Working with people of diverse cultural heritage requires an awareness of their history; the effects of cumulative collective trauma; and an awareness of the cultural values that guide behavior. Social workers will face predictable barriers when serving American Indians because of cumulative collective trauma and differences in values: these include behaviors that indicate trustworthiness, differences in communication styles, and differing expectations in achieving case planning goals and objectives.

This module is intended to expand Master of Social Work (MSW) students' awareness of cumulative collective trauma and how culture influence human behavior in this population by providing a menu of lectorettes, and activities that are intended to fill a class period of 1.25 hours (includes 60 minutes devoted to a guest speaker presentation). There are optional lectorettes and activities for students to identify trust-based behaviors from a Tribal perspective; compare value systems (Native American vs. Contemporary American); learn about unresolved grief and loss and its impact in current practice; and learn about the effects of myths and stereotypes.





Although American Indians (including Alaska Natives, hereafter referred to as Natives or Tribal people) are a small percentage of the general population, there is often a disproportional percentage of youth and families served by the Child Welfare Services and Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) systems when compared to other ethnic groups. Federal reviews currently require states and counties to ensure the inclusion of Tribal stakeholders in their System Improvement Plans and Performance Improvement Plans (SIP's & PIP's). Social workers are often unprepared to reach and serve this unique population.

### *Learning Objectives*

1. Students will identify trust-based behaviors from a Native American perspective.
2. Students will compare Tribal traditional values with Contemporary American values.
3. Students will learn about unresolved grief and loss and their transmission to later generations of American Indians. (Historical and Cumulative Collective Trauma)
4. Students will learn the effect of myths and stereotypes on American Indians from both the social worker perspective and the client perspective.

### *CalSWEC Competencies*

#### I. Ethnic sensitive and multicultural practice.

- 1.1 Student demonstrates sensitivity to clients' differences in culture, ethnicity, and sexual orientation.

### *Intended Audience*

MSW Students





*Agenda Guest Speaker Format*

1. Lecturette Headings with background information
2. Questions for group discussion
3. Questions for individual activities
4. Materials needed
5. References

*Tips For Conducting This Module*

Faculty should identify any gatekeepers within the American Indian community to identify potential guest speakers for this module. It is suggested to work with persons familiar with and familiar to the local Tribal communities to build from existing linkages. Potential speakers may also be identified at the following agencies:

1. Indian Health Services
2. Indian Health Centers
3. American Indian Resource Centers
4. Tribal Family Service Centers
5. ICWA (Indian Child Welfare Act) Programs
6. Bureau of Indian Affairs

Faculty are also encouraged to contact the Bureau of Indian Affairs to determine the locally identified ICWA agent who is responsible to respond to any potential Tribal notification presented by Child Welfare Services (CWS) or other children's service providers.

It may also be helpful to utilize search engines: [www.google.com](http://www.google.com); [www.lycos.com](http://www.lycos.com); [www.metacrawler.com](http://www.metacrawler.com); and type the following phrases followed by your location, city, or county. These phrases are:





American Indian services in \_\_\_\_\_

Indian Health services in \_\_\_\_\_

Tribal health programs for \_\_\_\_\_

ICWA programs for \_\_\_\_\_

Bureau of Indian Affairs in \_\_\_\_\_

Tribal service programs in \_\_\_\_\_

The suggested approach for conducting this module is to begin by understanding U.S. History from an American Indian perspective to create context for the need to develop cross-cultural social work skills.

1. The introduction questions (How might U.S. History affect the behavior of an ethnic group as distinct as American Indians? How do our behaviors differ from theirs?) will help gauge students' understanding of U.S. history and its potential impact on behavior.
2. Activity 1 builds on a previous lecturette about the effects of history upon behaviors of American Indians and allows students to see both sides of awareness by identifying commonly known stereotypes about American Indians. Students are then encouraged to identify possible stereotypes American Indians may have about non-Natives.
3. Multimedia digital story "Wakeem's Story" is brief account about a Tribal youth in the system facing multiple challenges (including developmental) and runs less than 10 minutes. A series of discussion questions are provided.
4. Optional activities are suggested to further students' awareness and may overlap with activities of other modules. These allow flexibility to address other areas (case







studies, community engagement, and others) that may be appropriate to the course syllabus.

5. Long-Term activities (one to three weeks in duration) can be used to continue awareness over a period of time, tying learning objectives to other modules or other coursework.

*Suggested Tools and Materials*

1. DVD player
2. Values Comparison Chart
3. Wakeem's Story (multimedia DVD)

It is suggested that faculty share with guest speakers an account of any previous modules related to American Indians and any materials students may have received, as these may help guide their thoughts and help them identify what experiences best suit the effort. It is also strongly suggested that faculty and host staff provide guest speakers with both a token of appreciation for their participation, and some cash remuneration for their time and resources to attend.





### Suggested Activities and Lecturettes

Suggested activities are provided for use at the professor's discretion. Activities are meant to allow for a deeper understanding of the learning objectives.

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Suggested Time</u>
Introduction Questions for Group Discussion	10 minutes
Lecturette: The Effects of History upon the Behavior of American Indians	5 minutes
Activity 1: Guest Speakers from the local American Indian Service Programs	45 minutes (15-20 minutes/person)
Questions and Answers	10 minutes
Closing and Honoring	5 minutes

#### *Introduction Questions for Group Discussion*

(Suggested Time: 10 minutes).

1. How might U.S. History affect the behavior of an ethnic group as distinct as American Indians?
2. How do our behaviors differ from theirs?

#### *Lecturette: The Effects of History upon the Behavior of American Indians*

(Suggested Time: 5 minutes)

Because of a long history of broken treaties, attempted genocide (California policy in 1848), and federal policies that broke apart Native families, Native communities are hesitant to collaborate with health departments, non-Tribal social service agencies, and academic institutions. In both the distant and recent past, the “words” spoken by Non-Natives when forming agreements were not honored which today results in much of the distrust and anger held





by Natives toward Non-Natives. Additionally, with the recent success of Tribal enterprises (e. g. gaming, etc.), many Tribal members expect that any effort to build relations include a hidden agenda to seek financial support from them.

*Suggested Activity 1: Guest Speakers From the Local American Indian Service Programs*

(Suggested Time: 45 minutes, 15-20 minutes per person)

Faculty / Host will introduce each guest speaker and explain how they were contacted and asked to participate as a guest speaker. Faculty / Host will announce the individual by name, Tribal affiliation, their community involvement / role (is a member of the Tribal council, or serves on a board of directors) and the agency or organization they represent.

Faculty / Host will publicly share with guest speaker(s) whether the students have received any other American Indian – specific information, or speakers. Faculty / Host will apprise guest speakers of the learning objectives and ask for their help to increase student's awareness and understanding of how American Indian community members may act / react when interacting with social workers or other non-Native service providers.

*Questions & Answers*

(Suggested Time: 10 minutes)

*Closing and Honoring*

(Suggested Time: 5 minutes)

Faculty / Host will publicly thank each guest speaker and present them with a token gift for their contribution and participation.





Alternative Activities and Lecturettes

Pending time availability the following lecturettes and activities may be used at the discretion of the professor to emphasize aspects of presentation, fill in time and/or and support learning objectives.

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Suggested Time</u>
Activity 1: Exploring Myths and Stereotypes	35 minutes
Lecturette: A New Frame of Reference	15 minutes
Activity 2: Multimedia DVD-Wakeem's Story & Guided Discussion	35 minutes
Lecturette: Challenges Facing American Indian Youth	10 minutes
Lecturette: American Indian Belief Systems	10 minutes
Long-Term Activity 3: Case Studies Comparing Rural vs. Urban American Indians	1 week
Long-Term Activity 4: Community Interaction Activity	2-3 weeks

*Activity 1: Exploring Myths and Stereotypes*

(Suggested Time: 35 minutes)

Discuss and explore possible answers and outcomes for the following questions, and be prepared to report back your answers. Refer to the handout on pg. 26-27: Traditional Tribal Values of American Indians vs. All American Values.

1. What are some stereotypes of American Indians?

(Examples: They all look like Sitting Bull; they all live on reservations; they all get government subsidies; they are all rich because of the casinos; they don't have to pay any taxes; they are all spiritual)





2. What are some stereotypes American Indians have toward non-Indians?

(Examples: They never tell the truth – they lie; they only care about money; they are selfish [compare with Tribal value on emphasis on family]; they always take what they want [compare with Tribal value of sharing vs. taking]).

3. What communication techniques and behaviors are needed to cultivate trusting relationships with Tribal clients?

(Examples: Not being in a hurry to do things or get an answer – being patient; listening for and responding to the expressed needs [even when it may be unrelated to one's role]; eating together; asking about one's family and well-being before attempting to get information).





**Handout 1**

## **Traditional Tribal Values of American Indians vs. All American Values**

American Indians have a set of values that are different from mainstream America. It is important to understand and respect the traditions of the American Indian. Below is a list of traditional Indian values that differ from mainstream America.

### **10 Core Values and Beliefs**

<b>Tribal Traditional Values</b>	<b>All American Values</b>
Family, clan, communal emphasis	Individual emphasis
Sharing	Winning / Taking
Present-time orientation	Future orientation
Spiritualistic	Materialistic
Time non-awareness	Time awareness
Harmony with nature	Conquest of nature
Passive	Aggressive
Giving/spending	Acquiring/saving
Appreciates/honors silence	Avoids silence
Respect of other religions	Converting/proselytizing





The potential for inner conflict for a person in one value system trying to live by the rules of the other is obvious. If American Indians had been able to maintain their traditional beliefs and values at least then the problem of values conflict would be definable. Most of the American Indians, like other minority populations, are living between two value systems. For some American Indian parents it may be hard to watch their children assimilate into mainstream American values, which are directly opposed to their own traditional beliefs. These non-Indian values have encouraged American Indian children to live a lifestyle that is in conflict with their beliefs (i.e. alcoholism, substance abuse).





*Lecturette: A New Frame of Reference for Social and Personal Interaction*

(Suggested Time: 15 minutes)

Tribal protocol requires behavior that demonstrates humility, respect, the awareness that all things are connected, and that our individual and group behaviors can help and hurt current efforts to solve community problems. Tribal values emphasize family/clan/group/Tribe, not the self or individual as in contemporary mainstream society. When working with Tribal entities it is important to behave as if one is acting on behalf of the group's greater good. Questions are best framed in a manner that conveys awareness that the "family" (or greater whole) may be affected, positively or negatively by the answer. For example, when asking Tribal leaders to participate in an advisory capacity (or give input in a decision-making process) it is best to ask for the "help and advice that will help impact the well-being and future of Tribal youth within the community". When hosting an event, one should approach their role as though they were leading a large family reunion, making sure every individual is acknowledged, and that the group discussion and decision process is conducted in a respectful and harmonious manner, with an emphasis on ensuring the entire group benefits from each individual that is present.

*Activity 2: Multimedia Presentation-Wakeem's Story*

(Suggested Time: 35 minutes)

*Show DVD*

(Suggested Time: <10 minutes)

*Wakeem's story group activity: Small group discussion questions.*

(Suggested Time: 15 minutes)







Discuss and explore possible answers and outcomes for the following questions, and be prepared to report back answers.

1. What values, myths, and stereotypes are evident in Wakeem's Story?  
(Example: Values-Elders as mentors [Phil's role] to guide through life challenges; focus and emphasis on family connection through Aunt; emphasis on reconnecting with one's history and culture through Aunt; focus on eating together as a familial and relational activity [Phil bringing burritos]).
2. How might grief and loss affect outcomes for Wakeem?  
(Example: Wakeem may lose interest in following through on case plans; Phil may encounter distrust with Wakeem or when interacting with Wakeem's family; Wakeem may never visit his ancestral homeland or know all his tribal family relations).

*Students report back*

(Suggested Time: <10 minutes)

*Lecturette: Senator Ben Nighthorse Campbell on the greatest challenges facing American Indian youth....*

(Suggested Time: 10 minutes)

Senator Ben Nighthorse Campbell (2000) reported:,

The greatest challenges facing American Indian youth are overcoming the obstacles to living a normal childhood, receiving a sound education, and being equipped to compete for jobs in the modern economy. Obstacles such as violence, drug and alcohol use, poorly





funded schools, discrimination, and racism place incredible burdens on American Indian youth. If parents, tribal leaders, and elected officials do not address these problems and look for real solutions, I am afraid that the cycle of neglect in our communities will be passed on to the next generation. Challenges experienced by the parents and families who reside on reservations in tribal communities also have an impact on our youth. Issues such as unemployment, poverty, and lack of housing—not to mention poor housing conditions—create an environment of stress and anxiety that does not encourage youngsters to learn, to play, and to live healthy lives. Ultimately, such conditions lead many American Indian kids to depression and, tragically, some of these children even commit suicide. I get upset when I see children who may never have the opportunity to discover their potential or develop their skills because of the inadequate family structures and environments in which they are growing up. Many children are nurtured and provided with appropriate care by family and relatives. Far too often, however, more is needed to provide the kind of environment that children need. We need to encourage and cultivate environments that facilitate positive growth, making it possible to teach children and youth that they can accomplish anything they set their minds to (Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 2000).

*Possible discussion questions:*

1. What is the effect of cumulative collective trauma upon Senator Nighthorse Campbell?
2. What other systems (and service agencies) may be interacting with American Indian families?





*Lecturette: American Indian Belief Systems and Traditional Practices*

(Suggested Time: 10 minutes)

American Indian values lean toward a cosmic identity, a harmony of the individual with the tribe, the tribe with the land, and land with the spirit of the universe. Central to this quest for harmony is a sense of constancy – the timelessness and predictability of nature as the foundation of existence. Indian values are interwoven throughout American Indian culture, lifestyle, religion, and daily activities. Many values are re-enforced through the use of ceremonies. Tribal ritual and ceremonial practice provides a code for ethical behavior and social organization which contribute to the meaning of life. It also provides a means for intervening in individual and social dysfunction. Traditional American Indian beliefs about health, as well as all aspects of living, evolved from Indian religion. Health is not just the absence of disease; it is harmony with oneself, including body, mind, and spirit, harmony with others, and harmony with one's surroundings or environment. Therefore the concepts of spirituality and religion are inseparable from one's health (Edwards & Edwards, 1980).

*Possible discussion questions:*

1. How might belief systems (conveyed in the above reference) affect individual and family and community behavior?
2. Based on the American Indian beliefs how would a social worker interact differently with a Tribal family that is more traditional vs. urban or acculturated?





*Optional Long-term Activity 4: Case Studies Comparing Rural vs. Urban American Indians*

*(Suggested Time: 1 week)*

Review the following case studies. Identify differences of value-based communication and interaction for working with individual, family / group, and community; and be prepared to explain your conclusions.

*Handout for case studies comparison (see pages 33-34)*





### Vignettes: Case Studies

#### SHELIA

Sheila is a 17-year-old, girl from a local reservation, who is the fourth child of seven. Her mother, who is non-Indian, has never been legally married and Sheila's siblings are from three different relationships. The responsibility for seven children was too much for Sheila's mother. She sent Sheila's older sisters to be raised by their "rich" aunt and left Sheila and two younger brothers with their father's mother on the reservation for the last 2 years. Sheila has contact with all of her siblings about every two months, but would like to see them more often. Sheila is a good student and has won several awards for academics. Sheila wants to go to college, but is not sure what degree she would like to pursue. Sheila would like to get a part time job, to start saving for college. She has no previous work experience and does not want to work fast food unless she has to.

#### JOSEPH

Joseph was voluntarily placed in foster care in San Diego County at the age of three by his mother. His mother was 20 years old and felt that she could not care for him due to severe depression. There was a history of suicide in her family, and she had attempted to take her own life when Joseph was two. Over the years, Joseph has been in his current foster home for 2 years now. His skin is very dark, but no tribal connection could be established. Paternity is listed as "unknown" in Joseph's file. However, Joseph associates with the Native American students in school and regularly attends tribal functions with his friends. His best friend's family considers him as part of their family. Joseph is in a special education class and making progress in school. He is likely to remain with the Jones family until he graduates. Joseph is interested in the computer and Native American history, traditions, and customs. Joseph is a regular volunteer at the local Indian community center during events for the elders.

*Note: These vignettes have been created for training purposes only and do not represent any particular family. The names are fictitious. Any resemblance it may bear to a real family is pure coincidence.*

Vignettes Adapted from: Becker, I., et al., CalSWEC's Indian Families and Child Welfare: A Training Curriculum. San Diego, CA: Public Child Welfare Training Academy.





<b>Sheila</b>	<b>Joseph</b>
<b>Personal Interaction Considerations</b>	<b>Personal Interaction Considerations</b>
<b>Social Interaction Considerations</b>	<b>Social Interaction Considerations</b>





*Long-term Activity 4: Visit an American Indian Service Organization*

*(Suggested time: 2-3 weeks)*

Students will visit an American Indian Service Organization and offer to volunteer for a day: While there they will explore possible answers for the following questions:

1. What are some stereotypes of American Indians?
2. What are some stereotypes American Indians have toward non-Indians?
3. What communication techniques and behaviors are needed to cultivate trusting relationships with Tribal clients?

Students will write a two page report on their experience and findings.





References

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