

# **Tribal Youth Resource Center Online Learning Event**

## **Panel Discussion on Cultural Connectedness and Trauma-Informed Care**

**Facilitators: Dr. Marilyn Zimmerman, Veronica Willeto DeCrane,  
Nona Main, and Kimee Wind-Hummingbird  
National Native Children's Trauma Center  
October 19, 2021**

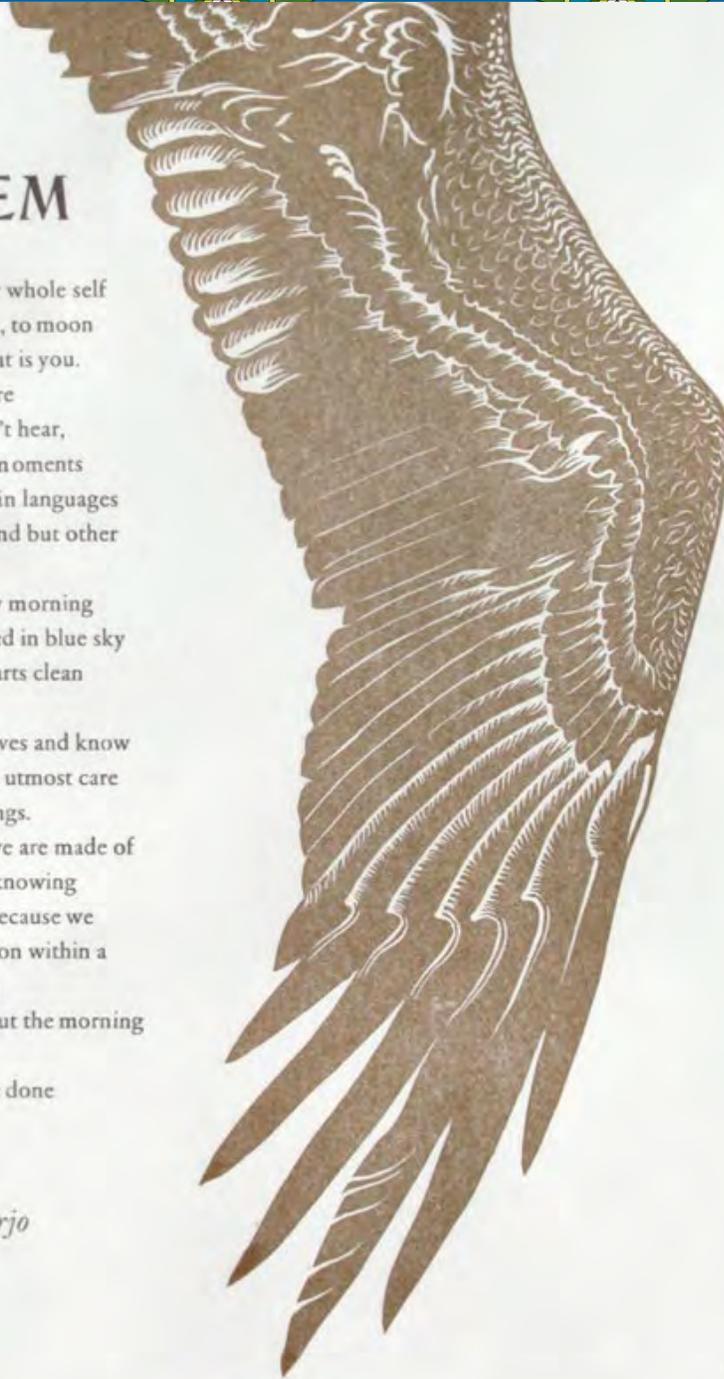


By Joy  
Harjo

## EAGLE POEM

To pray you open your whole self  
To sky, to earth, to sun, to moon  
To one whole voice that is you.  
And know there is more  
That you can't see, can't hear,  
Can't know except in moments  
Steadily growing, and in languages  
That aren't always sound but other  
Circles of motion.  
Like eagle that Sunday morning  
Over Salt River. Circled in blue sky  
In wind, swept our hearts clean  
With sacred wings.  
We see you, see ourselves and know  
That we must take the utmost care  
and kindness in all things.  
Breathe in, knowing we are made of  
All this, and breathe, knowing  
We are truly blessed because we  
Were born, and die soon within a  
True circle of motion,  
Like eagle rounding out the morning  
Inside us.  
We pray that it will be done  
In beauty.  
In beauty.

*Joy Harjo*



# Today's Presenters

NATIONAL  
NATIVE  
CHILDREN'S  
TRAUMA  
CENTER



UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA



Dr. Marilyn Zimmerman  
Senior Policy & Program  
Director



Veronica Willeto DeCrane  
TTA Manager



Nona Main  
TTA Specialist



Kimee Wind-Hummingbird  
TTA Specialist





# Learning Objectives

1. Describe both Western and Indigenous-based evidence of cultural connectedness as a protective factor and resource of healing for American Indian youth
2. Recognize the essential role of cultural connectedness in actualizing trauma-informed care for American Indian youth
3. Identify best and promising practices of cultural connectedness for American Indian youth that can be implemented in a Tribal Youth Program or Tribal Juvenile Healing to Wellness Court



# Cultural Connectedness

- “The extent to which an individual is integrated within his or her culture.”
- Youth can foster cultural connectedness even if they do not participate in cultural events or practices





# Western & Indigenous Evidence for Cultural Connectedness

# Healing in Our Culture

- Western Evidence-based treatments and practices
  - Measurement is quantitative
    - Ex: depression scales, PTSD criteria, substance use disorder, exposure to violence
- Indigenous Practice-based evidence
  - Measurement qualitative
    - EX: Participation in ceremony, getting tribal name, given rights to do ceremony
  - Culture and ceremony
    - Protective Factors



# Indigenous Ways of Being and Knowing



# Indigenous Ways of Healing



# Relationships

- Solid and trusting relationship with a supportive adult is the single most important protective factor for children.

“I have to tell you something.....I’m not your grandson” –  
Cheese (Lane Factor)

“Sure you are, even if you’re not.”-Grandma (Casey Camp-  
Horinek)



## Cultural or Spiritual Connections

- Connectedness, from a young age
- Surrounded by support and love
- Learning from community
- Acceptance and a feeling of being a part of something much bigger than ourselves



# Growing Body of Research

“Positively associated with self-efficacy, sense of self (present and future), school connectedness, and life satisfaction and, in some cases, predicted mental health above and beyond other established social determinants of health”  
(Snowshoe, 2015)



# Youth Development w/ Culturally Relevant Health Education

- Reframing health through an indigenous lens
- What did we teach our children about health prior to colonization?
- How do we combine western approaches with our own teachings?



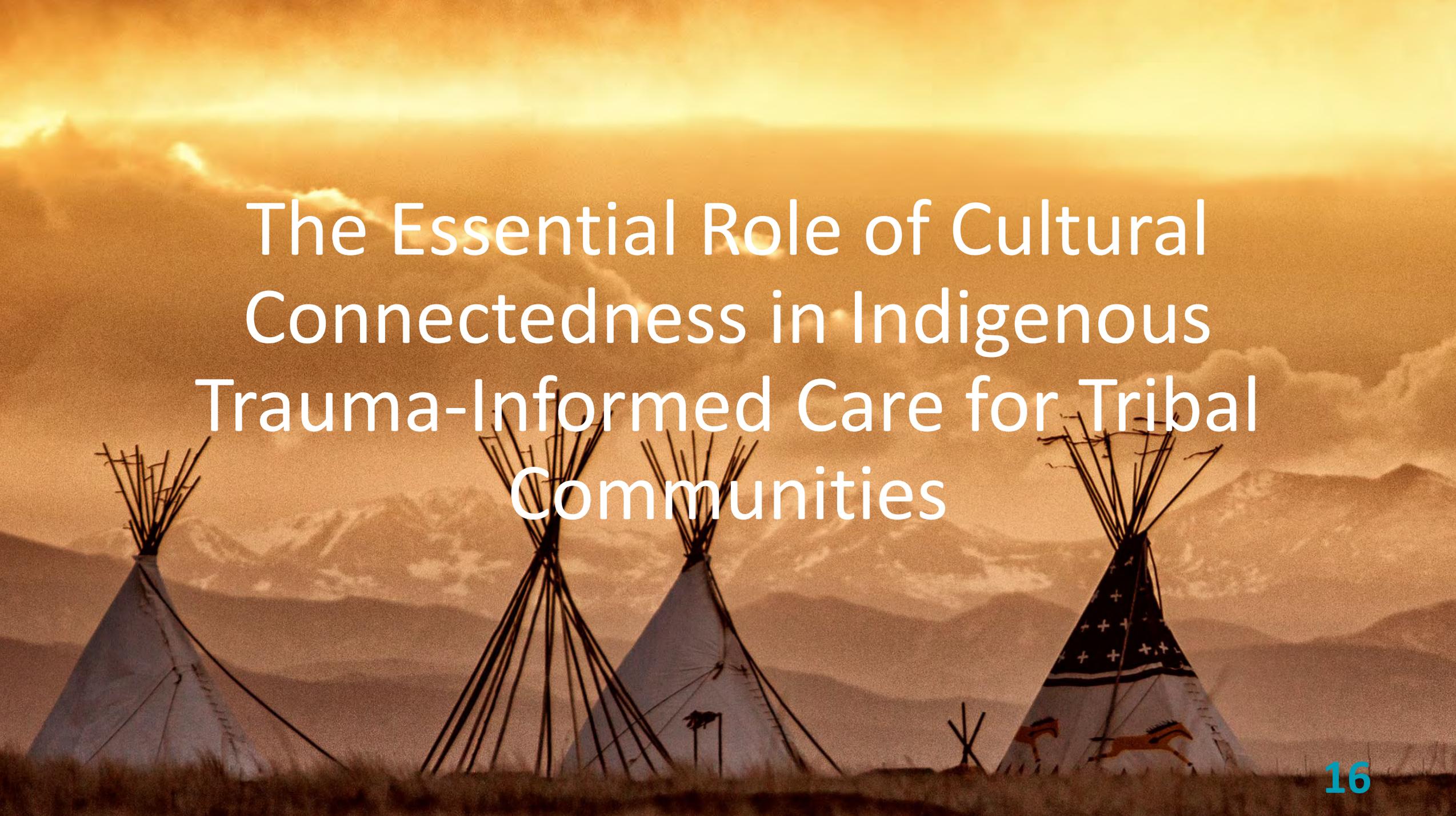
# Elders are our experts



Oral history and storytelling are our research papers







# The Essential Role of Cultural Connectedness in Indigenous Trauma-Informed Care for Tribal Communities

# Historical and Intergenerational Trauma



# Supporting Families

- Understanding the importance of the child's relationship with their parent or caregiver is vital to their development
- Supporting the adults to overcome their past adversity or trauma history is essential to the well-being of the family as whole
- Shifting your thought process on how you provide support to build resilience is essential in encouraging the family



# Supporting Families continued.

- What can you do?
  - Ask yourself what can you put in place to surround the family and support resilience?
  - What culturally appropriate services does the Tribe have that can meet the needs of the family?
  - Be open and approachable. The goal should always be encouraging the family as a whole and making every effort to cultivate hope.



# Infusing Culture is Trauma-informed Care

- What part of the youth's culture can we infuse with programming?
- How can we honor their community's cultural expectations while still accomplishing health education outcomes?



# Indigenous Healing of Trauma



# Healthy Identity Development



# Empowerment

- Voice and choice
- Validation and recognition
- Self-efficacy
- Self-determination
- Dignity
- New skills





A bald eagle is shown in flight over a body of water, carrying a fish in its talons. The eagle's wings are spread wide, and its head is turned to the right. The water is blue and has some white foam from waves. The text "Best & Promising Practices in Indian Country" is overlaid on the image in white. The number "25" is in the bottom right corner in teal.

# Best & Promising Practices in Indian Country

# Leaning into Promising Practices



# Tips for Walking Alongside Families

- Create a sense of felt safety
- Acknowledge that they are the experts on their family
- Seek input from them often about ways to support them
- Cultivate HOPE



# Best Practices for Health Education in Indian Country

- Who are the stake holders?
- Is there a youth advisory council?
- Who are the gatekeepers of the community?
- Building trust with communities
- Building trust with youth
- How will we make it sustainable?



# Pryor 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Center



# Peer Youth Mentoring Programs

- Indigenous youth are paired with each other in a school or community organization
- Participants increase feelings of cultural connectedness (Crooks, Exner-Cortens, Burm, Lapointe, & Chiodo, 2017)
- A strategy for youth who
  - Cannot access their cultural community due to distance
  - Are not interested in participating in cultural events or practices



# Data Tools for Measuring Feelings of Connectedness

## Cultural Connectedness Scale

- Developed by and for the First Nations in Canada
- Sample Questions:
  - “I have a strong sense of belonging to my community or nation.”
  - I plan on trying to find out more about my culture...”

(Snowshoe, Crooks, Tremblay, Craig, & Hinson, 2015)

## Awareness of Culture Scale

- Developed by and for Alaskan Natives
- Sample Questions:
  - “My community believes I am important.”
  - “We come from the land and will return to the land.”

(Mohatt, Fok, Burket, Henry, & Allen, 2011)





## Being by Tanaya Winder

Wake up, greet the sun, and pray.

Burn cedar, sweet grass, sage—

sacred herbs to honor the lives we've been given,

for we have been gifted these ways since the beginning of time.

Remember, when you step into the arena of your life, think about those who stand beside you, next to, and with you.

Your ancestors are always in your corner, along with your people.

When we enter this world we are born hungry,  
our spirits long for us to live out our traditions  
that have been passed down for generations.

Prayer, ceremony, dance, language—our ways of being.

Never forget you were put on this earth for a reason—  
honor your ancestors.

Be a good relative.



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