

Indigenous Paths to Resilience

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Individual Resilience in Native Communities

- Adaptation despite risks
 - characteristics of individuals that enable them to cope with difficult events and respond appropriately under pressure. (Thornton, Collins, Daugherty, 2006)
 - the "ability to adjust and adapt to the changes, demands, and disappointments that come up in the course of life" (Joseph, 1994, p. xi).
- Relational
 - Rutter (1990) described resilience as positive responses to stress and adversity in spite of serious risk.
 - "...resiliency emerges from the interaction of one's belief system with environmental stressors to evoke an individual's coping skills" (Jew, Greene, Kroger, 1995).
- Reaction to risk factors
 - 'bouncing back' after going through hardship of some sort (Wexler, 2011)
- Internal fortitude and strength
 - People demonstrated their cultural resilience through the positive application of spoken and written Lakota (Powers, 2009).
 - Strand and Peacock (2003) define cultural resilience for Native Americans as the incorporation of traditional practices and ways of thinking as a means to overcome oppression and other negative obstacles faced by this population.
- A process/adaptation
 - "...dynamic process that enables the individual to respond or adapt under adverse situations" (Thornton & Sanchez, 2010, p. 455).
 - "the process by which people respond to and overcome ongoing and acute stresses, particularly socio cultural differences (Wexler & Burke, 2011).

Risk Factors Within American Indian Communities

- Intergenerational/Historical trauma associated with colonization (Manifest Destiny, Treaties, Forced Removal, Genocide, Contemporary Policy)
- Boarding school experience
- Federal state/policy
- Oppression
 - Discrimination



Protective Factors

- Spirituality (Metaphysical Connections)/Culture
 - The work of resiliency is not necessarily "religious," but there is definitely a spiritual aspect within it that nonetheless strengthens the heart of youth.... (Brokenleg, 2010, p. 10)
- Identity
 - “Participants felt that developing their cultural identity created resiliency vital to building and sustaining families and provided the strength to productively manage day-to-day issues such as family well-being, employment, self-sufficiency, wellness, and youth development (Grandbois & Sanders, 2012, p. 390-391)
 - personal attributes, positive/supportive relationships, and American Indian culture were found to be significant mechanisms of strength and Resilience (McMahon, Kenyon & Carter, 2013).
- Elders
 - James Clairmont, a Lakota spiritual elder, expresses how the concept of resilience is inherent in his tribal culture: “The closest translation of ‘resilience’ is a sacred word that means ‘resistance’ . . . resisting bad thoughts, bad behaviors. We accept what life gives us, good and bad, as Gifts from the Creator. We try to get through hard times, stressful times, with a good heart. The gift [of adversity] is the lesson we learn from overcoming it” (LaFrambois, et al. 2006; Original citation:Graham, 2001, p. 1)



Protective Factors (cont'd)

- Ceremonies and Tradition
 - “...that greater engagement in the traditional culture may lead to more positive outcomes for the children” (Gonzales, Knight, Birman, & Sirolli, 2003).
- Community-centric
 - “Being a Lumbee accords members a self-reliant, interdependent identity whereby individuals care for and are cared for by one another” (Angell & Jones, 2003).
- Humor

Self-Determination & Sovereignty

- “Inclusion of traditional beliefs and cultural practices within a western institution of health equals improved health status of Indigenous Populations” (Hirsch, 2011).
 - Example: [Nuka System of Care, South Central Foundation, Alaska.](#)

Conclusions

- Defining resilience too narrowly may result in imprecise conceptualizations and delivery approaches.
- The role humor plays in resilience is not well identified in the literature reviewed.
- The legacy of colonization in American Indian communities has implicit effects on the resilience of individuals and communities (historical trauma).
- Implementing and improving research practices that explore community-based factors of resilience must be a priority.
- Developing models of resilience within academic institutions must be inclusive of interdisciplinary approaches and indigenous perspectives.

Indigenous Resilience Model

Joseph & Hamill, 2014



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