



# Multigenerational Trauma: insights into the effects and how people heal

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# Teisha Simmons “Nekkeggun”

## More about your presenter



- Ti'eyegge hutaanh eslaanh
- Bedzeyh hutaanh
- Meneelghadzet'oh & Notaaleedenh
- Koyukon Athabascan
- Partner, mother, Granddaughter, Daughter
- Community member
- Tribal Liaison
- Language and song revitalization, Volunteering,

# Historical Trauma

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## What is it?

Multigenerational trauma experienced by a specific cultural, racial or ethnic group and related to major events that oppressed that group of people

- Holocaust
- Slavery
- Forced migration
- Forced violent colonization of Alaska Natives and Native Americans

# Impacts of historical trauma

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- Some will experience no effects of historical trauma
- Negative effects
  - Poor overall physical and behavioral health
  - Low self-esteem
  - Depression
  - Self-destructive behavior
  - Marked propensity for violent or aggressive behavior
  - Substance misuse and addiction
  - High rates of suicide
  - Cardiovascular disease
  - Epigenetic impacts

# Alaska Native History

## Four Great Deaths

- Diseases
- Alcoholism and substance abuse
- Enslavement & Boarding Schools
- Disconnection from land, water, each other, and self,





# Healing requires understanding

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# Key concepts of historical trauma

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- Current lifespan trauma superimposed upon a traumatic ancestral past creates additional adversity
- Can have an impact on psychological and physical health
- It is cumulative and reverberates across generations -- descendants who have not directly experienced a traumatic event can exhibit the signs and symptoms of trauma
- People coming into systems of services and supports may believe that systems do not support them and may experience triggers that are retraumatizing

# What are we seeing today?

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## Multigenerational trauma

- The transference of mental, emotional, physical, spiritual, or relational wounds caused in new generations from the trauma that past generations still carry. These wounds are passed down in cyclical fashion through displayed behaviors, attitudes, and through epigenetics/cellular memory.
- Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

## Persisting trauma

- The social, economic, institutional, judicial or other extenuating factors that perpetuate the effects of historical trauma, creating environmental triggers and reinforcement of original traumas. Persisting trauma mechanisms are set in place through and perpetuated by oppressive laws and social norms.



# Healing and overcoming

## A blend of western and traditional practices

- The work you are all doing
- Culturally competent services



# Incorporating traditional healing

## First Alaskans Institute Individual and Family Toolkit

### Traditional and cultural activities

- Maqi
- Kargi
- Dance practice
- Processing/gathering traditional foods together
- Therapeutic Acupuncture
- Learning traditional knowledge, language and practices



# Incorporating traditional healing

## First Alaskans Institute Individual and Family Toolkit

### Teachings from Ancestors, Cultures & Traditions

- Be in service to others
- Develop sisterhood and brotherhood
- Prayer & ceremony
- Gather and what your traditional foods, strengthen your body
- Potlatch healing process



# Multigenerational healing

“When we heal ourselves, we also heal our ancestors, our grandmothers, our grandfathers, and our children.” - Se'tsoo Dr. Rita Pitka Blumenstein





# Designing services that help those we serve

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# Anaa baasee' (Thank you) Denaakk'e

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