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. (Thorton, 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

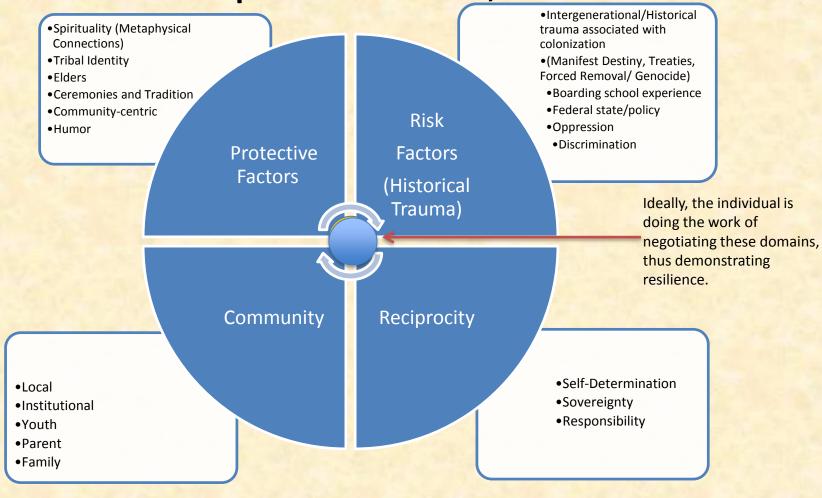
Self-Determination & Sovereignty

- "Inclusion of traditional beliefs and cultural practices within a western institution of health equals improved health status of Indigenous Populations" (Hirch, 2011).
 - Example: <u>Nuka System of Care, South Central</u>
 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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