



# Native Americans: the Minority within the Minority

Denise Miller  
Sandy Rivers

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Welcome & Opening



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## Native Americans: the Minority within the Minority

The most effective way to destroy people is to deny and obliterate their own understanding of their history.

George Orwell

**Not even on the radar in cultural diversity awareness/research**

Lack of Understanding History

- Colonial Occupation/Stolen Land
- Genocide
- Boarding School/Foster Care/40s Scoop

On-Going Oppression/Issues

Lack of Culturally Sensitive Treatment Options

- Low success rate
- Mistrust of traditional treatment
- Poor Outcomes

3

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### Indigenous Historical Trauma

Stolen land / Every treaty broken

- Forced Relocation
- Reservations 2.3% of USA land
- No citizenship until 1924 (previously not considered as human)

Lack of Religious Freedom until 1978

Leaders of the U.S. Government:

- Openly claimed that the skin of Indians could be peeled off to make tall boots.
- Indians must be annihilated



"The immediate objects are total destruction of their settlements, and capture of as many prisoners of every age and sex possible"  
George Washington

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### Scalping & Genocide



Grandmother Isabelle



"Kill Every Buffalo You Can! Every Buffalo Dead is an Indian Gone"

1641 First bounty in North America for Indian Scalps  
\$60 per scalp

Native prisoners sold into slavery  
Women and children raped and enslaved  
Colonial law "kill savage Indians on sight at will"

56 Million (90%) killed in the Americas  
Intentional destruction of food sources

- Genocide of Buffalo

[This Land is Native Land - YouTube](#)

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### Boarding Schools: 1879-1978



"Save the Man, Kill the Indian"



Federal Govt Program funded Catholic and other Religious Organizations to Assimilate NA Children

Children were **forcibly taken** from their families suffering:

- Abuse of ALL kinds
- 100% loss of Culture, Identity & Language
- Victims of Scientific "Starvation Experiments" in Canada

1978 Child Welfare Act (right to decline boarding school)

June 17, 2022  
Remains found on Boarding School Property



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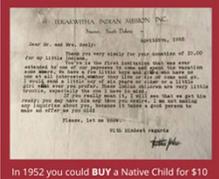
### Sixties Scoop Mid 1950s-1980s & Birth Alerts

**Sixties Scoop**  
 Estimated 20,000 children taken  
 Then Placed in Foster homes to be adopted

- Adopted/Sold to white families
- Often the only Indigenous person in community

**Birth Alerts**  
 Issued without Parents' Consent (Canada)

- Disproportionally used for Indigenous Children
- Resulting in children placed in Foster Care



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### Foster Care

- Four times more than Non-Native

Before 1979

- Over 80% of reservation families lost at least one child
- More than 25% were removed from their families



Ceremonially Blessed Moccasins given at birth before they can be taken and put into foster care

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Long Lasting Effects of Boarding School, 60's Scoop & Foster Care

- Homelessness
- Incarceration
- Loss of Cultural Identity
  - Name, Language, Broken Familiar Attachment, Low Self-Esteem, Shame
- Mental Health Issues/Addiction
- Distrust of Government

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### Tribal, State and Federal Sovereignty Law Issues

Convoluted, Confusing Laws that don't Support Tribes

- Self Determination Era Policy Promotes Sovereignty
- Criminal/Civil Jurisdiction within State and Federal laws *Infringe* upon Tribal Sovereignty

Tribal Jurisdiction Varies

- Impacts access to Court Ordered Treatment
- Jail/Prison Sentences



Elayne Gregg and family MMIW

10

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### Current Issues



- 38% Higher Incarceration rate than National Average
- 30% more referred to Juvenile Court than whites
- Highest rate killed by police** than any racial group
- Victim of violent crimes, more than **double** the rate of all other US citizens
- Poverty
- PTSD - Mental Health
- Health Care Covid 19 mortality 2.8 times that for white
- Substance Use
- Invisibility

11

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### Suicide

Since 1999 **Suicide Rates are Up**

- 139% for Native Women
- 71% for Native Men
- 33% nationwide in US

Male youths ages 15-24 is

- 126 per 100,000
- Highest rate in the US
- 24 per 100,000 for Non-Indigenous



Suicide Prevention Resource Center June 28, 2019  
Reclaiming Native Youth 2018

12

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**Women's Issues**



Incarcerated **six times** the rate of white women

84% experience violence in their lifetime

- 88% of NA women are victims of violent crime committed by **non-Native perpetrators**

More than **twice** as likely to be the victim of a violent crime than any other demographic

56% have experienced **sexual violence**

Forced Sterilization 1960s & 1970s

Missing & Murdered **TEN times** national average

Highly susceptible to **human trafficking**




Honaly Nihari Macchende Anderson

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**Alcohol, Drugs & Addiction**



"Substance dependence is one of the most important sources of health problems facing Native Americans."

**Highest Rates** of alcohol, marijuana, cocaine, inhalant, and hallucinogen use disorders **compared to other ethnic groups**

Lowest rate of treatment engagement

**1 in 5** NA Young Adults (aged 18-25) has a Substance Use Disorder

- Highest Rate of Opioid Overdose** out of all U.S. racial and ethnic groups
- Second and Third highest overdose death rates from **heroin and synthetic opioids**, respectively

American Indians and Alaska Natives (2017) Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

14

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**Lack of Effective Recovery Services & Why This is Important**



**Standard Western Treatment Centers Don't:**

- Acknowledge/Understand Indigenous Ancestral/Historical Trauma
- Provide Culturally Based Support
- Incorporate Red Road/Wellbriety Trained Therapists, Recovery Coaches, Culturally Conscious Social Workers

**Results in:**

- Poor Engagement and Retention
- Lack of Understanding of Cultural Values
- Mistrust of Treatment Providers

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## Culturally Sensitive Recovery Coaches

Understand the Cultural Issues Facing the NA Community

Provide Resources and Advocacy

- Referral for Culturally Sensitive Treatment Programs
- Housing (Clearing & Blessing)
- Job Placement
- Health Support - Insurance Assistance/Food Stamps, etc

Cultural Support

- Meetings/Talking Circle
- Ceremonies/Sweat Lodge/Pow Wow
- Drumming/Singing
- Art/Sewing/Crafts/Regalia Making
- White Bison Wellbriety
- Medicine People/Elders



Wellbriety Pow Wow, Portland, OR

16

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## White Bison Wellbriety & The Red Road

Began in 1990

The Medicine Wheel and 12 Steps

The Red Road to Wellbriety (book)

Facilitator and Recovery Coach Trainings

- Warrior Down
- Medicine Wheel and 12 Steps
- Celebrating Families

OnLine Meetings

Conferences

Wellbriety Certified Treatment Centers



Dan Coyhis and Elders at Wellbriety Conference



17

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## The Haven's Native Ways Program

This program includes:

- Drumming/Singing
- Ceremonies
- Talking Circles
- White Bison Wellbriety
- Healings with Medicine People
- Sewing
- Beading
- MMIW events
- and more

### The Native Ways Program at The Haven in Tucson



Successful Completion Rates

- 0-8% Prior to Native Ways Program
- High 90s After Creation of Program

Denise with former client and her children

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## Drumming for Women in Recovery

**Denise's on-line Drumming for Women in Recovery Program**

**Program includes:**

- Weekly Drumming & Singing
- Clearing/Smudging
- Guided Meditations
- Medicine Wheel Teachings
- Teachings Specific to Women
- Monthly Ceremonies
- Individual Support Sessions



**Drumming for Women in Recovery**

"Denise's work has been an outstanding addition to our Native Ways Program"  
Nati Cano, Program Director

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## Balance and the Medicine Wheel in Recovery



**Balance and the Medicine Wheel in Recovery**  
Denise Miller Workshops

The Emotional, Physical, Mental and Spiritual components of Recovery in the Medicine Wheel

The importance of establishing and maintaining strong boundaries

Techniques for fundamental Energy Hygiene and Strengthening Boundaries.

Benefits of Energy Hygiene

- release stress
- increase clarity
- improve professional relationship for improved outcomes.

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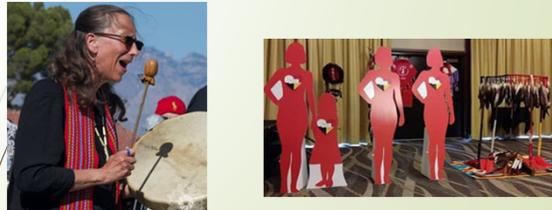
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## Closing Honour Song & Prayer



[Honour Song \(MMIW song\) - YouTube](#)

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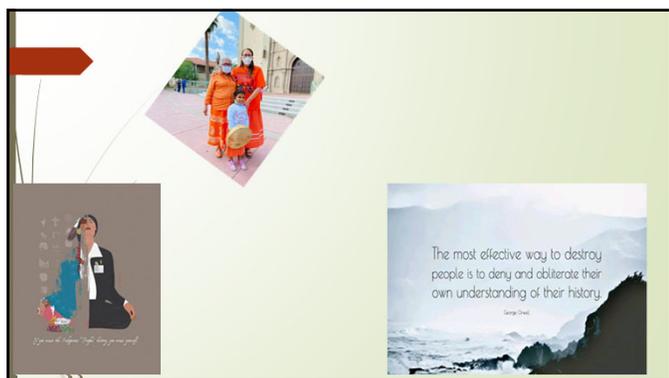
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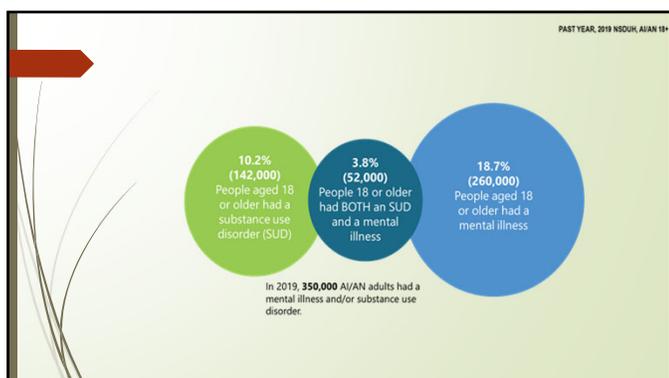
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