Traditional Healing

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Learning Objectives

- Describe 3 cultural approaches used to promote healing
- Explain the difference between the traditional Native practice of a sweat lodge ceremony and a talking circle
- Identify 2 benefits of the cultural arts program
NAC Mission: “Improving the lives of individuals and families through Native American culturally appropriate behavioral health, affordable housing, and community development services.”

Since 1972 Native American Connections (NAC) has been improving community health/wellness and increasing housing stability for individuals, children/youth, and families. NAC owns and operates 20 sites in Phoenix offering and providing access to integrated healthcare, affordable housing and community development services to over 10,000 individuals and families each year. NAC’s target population includes homeless and low-income individuals/families in metro-Phoenix.

NAC-Documentary.mp4
Overview of NAC Services

- Housing (Affordable Housing and Permanent Supportive Housing)
- Supportive/Transitional Living for Adult Men and Women
- HomeBase Youth Service (homeless youth shelter)
- Adult Intensive Outpatient Programs (AM and PM)
- Adult Standard Outpatient Program
- General Mental Health Counseling for Adults and Children (10 years old & older)
- Youth & Family Wellness
- Transition Age Youth Services (18-21 years old)
- Standing Stronger (adolescent treatment program)
- Behavioral Health Residential Facility (Patina Wellness Center)
Traditional Native Practices

Central to the treatment programs and the healing process

- Evidenced based practice is anchored with the Native American spiritual practices in a complementary approach
- Healing & recovery with the use of Native American traditional treatment approaches is very important in overcoming daily challenges and in recovery of oneself
- Vision – acknowledging effects of substance use & trauma, honoring cultural values & developing a vision of success
- Sense of Hope – interconnectedness, the inner spirit, mind, body & spirit balance and responsibility of self
- Connectedness – to self, family, community. Building quality and authentic healthy relationships
Native Traditional Values

Values of traditions of Native people are within stories of how their people overcame barriers and obstacles in the past.

Cultural stories, practices and beliefs which have sustained the path of their ancestors can reconcile the paths of their descendants.

The belief of an integrated culturally & spiritually responsive recovery program support and provide those we service with an understanding of their own cultural history and their innate protective resiliency factors.

Mind, Body, Spirit and the harmonious balance of each.
The Process

Native traditional healing practices in the treatment setting permit individuals to obtain a collective healing experience with self and others, internal & external.

Participants take personal responsibility for their own healing from their self-analysis while being a collective and supportive member of the circle.

The process on a non-judgmental and non-hierarchical approach fosters trust through listening and sharing for the participants.
Cultural Sensitive Practice for the Professional

- Provides cultural appropriateness in care and outcome for clients from the staff
- Enrich staff & client’s personal experience, knowledge and growth about diverse cultures
- Develops specific skills, awareness & attitude for the service provider
- Allows service provider to examine their own bias
- Knowledge of historical, socioeconomic & political situation and construct of the tribal people served is a resource for the staff
- Cultural capacity is available to address clinical matter with traditional approach and understanding
- Treatment approach supports the client and their family strengths & values
Native tradition has always honored practices that acknowledge spiritual philosophies learned and carried from ancestral times to the present to support and maintain harmonious and holistic existence with the natural world & the natural laws.
The Collective Sacred

- Taught & shown how Native specific teachings can assist their recovery & promote spiritual connectedness on a daily basis
- Participation and instructions in the Red Roach Tradition, the Talking Circle, Cultural Arts, Positive Indian Parenting and Drumming/Singing as fundamental holistic approaches to recovery
- Staff training necessitate the Talking Circle, Gather of Native Americans, the Circle of Strength & Cultural Competency to expand their personal & professional insight and merging with evidence based practice
Wisdom & Knowledge

- Stories help transfer the philosophical basis of why things are done in a certain manner in ceremonies according to traditional knowledge from the teacher to the learner.
- All Native traditional ceremonies have their own unique set of customary rituals, teachings & approaches which include the use of a variety of herbs.
- Medicinal herbs are used in cleansing, purification and blessings. Plants used in these settings have traditional stories of their use and purpose of their medical healing qualities.
Cultural Programming

- Sweat Lodge
- Talking Circle
- Smudging/Prayer
- Drumming/Song
- Story telling
- Meditation
- Cultural Arts
- GONA
- Circle of Strength
Story Telling

Story of the Four Sacred Medicines
by H. Benally

There came a time when Mother Earth and Father Sky fell out of harmony with one another because of a difference which halted working cooperatively with one another for four long years. Mother Earth claimed that everything that lived and which walked upon the ground were under her control. Father Sky in return claimed everything from the air on up was his to control. Within that time, Father Sky’s air became thin with no moisture or rain. Mother Earth became very dry and many of her children began to suffer and die; the plants and animals were vanishing fast. Eventually, the only one bird and four plants remained. The plants were cedar, sage, tobacco and sweet grass. They were the only ones who had withstood the hardship and went to Mother Earth and told how they were suffering because of her decision that she would not work in a harmonious relationship with Father Sky anymore. Mother Earth realized how devastating their difference had affected all life. She called upon the bird which was an eagle to deliver a message to Father Sky to restore harmony between them. The bird flew on up to the sky and flew until it could not be seen anymore. Soon the clouds gathered followed by a distant thunder and lightning, a second lightening followed further off in the sky, a third call of thunder and lightning came much closer to Mother Earth and upon the fourth thunder, lightning lit up the sky and opened the heavens with an abundance of rain. Soon everything that had vanished began to reappear as the air, water, earth reconciled. It is for this reason cedar, sage, tobacco and sweet grass became known as the Four Medicines. When we use them today we use their fundamental nature and spirit of enduring strength. From that day forth, the four medicines were assigned to the ceremonies of all Indian people because of their courage, stamina, resilience and ability to survive. That is why today we use the tobacco, cedar, sweet grass and sage, and we use the eagle feather in our ceremonies.
Smudging/Prayer

The cedar, sage, sweet grass or other regional herbs are lit in a small vessel such as an abalone shell or other receptacle specific for this use & sets the stage of healing.

By smudging, participants spiritually align their mind, body, spirit and emotions with powerful personal affirmations.

Smudging oneself is very important in spiritual cleansing, connecting, and anchoring.

A feather or the hands are used to fan and apply the herbal smoke from head to toe, toe to head & various points over the entire body.

The incense of the herbs/plants naturally help a person to connect with the tranquil and optimistic side of life. In a quiet supportive atmosphere, participants get in touch with their thoughts and feelings.
Meditation

Native American principles support wellness in self, family and community

White Bison – Elder’s Meditation of the day

“Our fathers gave us many laws which they had learned from their fathers. These laws were good.” - Chief Joseph, NEZ PERCE.

The creator gives us many laws to live by. These are different than the laws of man. The laws of the Creator are designed for us to live in harmony and balance with ourselves and each other. These laws are about having freedom and happiness. Our Elders teach us these laws. Laws about how to treat each other, laws about how to treat and respect our Mother Earth, the laws about the environment.

Oh Great Spirit, teach me the laws of the unseen world. Today I pray You open my eyes so I can better see the Red Road.
Meditation

Four Laws of Change

- Change is from within
- In order for development to occur it must be preceded by a vision
- A great learning must take place
- Create a Healing Forest
Meditation

Medicine Wheel

- Way of expressing principles, laws, and values
- A balanced, cyclic, circle-based system
  - Four directions, human life, cycle of life, human growth
  - Polarity-based system
  - Seen and unseen world
  - Interconnected system – interdependent, interrelated & joined
  - Conflict & struggle – conflict precedes clarity
  - 12-steps aligned with the circle teachings, principles the ancestors lived by (Honesty, Hope, Faith, Courage, Integrity, Willingness, Humility, Forgiveness, Justice, Perseverance, Spiritual Awareness, Service)
Drumming/Song

- Release & balance spiritual energy
- Hypnotic rhythms allow the body to achieve a meditative state while relaxing the body & calming the mind
- Increase intuition and heighten perception
- Music – create peaceful relaxation & emotional well being, emotional breakthrough, sooth the spirit, reduces stress & anxiety
- Safe, sacred space
Sweat Lodge

- Is a purification ceremony usually conducted in a simple, round structure of willows covered with blanket and tarps.
- Heated stones are placed in the center of the Lodge while the leader guide the people in prayer, song and sacred teachings.
- Represents the womb of Mother Earth, a sacred place for cleansing and healing the body, mind, emotion and spiritual life of an individual.
- Place to nurture spiritual growth & personal strength.
- Place to pray for forgiveness, share hope and to give thanks.
- Meditation, prayers and the use of herbs aid participants in cleansing their thoughts, emotions and physical being with their prayers.
Within the four consecutive rounds, the ceremony gives spiritual acknowledgment to the four cardinal directions revered with a fundamental principle or way of life teaching.

The central focus is to balance the mental, emotional & spiritual nature of each participant in harmonious alignment with the teachings, songs and prayers.
Sweat Lodge – Understanding & Considerations

- Is impossible to describe fully, as each lodge varies according to the orientation of the person leading the ceremony.
- Is important for women on their “moon” or menstrual cycle to abstain from participating in the ceremony.
- In traditional teachings, women are life-givers with their ability to bring forth children and undergo their monthly personal purification ceremony. This is a time for women to honor their womanhood in privacy with appropriate care and nurturance.
- At NAC, the women and men have separate lodges and each honor their own lodge.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Men’s Lodge</th>
<th>Women’s Lodge</th>
<th>Men’s Lodge</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sunday</td>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>Tuesday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:30 – 9:30 pm</td>
<td>6:30 – 9:30 pm</td>
<td>6:30 – 9:30 pm</td>
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Talking Circle

Coming together in a circle has always been honored by Native people in their tradition. In this unified manner, every person is important within the circle, equal.

Creates a spiritual setting so participants can share mutual support as they begin to trust and experience healing through personal expression and prayer.

Approached mindfully, is a powerful recovery tool that can help individuals to bring healing to the four focal areas of their lives; emotional, physical, mental and spiritual.
# Talking Circle Etiquette

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive</th>
<th>Negative</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bless oneself with strong positive affirmations</td>
<td>Judging others in the circle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speak from the heart</td>
<td>Interrupting or cross-talking as others are sharing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respect the elements, feather, oneself and others</td>
<td>Walking in front of the person with the feather</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust the process</td>
<td>Break the cycle by leaving, support is very important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remember there is hope and healing</td>
<td>Bringing in food or drinks</td>
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</tbody>
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Cultural Arts

- Creative process of art making to improve and enhance the physical, mental and emotional well-being of individuals of all ages
- Anyone can be creative in some form or another, especially beneficial to those who are less capable and less comfortable expressing themselves via words
- Help clients to see things about themselves that they may not have comprehended
- Use the clinical team to help clients process emotions and feeling that they are struggling with, so they healing can begin
- Idea of self-exploration, can lead to some insightful conclusions about themselves
- Help people with social skills, can help clients that are withdrawn or shy
Gathering of Native Americans (GONA)

- “All my relations” establishes a feeling of inclusion and belonging
- Healing from historical and cultural trauma, the healing of self, family and community
- Belmont process – what did you hear, see and feel?
- Four levels of life’s teaching
  - Belonging – inclusive, open, safe & trusting
  - Mastery – impact of historical trauma, resilience and recovery
  - Interdependence – planning process, assess resources & relationships, strengthen interconnectedness
  - Generosity – symbolizes each participant’s larger gift to their peers and community
Circle of Strength

Recovery is a Family Process
• Stages of Development
• The Brain & Substance Use
• Addiction & Stages of Change
• Healthy Relationships
• Family Roles
• Dependency & Family Strengths
• Boundaries & Family Strengths
• Traditions Twelve Steps
• Listening & Communication
• Feelings & Messaging
• Healing Conflict
• Balanced Living
• Self-care
• Family Time
• Relapse Prevention

Family workshop and experience of family wellness model & recovery immersion program

For clients, family & identified supports

Begin the conversation within families & supports on how to create an environment of healing, understanding, communication & wellness
Recovery

The culmination of cultural, spiritual and traditional values attained point the way toward breaking the cycle of addiction and hurt

- Flourish a path where a purpose is fulfilled
- Where the spirit, health and the life of their families are nurtured
- To carry the spiritual vision and traditional values into the future for the next generation
- To live by and honor the values of culture and spiritual teachings
- Restore the strength and balance of self, families and communities
Learning Objective Review

“Humankind has not woven the web of life. We are but one thread within it. Whatever we do to the web, we do to ourselves. All things are bound together. All things connect.”

– Chief Seattle, 1854

• Describe 3 cultural approaches used to promote healing
• Explain the difference between the traditional Native practice of a sweat lodge ceremony and a talking circle
• Identify 2 benefits of the cultural arts program
Contact Information

Native American Connections - Administration

4520 N Central Avenue, Suite 600
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For general information about Native American Connections or to volunteer with us, please contact us at 602-254-3247.

Native American Connections - Outpatient & Assessment

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For further information on substance abuse or mental health services, or other behavioral health questions, please contact us at the email address above or call 602-424-2060.

Native American Connections - Housing Rental & Office Leasing Center

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“Walking the Red Road is a determined act of living within the Creator’s instructions. Basically, it is living a life of truth, humbleness, respect, friendship, and spiritually. Those on this road are by no means walking a perfect path, but are in search of self-discovery and instructions.”