Historical trauma and its effects
on a Ni mil puu family;
finding story
healing wounds

Robbie Paul PhD.
Tow-le-kit-we-son-my
Ni mil puu-Nez Perce

Historical Unresolved Grief

- cumulative, in that there is a
collective compounding and psychic
wounding over time, both over a life
span and across generations.

  - Braveheart-Jordan (1995)

Symptoms

Mourning resolution is incomplete and
the grief can be manifested as:

- Prolonged signs of acute grief
- Depression
- Substance abuse
- Somatization
Post Traumatic Stress Disorder

According to the DSM-V (APA, 2013), PTSD refers to a disorder that may occur when a person has been exposed to a traumatic event.

PTSD can stem from an event that is:
- Actual
- Witnessed
- Confronted

The Event(s) must involve:
- Actual Death or Serious Injury
- Threatened Death or Serious Injury
Person's Response can involve

- Intense Fear
- Feeling of helplessness
- Horror

Trauma Response
The constellation of features in reaction to a traumatic event or series of events has been called the trauma response and encompasses symptomatology such as war neurosis, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), and psychic trauma (van der Kolk, 1987; Krystal, 1984)

Intergenerational Transmission of Grief and Trauma:
The transfer of features or symptoms across generations, from the survivors to their descendants, is delineated as intergenerational transmission. This nomenclature appears principally in the trauma and Jewish Holocaust literature.
Trauma woven into DNA

- Science of epigenetics, literally "above the gene" proposes we pass more that DNA in our genes
- Our genes can carry memories of trauma experienced by our ancestors can influence how we react to trauma and stress

LeManuel Bitsóí, Navajo, PhD
Research Associate in Genetics at Harvard University

- According to Bitsóí, epigenetics is beginning to uncover scientific proof that intergenerational trauma is real.
- Historical trauma can be seen as contributing in the development of illnesses such as:
  - PTSD
  - Depression
  - Type 2 Diabetes

Culture
Set of beliefs, attitudes, values, and standards of behavior that are passed from one generation to the next.

Abney (in Fontes 2005)
Acculturation

...the practice whereby ethnic minority people come in contact with different environmental influences that have the potential of influencing different practice.


Potential: not everyone goes through this process to the same extent

Family and Culture

• a carrier of conscious and unconscious values, myths, fantasies, and beliefs that may not be shared by the larger community or culture...

Danieli (1998)

Conspiracy of Silence

• Transmission of unresolved grief happens with the first generation who experiences the trauma
  • They either do not share the story of the trauma
  • Only bits and pieces are shared, so not a complete picture is known, but the children are aware of the omnipresent feeling that is left
  • Thus leaving the children of the survivors having absorbed the omnipresent feelings and unspoken grief
  • Danieli (1998)
Scholarly Personal Narrative

"I have found that personal narrative writing helps us all to understand our histories, shape our destinies, develop our moral imaginations, and gives us something truly worth living and dying for."

Robert J. Nash

Story Telling

- Native American author N. Scott Momaday says
  - Storytelling...is an act by which man [woman] strives to realize his [her] capacity for wonder, meaning, and delight.
  - Man tells stories in order to understand his/her experiences, whatever they may be.

Power of Story Telling

- To discover self
- How our lived experience contributed to silencing the story
- The process of telling story, can be the beginning of healing
- Tell the story must listen to what "I" am saying
  - Listening to the ancestors, but using my voice
"You have to listen to learn and learn to listen."

Chief Burke, Umatilla
Healing our Wounded Spirits Conference April 2003.

How do you begin to heal the unresolved grief?
- "What cannot be talked about can also not be put to rest; and if it is not, the wounds continue to fester from generation to generation."
  - In Danieli (1990)

The story begins
**Tradition**

* "I believe that the tradition of telling the oral stories of self, family, and culture, is a valuable and honored tradition in the process of healing self wounds, family wounds and cultural wounds."
Camas fields on Weippe Prairie, where Lewis and Clark happened upon a Niaiwpuu village.

Captain Merriweather Lewis
Captain William Clark

Rev. Henry Harmon Spalding. He and his wife Eliza arrived at present day Spalding, Idaho on Nov. 29, 1836

Arrival of the Nez Perce at the treaty grounds at Fort Walla Walla, Washington Territory on June 1, 1855
The steamboat Spokane on the Snake River near Lewiston, Idaho, in the early twentieth century.


Seven Days Whipping Wa-ta-oy-naq-pal-hayne

U-n-al-wat (Phoebe Lowry), mother of Ka-quizn-nee or Black Raven (Jesse Paul) Circa 1890s
Snake River Area on the Oregon side, traditional grounds of the Joseph Band

Wallowa Lake, Oregon
Traditional Grounds of Chief Joseph

General Otis O. Howard gave the order to Chief Joseph and others to move onto the reservation within 30 days, starting from May 1, 1877
Tipi's at Big Hole Battlefield, Montana

Titus Paul
Koo-ya-mah, Mountain Lion
with granddaughter
Kim Enz at Big Hole Battle field after ceremony on
August 9, 1994

Healing
• Healing is a process and takes time
• Take Personal responsibility for own healing
• Pray to the Creator for the time to go to those places in your life history that have affected you and your family
• On or near the anniversary dates of the historical event go to the physical site
• Participate in the ceremony
• Tell the story
• Begin to forgive and let go
• May take more than one visit
Checking Battle field markers at Bears Paw, October, 1993

1st picture taken of Chief Joseph after surrendering
Nez Perce Indian Burial Ground Memorial 1879-1885 In Tonkawa, Oklahoma

Photo taken at Carlisle Indian Industrial Boarding School, 1880. There are seven Nez Perce who were sent from the Nez Perce exile camp of the Ponca Indian Agency, Oklahoma. Top row left to right: Jesse Paul, Charles Wolf, Sam Johna. Bottom: Dolly Gould and Rebecca Little Wolf.
Carlisle Indian Industrial School 1888

Jason Conditt
Tin-win-go-say-din-kun

Jane Parsons Wa-hee-loo
Conditt and her husband Jason Conditt
Daughter of Chief Ut-sin-malikan
Lydia Condit Paul
Tow-le-kit-we-son-my
Daughter of Jane and
Jason Condit
Granddaughter of
Ut-sin-malikan

Paul
Ranch
House
1974

Left to right
Richard, William,
Bessie,
Esther

The four oldest
children of Jesse
and Lydia Paul

Circa 1902
Children of survivors

- Many manifest Holocaust-derived behaviors
- Anniversaries of their parents' traumata will experience painful bewilderment, that is not understood.

The Paul Family, 1996

Titus and Maxine with their five children, Roberta, Jess, Richard, Warren and Jackie, Craigmont, Idaho 1996
Titus Paul, Koo-ya-mah, Whitetail Battle Field in back ground painting by Patty Reid.
Truth and Reconciliation Commission in the United States

- Now is the time to heal
- What would this commission look like
- Examples to look at
  - South Africa’s TRC
  - Canada’s TRC just newly formed
- Where to Begin
  - Focus groups
  - State human rights commissions
  - Churches
  - Suggestions
Obey the Creator
And do good to all

It is good Medicine
Healing your wounds

And easing your pains

Framework Model
Building Resiliency
Learning Resilience

- APA defines resilience as the process of adapting well in the face of adversity
- Help make connections
- Avoid seeing crises as insurmountable problems
- Accept that change is a part of living
- Look for opportunities for self-discovery
- Nurture a positive view of yourself
- Take care of self

Cultural Competence

- Person
  - Know self
  - Understand personal and professional ethnocentrism
  - Be open to learning about others and other topics
  - Find a cultural mentor
  - Attend community events
  - Try different foods

Person

- Understand privilege and its implications in the work we do
- Be an ally and speak up!
- One may or may not be culturally competent but we can be culturally responsive
Reflective questions to think about as a professional:

- How do you personally find your own story?
- How do you confront your story?
- How do you heal?
- How do you listen?
- So now what? How does this make sense to me?

Workplace

- Build relationships with individuals, families, and co-workers
- Be an ally; SPEAK UP!
- Mentor a new employee
- Look at the structure of the organization

Workplace

- Welcoming environment for clients
- Intake
- Human Resources
- Service Delivery
- Assessment and Evaluation
Reflective questions to consider when working with Native American population

- How do you help them find their own story?
- As a health care professional, how do you recognize that a client may be dealing with unresolved grief? (symptoms could be signs in behavior, alcohol abuse, absenteeism, drug use, sexually activity.)
- How do you help client deal with their unresolved grief?
- How do you help them listen to their ancestors?

Society

- Understand the socio-political implications of policies
- Work with community mentors
- Ask community members their opinions
- Be an ally-SPEAK UP!
- Continue or start a dialogue of how to address the socio-economic-health related issues that relate to historical trauma

Things to consider

- How do we build an infrastructure to address the unmet health care needs of underserved populations, which can include the Native American population as well as several other underserved populations
- What would that look like?
- Continue to ask questions
- Be open and continue to learn
- Acknowledge that this work can be overwhelming, be sure to take care of self in the process
Professional Ethnocentrism

...where the professional sees his/her own beliefs and practices as superior, and misidentifies differing cultural practices as maltreatment.

Fontes (2005)