Shouldering Grief: Validating Native American Historical Trauma

Dr. Brave Heart, conceptualized historical trauma in the 1980’s, as a way to develop stronger understanding of why life for many Native Americans is not fulfilling “the American Dream”. Although, many Native Americans have adapted to an Americanized way of life and are healthy and economically self-sufficient, there is still a significant proportion of Native people who are not faring well.

Continuing her research at UNM, Dr. Brave Heart is currently working with Native youth in New Mexico in recognizing historical trauma and its effects. As co-PI for the project, she adds that next steps are to collect more sophisticated research and to obtain NIH funding; to develop evidence-based practices. She was recruited by UNM because of their desire to bring in native research faculty for the Center for Rural & Community Behavioral Health. She currently has a NARCH grant in review on development of a pilot historical trauma model for tribal colleges. She has also developed a website for the Albuquerque Indian Health Service on historical trauma.

Dr. Brave Heart She was formerly an Associate Professor at Columbia University School of Social Work and a clinical intervention research team member at New York State Psychiatric Institute/Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons. She was Associate Professor at the University of Denver for many years and developed historical trauma and unresolved grief theory and interventions among American Indians. In 1992, she founded the Takini Network, a non-profit organization based in Rapid City, South Dakota, devoted to community healing from massive group trauma. Dr. Brave Heart’s Historical Trauma and Unresolved Grief Intervention was selected as a Tribal Best Practice by First Nations Behavioral Health Association and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). Dr. Brave Heart’s prior work as PI on SAMHSA-funded projects such as the Lakota Regional Community Action Grant on Historical Trauma and Integrating Historical Trauma Intervention in a Lakota Parenting Project informs her current research. Dr. Brave Heart is also PI for the Indigenous Peoples of the Americas Survey on traumatic, grief, and loss and is working with the Aberdeen Area American Indian veterans.

For more information about the NM CARES Health Disparities Center, our Speaker Series please contact Miria Kano at mkano@salud.unm.edu, at 505-272-3876, or check out the links below.

Links:
NM CARES Health Disparities Center:
http://hsc.unm.edu/programs/nmcareshd/index.shtml