

Center *for* Rural Health



American Indian/Alaska Native Mental Health Disparities

Jacqueline S. Gray, PhD

Center for Rural Health
University of North Dakota

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AI/AN Mental Health Issues

- The asterisks (*) of studies (to few to report)
- Office of Minority Health (OMH) reports AI/AN have higher rates than all races of:
 - Serious psychological distress
 - Feelings of sadness, hopelessness, & worthlessness
 - Feelings of nervousness or restlessness
 - Suicide
- AI/AN overrepresented among populations in high-need of MH services:
 - Homeless
 - Incarcerated
 - Substance abusers
 - Exposed to trauma
 - Children in foster care

OMH,
2016

AI/AN Mental Health Disparities

Alcohol Abuse:

- **39.4%** AI/AN 26-49 years binge drink in the past month (national rate is **28.9%**)
- Risk factors: unemployed or living in poverty
- AI/AN **5x** as likely to die of alcohol related disease

Drug Abuse:

- **21.1%** >11 years illicit drug use disorder in past year
- **20%** need treatment; Only **12%** who need it receive treatment
- Methamphetamine threatens to dwarf alcohol problems

AI/AN Mental Health Disparities

Mental Health Status AI/AN adults compared with Non-Hispanic whites:

- Serious psychological distress 1.7 X higher
- Sadness 1.8 X higher
- Hopelessness 1.5 X higher
- Worthlessness 1.6 X higher
- Everything is an effort 1.2 X higher
- Nervous, all/most of time 1.6 X higher
- Restlessness, all/most of time 1.5 X higher

Violence in Indian Country

- Violent deaths from unintentional injuries, homicide, suicide account for **75%** of all mortality for AI/AN in their 20s
- Bullying **27.5%** AI/AN grades 6-12
 - 20.1% national all races
- AI/AN are **2.5** times as likely to experience violent crimes
- AI/AN are **at least 2 times** more likely to experience rape or sexual assault crimes compared to all other races
- **61%** of AI/AN women have been assaulted in their lifetimes **34%** of AI/AN women will be raped in their lifetimes

Violence in Indian Country

- **39%** of AI/AN women will be subjected to violence by an intimate partner in their lifetimes;
- **17%** AI/AN women reported being stalked during their lifetimes;
- Among AI/AN women victims of rape or sexual assault, an average of **67%** describe the offender as non-Native;
- Among Native women victims of assault, an average of **63%** describe the offender as non-Native;
- **46%** of people living on reservations in 2010 were non-Native.

Trauma in Indian Country

Several distinct forms of trauma have been identified in Indian Country:

- Cultural Trauma
- Historical Trauma
- Intergenerational Trauma
- Current Trauma

Effects of MH Problems

- 90% of AI/AN suicide completers have MH Dx
- Suicide is 2nd leading cause of death
- Suicide contagion in communities push rates higher
- Cultural stigma against talking about death
- Shortage of behavioral health providers
- Turn over of BH staff working in isolation
- Lack of AI/AN providers

Culturally Based Training

- Trauma Focused –Cognitive Behavioral Therapy
 - Project Making Medicine – OUHSC
- Wellbriety Training
 - White Bison
- AI/AN Addictions Technology Transfer Center
 - University of Iowa
- Equine Assisted Therapy
 - Rosebud Sioux Tribe – Horse Program
- Healing of the Canoe –
 - Northwestern Coastal tribes

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