



**A CULTURALLY INFORMED DISCUSSION OF
TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY AMONG NATIVE
AMERICANS**

Dr. Wendelin Hume University of North Dakota- NIJII
Wendelin.hume@und.edu

First a few Thank You's

Miigwech and acknowledgement of the space

Miigwech to ancestors generally

Miigwech to Creator and Spirits

Miigwech to Organizers and Sponsors and Participants

Miigwech to my family

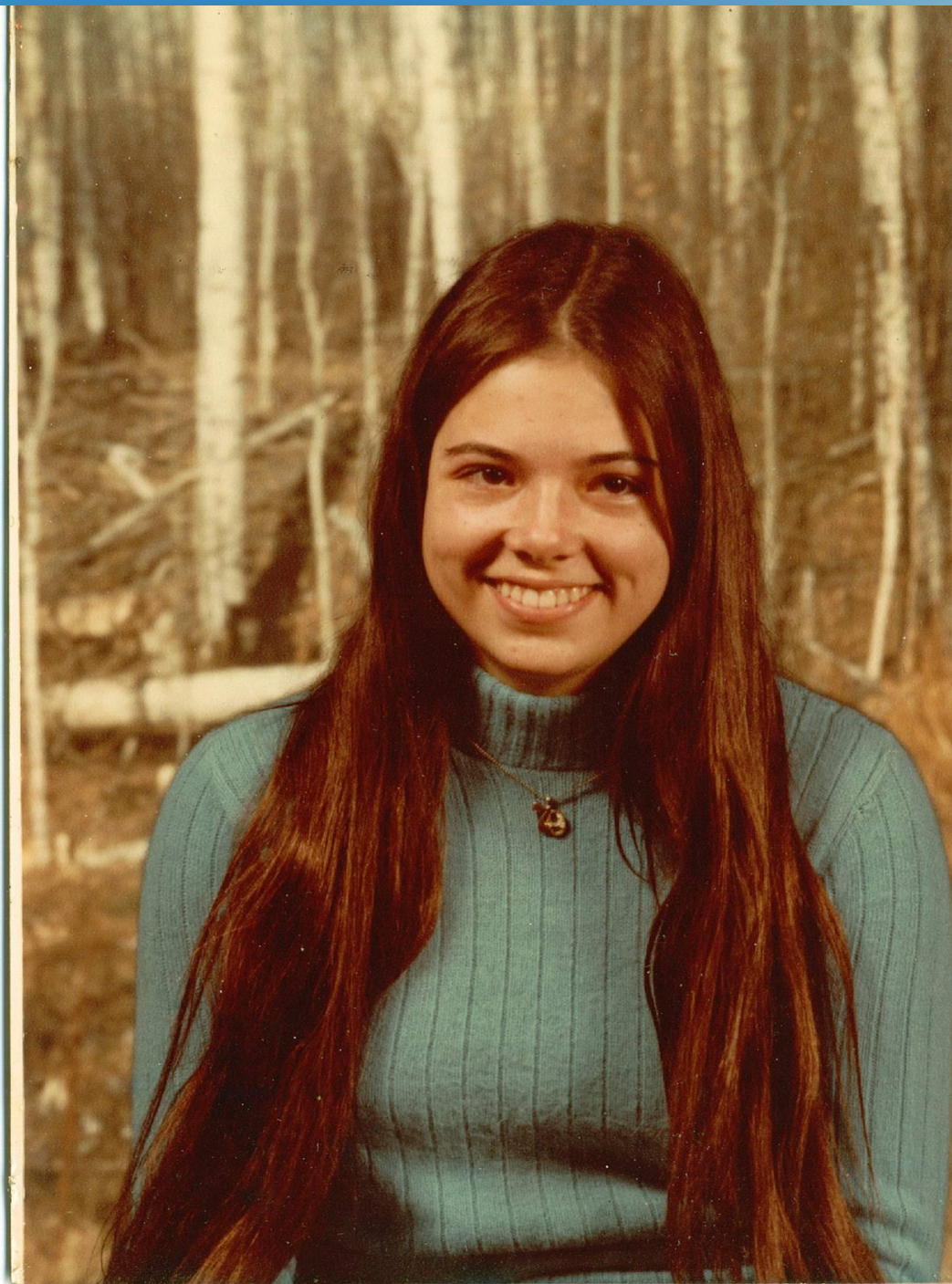
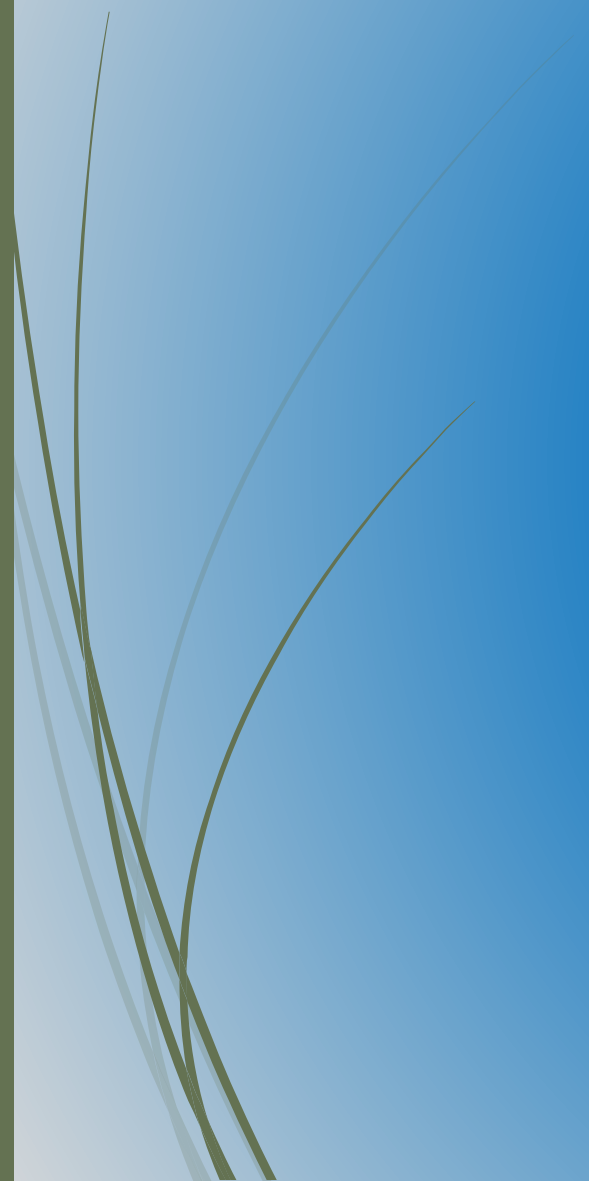
Intro self – family

- Born in U.S. raised in [Canada](#) on [Reserve](#) (ACES, Boarding School, MMIW, etc.)
- Moved Texas then Wyoming – [graduated H.S.!](#) Started [family](#)
 - Black Hills State – [Spearfish SD](#) to earn [B.S.](#)
 - Sam Houston [State](#) – [Huntsville](#) TX to earn M.A and PH.D.
 - [UND!](#)
 - Much more than a young woman, seeking drugs, [IHS](#)





Berry Creek, Lake of the Woods, Ontario
Photo by: Ben Height















Sam Houston

STATE UNIVERSITY

14000 University Blvd., Houston, TX 77056



Ty Cashion

An Illustration by Tommy Taylor
Foreword by Dean Rusk





Respect Means Listening

When we truly listen, we can discover balance and harmony.

“Often, people think we’re a culture that needs rescuing, and we’re not. We’re a people who are very resilient, very strong, and we want to be partners in creating systems that are effective and matter. We don’t want to be served; we want to be part of building service structures.”

Dr. Crystal Hernandez, Advocate

Advocacy and Allyship

- Advocacy promotes the interests or causes of someone or a group of people.
- Self-advocacy is speaking up for yourself by expressing your interests, desires, needs, and rights.
- Individual advocacy, also called allyship, is having someone stand beside you (an ally) who speaks out for change on behalf of another person or group.
- Systems advocacy is done by individuals and/or organizations that work to change policies, laws, or rules that unfairly impact a group.

Learning Objectives

1. Be able to describe how significant TBI is as a health concern among Native Americans.
2. Identify at least three factors which impact TBI in Indigenous communities.
3. Be able to describe at least two cultural strengths in Indigenous communities which can help in reducing health disparities.

1. Be able to describe how significant TBI is as a health concern among Native Americans.

- ▶ Although TBI risk in indigenous people has been identified, very few studies discuss this topic and the determinants that may place them at higher risk of TBI.
- ▶ Historical and Cultural context – colonization, annihilation, forced assimilation, boarding schools, injustices and disparities
- ▶ Higher Risk Factors: socioeconomic factors (housing, education, employment...), remote and isolated communities (delayed or limited access to treatment and rehabilitation), substance abuse (in some communities, can lead to increased risk of injuries)

Disparities in TBI

- Incidence/Prevalence rates
 - American Indian/Alaska Native children and adults have higher rates of TBI-related hospitalizations and deaths than other racial or ethnic groups. Factors that contribute to this disparity include higher rates of motor vehicle crashes, substance use, and suicide, as well as difficulties in accessing appropriate healthcare.
- Outcomes
 - Racial and ethnic minorities are also more likely to have poor psychosocial, functional, and employment-related outcomes after sustaining a TBI than non-Hispanic white individuals.

2. Identify at least three factors which impact TBI in Indigenous communities.

rates of



*Motor vehicle
crashes*



*Substance
use*



Suicide



**Traumatic Brain Injury
Resource Bundle
for American Indians**

Distributed and endorsed by
North Dakota Brain Injury
Network 1301 N Columbia Rd,
Stop 9037
Grand Forks, ND 58202-9037



**NORTH DAKOTA
BRAIN INJURY
NETWORK**
ndbin.org • 855.866.1884

Depression after Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)

**What
Is
Depression?**

Depression is a health problem that makes people feel sad, hopeless, or empty over a long period of time.

How Common Is Depression After TBI?

Half of all people with a TBI will have depression within the first year after a TBI.

Nearly two thirds of people with a TBI will have depression within 7 years after a TBI.

What Causes Depression After a TBI?

Physical changes in the brain caused by the TBI. The TBI may affect the parts of the brain that control your emotions.

An emotional response to the TBI. People may struggle to adjust to life with a disability.

Factors that are not related to the TBI. These may include family history or other influences that were there before the TBI.

Changes in your lifestyle caused by the TBI. Not being able to work or do other things you used to do may be frustrating or disappointing.

3. Be able to describe at least two cultural strengths in Indigenous communities which can help in reducing health disparities.

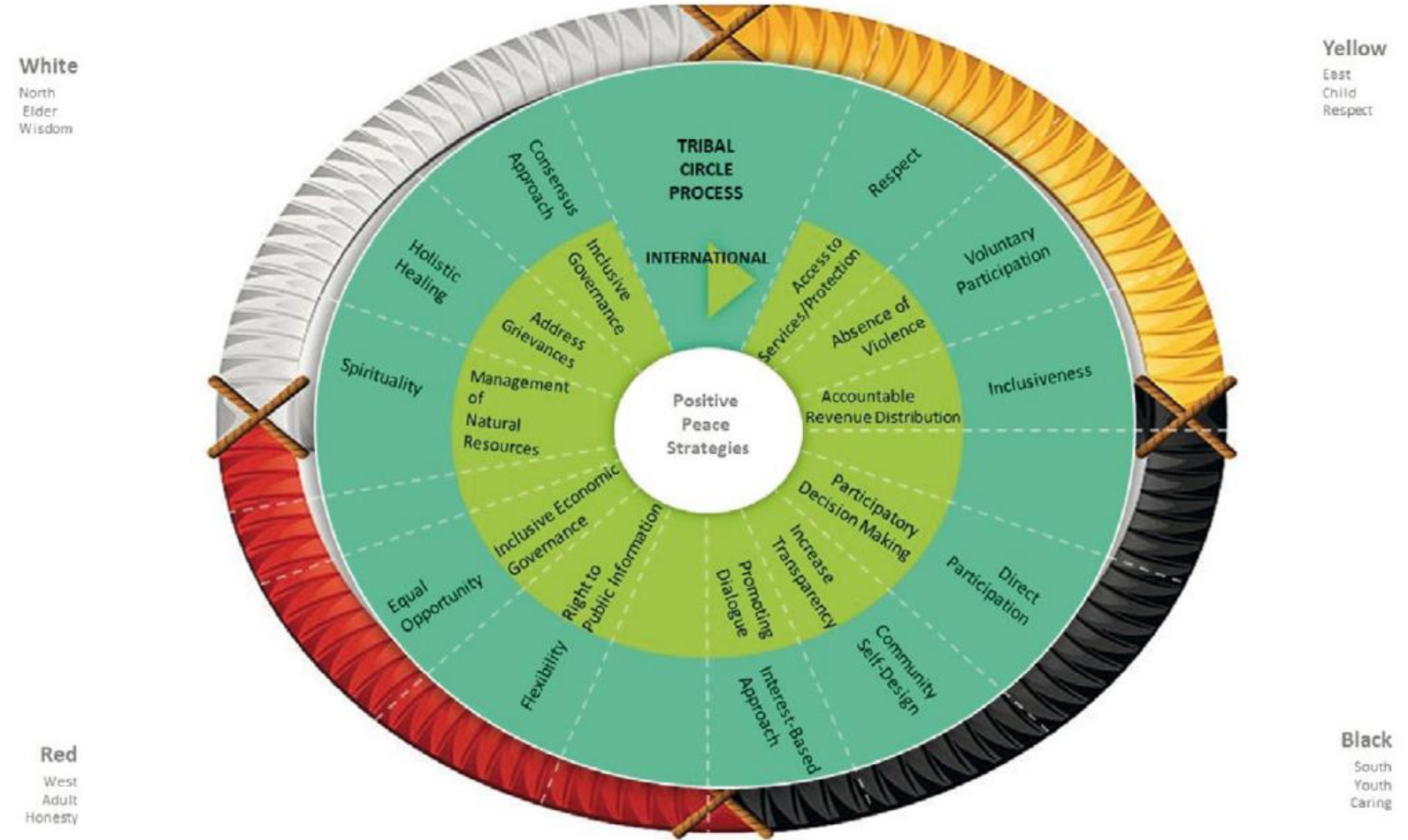
- Community Resilience – strong social networks and support systems
- cultural traditions and values
- community based programs and initiatives



Strategies to Address TBI in Indigenous Populations

- Addressing substance use through community programs.
- Increasing education and awareness of brain injury (particularly in domestic violence and child abuse).
- Improve safety on roads and in homes.
- Improving funding for access and care.
- Collaborative research.
- Collaborative policy changes.

Figure 5: A Medicine Wheel Model for Positive Peace



Source: author creation.

References and Recommended Sources

- <https://www.air.org/project/traumatic-brain-injury-resource-bundle-american-indians> (useful infographics)
- <https://www.cdc.gov/traumaticbraininjury/health-disparities-tbi.html> (research and resources)
- <https://vbis.ca/brain-injury-basics-indigenous-peoples/> (First Nations, good context and basics)
- https://www.nicoa.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/NCD_Understanding_Disabilities_in_American_Indian_508.pdf (sources of help and culturally relevant suggestions)
- <https://www.cdc.gov/aging/healthybrain/Indian-country-roadmap.html> (how to work with the community)
- <https://www.ndbin.org/brain-info> (info and North Dakota resources)
- Hume, W. (2023). The circle process and the potential for positive peace: A Focus on the Native American experience in the United States. *Security and Society*, 5, 105-131. https://ff7dc69f-7959-47d6-9f2d-ddd2dea25884.filesusr.com/ugd/f6fe43_9b269bedf4bb42cf824ff5617182f2e2.pdf (history and policy suggestions)



For More Information

Dr. Wendelin Hume

E-mail: Wendelin.hume@und.edu

Phone: 701-777-4001

Thank You!
Miigwech!!