Relationship Between Child Abuse, Substance Abuse and Violence
Native American Population
(All Ages)

- Leads nation in death caused by:
  - alcohol-related motor vehicle fatalities
  - chronic liver disease and cirrhosis
  - diabetes (infections/ amputations / health complications)
  - fetal abnormalities
  - homicide
## Four Leading Causes of Death

**American Indian and Alaska Natives**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Range</th>
<th>Cause</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ages 1-4</td>
<td>Accidents/Homicide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ages 4-15</td>
<td>Accidents/Homicide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ages 15-24</td>
<td>Accidents/Homicide/Suicide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ages 25-44</td>
<td>Accidents/Chronic Liver Disease &amp; Cirrhosis/Suicide/Homicide</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Substance Abuse and Child Abuse in American Indian communities

- 70-90% of child abuse cases involve alcohol
- Higher frequency with females (70.4) than males (60.)
- 50-80% of child neglect involve alcohol
- Alcohol abuse less frequent in cases of sexual abuse

NIJC, 1995
Maternal Alcohol Use
Perinatal Effects

• Leading cause of mental retardation
• Average IQ of 63 found in FAS

*NJIC, 1995
Maternal Alcohol Use
Increased Risk of Sudden Infant Death

• 2 to 20 fold higher than baseline rates
• Not known whether due only to effect of drugs or also to environmental factors in addicted household
Maternal Alcohol Use
Long-term Effects on Children

• High level of psychosocial problems
  ‣ conduct disorder
  ‣ antisocial behavior
  ‣ non-compliant

• Growth failure and mental retardation

• Secondary Disabilities
  ‣ learning disabilities
  ‣ hyperactivity
  ‣ impulsively
Current Statistics:
Violence and Victimization in Indian Country

- Average annual violent crime rate among American Indians –
  - 124 per 1,000 persons age 12 or older
  - Approximately 2.5 times national rate
- Rates of violent victimization for both males and females are higher among American Indians than for all races.
Violence, Crime and Victimization

• The rate of violent crime experienced by American Indian women is nearly 50% higher than that reported by Black males.
Violence, Crime and Victimization

- American Indians experienced approximately 1 violent crime for every 8 residents age 12 or older compared to 1 violent victimization for:
  - 1 for every 16 Black residents
  - 1 for every 20 white residents
  - 1 for every 34 Asian residents
Violence and Child Maltreatment

• On a per capita basis, 1995 data indicate approximately 1 substantiated report of a child victim of abuse or neglect for every 30 American Indian children age 14 or younger.
Contributing Factors
Parental Alcohol and Substance Usage

• Criminal activity
  ▸ increase likelihood of stealing and/or selling drugs
  ▸ increase likelihood of prostituting self or children
  ▸ increase likelihood of other illegal activities to support substance usage
Contributing Factors
Parental Alcohol and Substance Usage

- Mental health disorder
  - Masking of affect disorders (depression, anxiety)
  - Substance abuse contributing to antisocial personality disorder
  - Drug induced psychosis
  - Organic brain disease caused by substance abuse
Contributing Factors
Increase Risk of Abuse and Neglect

- Diversion of resources
  - Cash used for drugs
  - Food assistance sold for drugs
  - Appliances/other articles pawned
  - Results in: more energy directed toward acquiring drugs and less energy directed toward children
Characteristics
Parental Alcohol and Substance Usage

- Unemployed or limited marketable skills
- Short term relationships that produce children
- Increase probability of out-of-home placement of children
Characteristics
Parental Alcohol and Substance Usage

- Increase risk for prenatal exposure to alcohol
- Produces difficult-to-parent infants and children
- Increase probability of conflict with education system and court system
Characteristics
Parental Alcohol and Substance Usage

- Family life chaotic and unpredictable
- Parents demonstrate
  - higher commitment level to drugs
  - higher commitment level to each other
  - lower commitment level to children
Effects of Substance Abuse

• Violence
• Paranoia
• Anxiety
• Distrust
• Less constraints about hurting, injuring, neglecting, or molesting children
• Interference with appropriate parenting ability
Effects on Children

- Increased risk for car accidents and accidental deaths,
- Increased risk for behavioral problems,
- Increased risk for neglect,
- Increase risk for suicide with age,
- Increase risk for substance abuse with age,
Effects on Children

- Increased likelihood of inconsistent or limited nurturing,
- Increased likelihood of inconsistent or limited attachment,
- Increase likelihood for poor or dysfunctional family relationships and patterns,
Effects on Children

- Increased likelihood of living in a less desirable or dysfunctional environment,
- Increased likelihood of inappropriate and/or limited parental/adult supervision,
- Increased likelihood of inappropriate parental/adult models.
Effects of Family Violence

- Bullying among children
- Use of corporal punishment
- No sanctions against spousal abuse
- No sanctions against elderly abuse
- Increased use of alcohol and other drugs
- Acceptance of violent activities for entertainment, humor, and compliance
THE HEALING JOURNEY
Prevention Strategies

• Support sobriety pledges
• Support sobriety activities
• Maintain no tolerance for substance or child abuse
• Maintain no tolerance for activities that harm children
THE HEALING JOURNEY
Prevention Strategies

- Maintain accountability for behavior toward others (self and others)
- Support the right to parent Native children in an honorable way
- Incorporate the Honor based society teachings in parenting and relationships and communities

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