

NATIVE AMERICANS

Brief history and time in the United States^{2,9}

- Also called American Indian, Indigenous American, Aboriginal American, and Amerindian.
- The ancestors of the Native Americans were a part of the nomadic hunting and gathering cultures. The earliest Native Americans were known as Paleo-Indians.
- The Native American group has populated the US for more than 12,000 years.
- The US was abundantly populated with Native American communities during the fifteenth century, but when European settlers started to arrive from the east, the Native American group was soon relocated, renamed, merged, scattered, and in some cases eliminated
- The centuries that preceded the arrival of the Europeans were filled with tremendous turmoil and revolution, as the expansion of new immigrants began to settle and Native American culture began to diminish.
- Hundreds of thousands of people were scattered in the United States, each with their own distinct culture.
- The disarray and changes involving this group that took place over the many centuries were each marked by a set of unique circumstances from declarations, disease, starvation, discrimination, to bloodshed all driven by the uncompromising expansion of the European settlement.
- There is no single “Native American” way of life, but instead general traditions are passed down from generation to generation, based on certain governing principles.
- According to the U.S. Census Bureau American Indians are one of the smallest minority groups in the United States constituting only 1.3% of the United States population.
- In the United States there are over 500 Native American domains that each share their own unique way of life.

Familial Risk and Protective Risk Factors for Culturally Competent Care

Familial Risk:

- Substance abuse including alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs ⁴
- Child abuse, Violence against women, Verbal and psychological abuse, and Elder abuse ¹³
- Rape ¹³
- Suicidal behaviors ³
- Diabetes that results in an extremely large cause of kidney failure ¹⁰

Protective factors

- Opportunities for prosocial involvement- having activities in the community available ⁴
- Rewards for prosocial involvement- positive reinforcement centered around social, family, and school involvement ⁴
- Family attachment- looking at closeness to family members ⁴
- Strong family connectedness, social support, and affective relationships with tribal leaders.³
- Social skills- education on handling different social situations ⁴
- Education on abuse in all cases- have information available and ready for anyone who could potentially be abused. Information such as where to get help, who contact, etc.
- Positive attitudes toward education, perceived interpersonal communication skills, as well as habitual discussion of problems with friends or family members ³
- The presence of a nurse or clinic in the school setting also emerged as a correlate of decreased suicidal behaviors in adolescent females ³
- Attempts to promote and preserve indigenous cultures has shown to help reduce suicide rates ³
- Team based care can be helpful in dealing with diabetes and integrating education regarding kidney failure and diabetes



Health Care disparities and Social Determinants to Health

- Healthcare for Native Americans has been a problem for many years because of drawbacks like poor road systems, segregated living conditions, inadequate transportation, and a shortage of healthcare providers in the area ¹²
- The Indian Health Service (IHS)
- Poverty: 28.8% : more than twice the percentage of white rural living residents ¹¹
- One third survive below the poverty line ¹⁴
- Social environment and physical environment ¹¹
- The life expectancy : 4.4 years less than the average population ¹
- Some of the worst health discrepancies and economic conditions of all time ¹
- Americans are 400 percent more likely to face starvation, largely a result of “Food Deserts”

Current Policy or Societal Issues that Affect Health and Nursing Care

- The U.S. government provides food to low income Native Americans, but often these foods are low in nutritional value, which could also impact their health.¹
- Native Americans have the highest rates of type II diabetes in the U.S. and are almost twice as likely to die from this disease.⁸
- The IHS provides assistance to over 2 million Native Americans across the U.S. and over 560 tribes. Hospital administrators have been forced to limit their services to these people because the U.S. congress has underfunded the IHS agency. As a result, the Native American communities have a different view of reality when it comes to healthcare.⁸
- Over the years of consistent underfunding within the IHS, there are underlying challenges that worsen access to care for AI/NA. For example, shortages in medical personnel within rural areas. ⁸

Categorical Knowledge of cultural values and Family Lifestyle

1.) Fertility and Infant Mortality ⁶:

- Sterilization took place in early 1970 ⁶
- High prevalence of STIs in Native American women: Results in pregnancy complications and infant mortality
- Alcoholism prevalent in Native American women: Results in FAS and infant mortality
- Infant mortality rate is difficult to calculate as the infant MUST be identified as a Native American on both the birth and death certificates

2.) Family Stressors/Problems ⁶:

- Mental Health: Limited resources available in psychiatric healthcare within communities
- Alcoholism: Multigeneration issue with many reservation banning the purchase of alcohol to combat issue

3.) Ethnogenetic considerations :

- “Native Americas have a high incidence of lactose intolerance resulting in low calcium diets”¹⁵
- “Exhibit enhanced vasomotor responses to alcohol”¹⁵

4.) Rites, rituals and health care traditions ⁷:

- Believe in spirits and nature as a living whole
- Strong emphasis on family and community
- Today, many Native Americans will utilize spiritual and western medicine techniques: Healing both soul and body

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