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NATIVE AMERICAN TRIBAL CHILD SOCIAL WORKERS' EXPERIENCES ON CO-OCCURRENCES OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND CHILD MALTREATMENT

A Project

Presented to the

Faculty of

California State University,

San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Social Work

---

by

Elaine Brown

June 2017

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Approved by:

Dr. Janet Chang, Faculty Supervisor

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ABSTRACT

Native American women and children suffer from domestic violence at an alarming rate on and off Indian reservations in the United States. Often these families that are impacted by domestic violence are involved in the state/county child welfare system. This study was to gain knowledge about Native American tribal child social workers experiences and challenges with co-occurrences of domestic violence and child maltreatment cases. This study used an exploratory, qualitative design with a phenomenological approach by collecting data through face-to-face and over the phone interviews with four Native American tribal child social workers from four different tribes across the nation. This design allowed participants the opportunity to provide a more in-depth explanation from their own personal experiences regarding their experiences and challenges working with domestic violence and child maltreatment cases.

The study found that there is a need for state/county social workers to have a better understanding of the historic and current experiences of Native people from a cultural, spiritual, and socioeconomic perspective through effective and consistent training on the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA). The study also found, that there is a need for state/county administration and social workers to build relationships with tribal child social workers in order to provide culturally competent and effective policies and services to serve Native American communities.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge the four tribal child social workers that participated and made this research interesting and possible. I would like to thank my family for being a constant source of support. Most importantly, I would like to thank God for being ever present in my heart and seeing me through this academic endeavor.

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this project to the Native children and families who are dealing with domestic violence and the child welfare system. My hope is to expand the academic literature in order to ensure state/county child welfare social workers are better prepared to provide culturally appropriate and effective services for the best interests of tribal children, families and communities.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT iii

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS iv

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Problem Statement 1

Purpose of the Study 4

Significance of the Project for Social Work Practice 5

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction 7

Tribal Social Workers 7

Indian Child Welfare Act 9

Co-Occurrence of Domestic Violence and Child Maltreatment 11

Challenges in Native American Communities 14

Native American Communities' Mistrust of the United States Government 18

Theories Guiding Conceptualization 19

Summary 20

CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

Introduction 22

Study Design 22

Sampling 23

Data Collection and Instruments 24

Procedures 25

Protection of Human Subjects 26
Data Analysis 26
Summary 27
CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS
Introduction 29
Demographics 29
Identifying Themes 30
Summary 42
CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION
Introduction 43
Discussion 43
Limitations 47
Recommendations for Social Work Practice, Policy and Research 48
Conclusion 50
APPENDIX A: PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS 51
APPENDIX B: INSTRUMENT 53
APPENDIX C: INFORMED CONSENT 56
APPENDIX D: DEBRIEFING STATEMENT 59
REFERENCES 61

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Chapter one addresses the problem statement, purpose of this study, which is to explore experiences and challenges tribal child social workers encounter in working with co-occurring domestic violence and child maltreatment cases. Also discussed in this chapter are the potential benefits of the research for social work practice. For the purpose of this study, and in order to respect the preferences of the study participants and other researchers, the terms Native American, American Indian, Indigenous, Native people and Natives are used interchangeably to refer to Native American people.

Problem Statement

Domestic violence has increasingly received more attention as both a public health and human rights concern (Casanueva, Smith, & Ringeisen, 2014). Despite this attention, it persists as a significant social problem in the United States (U.S.). Each year 4.8 million acts of physical aggression are perpetuated against women and 2.9 million physically aggressive acts are perpetrated against men in the United States (Evans, Davis, & DiLillo, 2008). The National Coalition against Domestic Violence (2016) stated that domestic violence includes physical, psychological, or sexual harm perpetrated by a current or former intimate partner used as a part of a systematic pattern of power and control.

Child maltreatment is also a major public health concern. According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services [DHS] (2013), in 2012, 3.4 million referrals in the United States involved the alleged maltreatment of approximately 6.3 million children. Domestic violence and child maltreatment often overlap, and families experiencing domestic violence are a concern for the child welfare system (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2009). Casanueva et al. (2014) reported the National Survey of Children's Exposure to Violence surveyed 4,549 households which concluded maltreated children are overrepresented in households who witnessed domestic violence compared with households who did not witness domestic violence, 33.9% and 8.6% respectively.

Domestic violence is an epidemic throughout the nation, but in comparison to other racial and ethnic groups, Native American women and children suffer violence in disproportionate numbers on and off reservations (DHS, 2017). For Native American women seeking safety and assistance in domestic violence situations substantial barriers to safety exist due to tribal political status and federal laws that affect reservations, as well as an underreporting of incidents on and off reservations (Bachman, Zaykowski, Kallmyer, Poteyeva, & Lanier, 2008).

Native American communities are severely affected by family violence. The Bureau of Justice Statistics (2014) stated, Native American women victimization is at 26.4%, compared to other races such as Caucasian, African American, Hispanic, and Asian at 5.5%, 6.5%, 3.9% and 1.3% respectively.

Despite these statistics that have consistently indicated that violence against women is more widespread and severe in Native American communities than among other races, the actual extent of violence against Native American women throughout the United States is unknown (Bachman et al., 2008).

Native American tribes are all sovereign nations, every tribe is their own nation and some may or may not collect data on the size and scope of the problem within their communities. If data is collected, it is for its own purposes, and not necessarily in the same manner across Native American communities (Bachman et al., 2008).

Currently, there are 567 federally recognized tribes within the United States of America, each with its own unique culture, language, and history (Federal Register, 2016). Nationwide scales surveys, such as those conducted by the U. S. Department of Justice are not designed to calculate incident rates for each tribe. Therefore, most research is limited to individual tribes and may not be generalizable to other tribes (Bachman et al., 2008).

Often Native American families impacted by domestic violence may be involved in the State's child welfare systems. The National Indian Child Welfare Association [NICWA] (2016) reports Native American children continue to be disproportionately represented in public child welfare systems despite the passage of the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) in 1978. ICWA's intent at the time was to prevent the breakup of Native American families and to preserve children's connection to family, tribe and culture (Brown, Limb, Chance, &

Munoz, 2002). Although Native American women are victims of domestic violence at a higher rate than any other racial group, there is not much research on the co-occurrences of domestic violence and child maltreatment in Native American communities (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2014). Yet, the co-occurrence of domestic violence and child maltreatment continues to pose a significant issue for Native American families and communities (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2014).

Purpose of the Study

The study seeks to gain knowledge about Native American tribal child social workers' experiences and challenges with co-occurrences of domestic violence and child maltreatment cases. It attempts to examine how Native American tribal social workers perceive their work in dealing with such cases. Since social worker professionals play a vital role in assessing and providing interventions, resources and treatment services to victims and children of co-occurring cases; social workers knowledge, training, and capacity to assess, are key components in successfully working with these cases. Working with co-occurring cases can be cumbersome because these issues are typically examined and treated as separate social problems, each with its own set of causes and characteristics and each with its own solution (Appel & Kim-Appel, 2006). To add to the complexity, when dealing with Native American families, determining jurisdiction can be challenging, and provisions for concurrent

jurisdiction of certain cases, can cause conflict and confusion amongst direct service providers, as well as law enforcement, courts, probation and/or any other agencies involved with Native American children and families (Laird, 2015).

Significance of the Project for Social Work Practice

As the number of Native American children continue to be over-represented in the state/county child welfare system and states continue to be out of compliance with ICWA (Crofoot & Harris, 2014), the study's findings will help state/child social workers better prepare to work with Native Americans regarding co-occurrences of domestic violence and child maltreatment. It is important to assist state/county social workers with working with Native American children and families because it requires a deep understanding of how history, culture, and tribal and state relations impact Native American people today. Furthermore, these findings will help state/county child welfare policymakers plan effective and culturally appropriate services for Native Americans to ensure best practices are applied to protect the best interests of all Native American children, families and tribes (National Association of Social Workers, 2008).

Policymakers and social workers who work with Native American populations must understand there is a need for joint collaborative efforts between tribal and state/county child social workers because Native American children continue to be removed from their homes at a higher rate; three times more, than non-Native American children (NICWA, 2015). In addition, children

with a parent who experience domestic violence are increasingly likely to be at a higher risk of being removed and placed in out of home placement, (Beller, 2015) and as noted earlier, Native American women experience domestic violence at a higher rate than the general population (DHS, 2017).

The Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) was created almost 40 years ago and state and county social workers continue to be ill-equipped to service Native American children and families (NICWA, 2015). This is due to the continual "inadequate training, misinterpretations of the law, lack of data, and willful ignorance" by state and county child welfare administrations (NICWA, 2015).

The study aims to help develop further understanding into the lives of tribal child social workers, to analyze the perceptions, experiences and challenges that are often faced by Native American families. However, because there is limited research on tribal child social workers' experiences and challenges in working with domestic violence and child maltreatment cases in tribal communities, the researcher hopes to expand on the existing research by exploring the experiences that tribal child social workers have encountered.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter consists of an examination of the research relevant to the topic on Native American tribal social workers working with co-occurring domestic violence and child maltreatment cases. The sections will include tribal social workers, Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA), co-occurrences of domestic violence and child maltreatment, challenges in Native American communities and Native American communities' mistrust of the U.S. government.

Tribal Social Workers

Truter, Fouche, and Theron (2016) state, "Social workers protect, among others, children who are in need of care and protection. Child protection social workers protect children by means of statutory intervention" (p. 2). Within the child welfare, social workers have been continuously present and providing services to those directly affected by child-maltreatment, domestic violence, as well as other social issues. According to the National Association of Social Work (NASW [2008]), "Social workers promote social justice and social change with and on behalf of clients." Social work is focused on problem solving and change. Social workers are change agents in the lives of individuals, families and communities they serve (NASW, 2008).

As stated in Belone, Gonzalez-Santin, Gustavsson & MacEachron (2002)

research referring to the 1975 Indian Education and Self Determination Act, the majority of tribes provide their own culturally appropriate social services programs. Tribal child social workers work in the same capacity as state and county social workers, but with federally recognized tribes in the United States. With the social services programs offered, social workers must adhere to the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA). ICWA's policy recognized sovereignty, the unique political relationships between tribes and the federal government (Lidot, Orrantia, & Choca, 2012).

Native American tribes have a unique legal and historical position in the American political system. The U.S. Constitution protects the political or "government-to-government" relationship between the government and Native tribes, and makes that relationship different from which the federal government has with states and foreign governments (National Congress of American Indians, 2016). Tribes have the right to intervene in state child custody proceedings involving Native children, giving tribes a voice in the proceedings (Lidot et al., 2012). The child tribal social workers represent both the interests of the child and the tribe. In addition, tribal social workers advocate and ensure that state/county child social workers follow ICWA requirements when a Native American child enters the child welfare system (Lidot et al., 2012).

As social workers working with Native Americans, it is important to be knowledgeable and have perspective into the Native American culture. Furthermore, being culturally competent is a vital step in assessing parent's

abilities that lead to effective interventions and develop case plans. However, there is no clear approach that guides child welfare professionals in doing so within the context of Native American history and culture (Tribal Law and Policy Institute, 2011). Because trust is the core of healing and therefore effective therapeutic relationship (Goodkind, Ross-Toledo, John, Hall, Ross, Freeland, et al., 2011). It has been found that Native Americans professionals working in child welfare, substance abuse and/or domestic violence programs, are better prepared to understand the historic and current experiences of Native people from a cultural, spiritual and socioeconomic perspective (Cross, Day, Gogliotti, & Pung, 2013).

Indian Child Welfare Act

In 1978 the United States Congress signed the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA). It is a federal law that seeks to keep Native American children with Native American families (Brown, Limb, Chance, & Munoz, 2002). The ICWA sets federal requirements that apply to state child custody proceedings involving an Indian child who is a member or eligible for membership in a federally-recognized tribe (California Indian Legal Services, 2017). The ICWA was passed to remedy the disproportionately high removal of Native American children from their homes by state social agencies (NICWA, 2016).

At the time of ICWA's passage 25% to 35% of Native American children had been separated from their families and placed in non-Native adoptive families, foster care, or institutions (Crofoot & Harris, 2012). Often Native

American children were unjustifiably removed because of social workers' misunderstanding of Native American culture or the effects of the poverty and dependence created by the government's reservation system (Kunesh, 1996). These types of allegations were used against Native Americans as evidence they were unfit parents which justified the government's removal of Native children and placing them in non-Native substitute care (Kunesh, 1996).

The separation and removal of Native American children from their family not only affected the best interests of the children and families, but also the best interests of the tribe. Separating children from their tribe and culture was recognized as destroying Native American culture and tribal communities (Crofoot & Harris, 2012). According to Bussey and Lucero (2013), the intent of Congress under ICWA was to protect the best interests of Indian children and to promote the stability and security of Indian tribes and families, as well as "to preserve children's connections to family, tribe, and culture" (p. 394). ICWA is a vital "policy framework" in which tribal children welfare programs trust and follow (NICWA, 2016). It provides guidelines and regulations for how public and private child welfare agencies and state courts should conduct their work to service Native American children and families, both on and off reservations (Bussey & Lucero, 2013).

The Indian Child Welfare Act addresses the issue of high rates of Native American children in the state child welfare system by the following;

Limits when an Indian child can be removed from their home; allows

> foster care and/or termination of parental rights only if certain standards of evidence are met; requires “active efforts” to prevent involuntary removal and reunify the Indian family; provides placement preferences such as “extended family members” in cases where foster care or adoption is appropriate unless the court finds good cause to deviate (California Indian Legal Services, 2016, p 5).

At the heart of the ICWA, it is stated that except in the rarest circumstances, Native American children must be placed with their relatives, tribes, or a Native foster placement (Crofoot & Harris, 2014). As of today, almost 40 years from the time ICWA was signed, Native children are still disproportionately represented in public child welfare systems (Bussey & Lucero, 2013).

Co-Occurrence of Domestic Violence and Child Maltreatment

The relationship between domestic violence and child maltreatment is well established in the United States. Co-occurrence can be defined as within-individual phenomenon, for instance “husband abuses his wife as well as his children” (Jouriles, McDonald, Slep, Heyman, & Garrido, 2008, p. 223), or across individuals “within the same family, husband will abuse his wife and wife then abuses her children, or both” (Jouriles et al., 2008, 223). Child abuse is estimated to be present in about 40% of domestic violence cases (Coulter & Mercado-Crespo, 2015). The U.S. Department of Human Services [DHS] (2017) reported 25% of children have a domestic violence risk factor. Risk factors are

attributes of a child or parent that may increase the probability of child maltreatment (DHS, 2017).

In addition, to the co-occurrence of domestic violence and child maltreatment, children who are exposed to domestic violence have an increased likelihood of externalized and internalized behavioral problems (Moylan et al., 2010), such as reduced self-esteem, social withdrawal, depression, aggression, violence and delinquency (Moylan et al., 2010). Domestic violence is now recognized as a significant issue that greatly affects the well-being of those exposed to it (Jouriles et al., 2008). According to Moylan et al. (2010), research has confirmed that experiencing child maltreatment can increase the likelihood of behavioral issues, including depression, anxiety, delinquency and violence.

The U.S. Department of Justice [DOJ] (2014) reports the majority of Native children are exposed to violence within the walls of their homes every day. Exposure to violence places these children at severe risk of being traumatized and prone to struggle to cope over the course of their lifetime. Despite leadership from tribal governments, as well as parents and families, domestic violence in the home of Native children and child maltreatment are more common compared to the general populations (DOJ, 2014). Furthermore, the DOJ (2014) has reported the response of child welfare system often only re-traumatizes the child.

In addition to the higher rates of domestic violence and child maltreatment in Native communities, Pennell, Rikard and Sanders-Rice (2014) report these

statistics are often underreported. Often times women, particularity “women of color and indigenous women” fear reporting abuse perpetrated against them because they fear their children will be removed from their care by child protection social workers, and/or what impact leaving the perpetrator will have on the family (Pennell et al., 2014, p. 36). Research conducted by Coulter and Mercado-Crespo (2015) reported 81% of their respondents believed domestic violence victims remained in abusive relationships “because they fear their children’s removal by authorities” (p. 260).

According to Douglas and Walsh (2010) state/county child protection social workers are ill-equipped to recognize the dynamics of and issues related to domestic violence. Tribal Law and Policy Institute (2011) reported children are frequently removed from their mother for failure to protect and/or because the mother lacks the necessary resources to care for the child/children. Instead of working with the mother and/or families and the tribe to remedy the concerns, children are often removed, and few or inadequate services are provided to assist the family to stay together (Tribal Law and Policy Institute, 2011). State/county child welfare social workers are expected to assess for protective parenting capacities to determine if the parents are able to provide for the safety and well-being of their children (Vogus, Cull, Hengelbrok, Modell, & Espstein, 2016). State/county social workers who lack understanding of Native American parenting and culture may not be able to effectively assess without consistent training and hands on learning.

The growing data supports the conclusion that child maltreatment and domestic violence are linked within families and places children at risk of harm, increasing the urgency for assessment, identification and intervention (Douglas & Walsh, 2010). Current services created and offered to address these types of family violence functioned separately (Francis, 2008). For example, domestic violence advocates' objectives are keeping the victim safe and empowering victims and they don't often view the children as victims or provide services for children. Child welfare advocates, on the other hand, don't view the parent as a victim, but see the parent as being in control of the situation (Tribal Law and Policy Institute, 2011). Systems responses for co-occurring domestic violence and child maltreatment could be collaborated and coordinated among agencies; this would decrease the risk of danger and increase well-being for women and children (Coulter & Mercado-Crespo, 2015).

Challenges in Native American Communities

Native Americans are the most impoverished racial group in the United States. The United States Census Bureau (2016) reports the 2 million federally recognized Natives Americans in the United States have the highest rate of poverty of any racial group. The U.S. Census Bureau (2016) reported, "26.6% of single-race American Indians and Alaska Natives (AI/ANs) were in poverty in 2015, which again is the highest rate of any race group" compared to 14.7% poverty rate for the whole nation. In addition, the Bureau of Labor Statistics

(2015) stated unemployment rates for AI/ANs in 2014 were at 11.3%. Some Native American communities report persistent rates of unemployment above 80% (Center for Native American Youth, 2016). The Department of Justice (2014), Attorney General's Advisory Committee on American Indian and Alaska Native Children Exposed to Violence reports this high percentage seems to contribute not only to high rates of crime but also to higher rates of alcoholism, substance abuse, and violence.

Additional challenges facing Native American communities include Native women tending to underreport crimes of domestic violence in Native communities (Bussey & Whipple, 2010). This is due to variety of intersecting issues at the personal, community and systematic levels. Key social and community level reasons Native women do not disclose abuse are to protect honor, fear of gossip, retaliation, and lack of confidentiality (Bussey & Whipple, 2010). For women residing in tribal communities, these obstacles are difficult to overcome. Griffith (2015) stated Native women play important cultural, spiritual, and physical roles in Native communities, so protecting their honor is imperative.

Griffith (2015) reports violence against Native women not only threatens to break down tribal sovereignty, but may also cause irreversible trauma to American Indian women. Violent assaults can impact victims "physically, emotionally and spiritually, and may ultimately cause victims to suffer higher rates of depression, alcoholism, drug abuse and suicidal ideation" than those who have not been assaulted (Griffith, 2015, p. 792). It is also not uncommon for

tribal direct service providers, tribal law enforcement and tribal government officials to be family members of the victim and/or the perpetrator through blood or marriage, therefore trust and adherence to confidentiality policies are vital to ensuring privacy and safety for Native victims of violence (Hamby, 2004).

Native American communities also have strong cultural values against interference, so reporting domestic violence is not an option (Jones, 2008). They would rather "handle it themselves" believing it is a "private family matter" in which the family, the community and authorities are not invited into (Jones, 2008, p. 115). This outlook is concerning because children are highly impacted by witnessing domestic violence between their parents and grow up to perpetuate the same cycle (Jones, 2008).

Systematic barriers that prevent reporting to formal non-tribal authorities occur due to lack of trust of the "outside" system and fear of prejudice or blame due to a history of maltreatment and oppression of Native American people (Hamby, 2004). Until recently, most tribal governments did not have full jurisdiction over all crimes that occur on their land. In 1978, the United States Supreme Court stripped tribal authority over non-Natives who would commit crimes on Native lands. In Oliphant vs Suquamish Indian Tribe, Justice William Rehnquist wrote in his opinion, non-Natives were "aliens" to the reservations Native culture and justice system; therefore, should not be subjected to Native American jurisdiction (Smith, 2013).

As of March 2015, two-years after Congress reauthorized the Violence

against Women Act (VAWA) of 2013, Native Americans tribes are now authorized to exercise the law's most significant update, which is a provision that allows tribal courts to investigate and prosecute non-Native men who abuse Native women on reservations (Bendery, 2015). Among, its provisions, Congress amended the Indian Civil Rights Act (ICRA) to authorize special domestic violence criminal jurisdiction to tribal courts over non-Indian offenders who commit the following acts:

1. Domestic violence
2. Dating violence
3. Violate a protection order (Griffith, 2015)

Unfortunately, this law excludes strangers and it does not include crimes of sexual and physical abuse of Native American children in Native American communities, this loophole needs to be closed in order to protect Native children and families (Griffith, 2015).

This ICRA is monumental because studies found that nearly 88% individuals committing acts of domestic violence against Native women on reservations are by non-Native perpetrators (Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000). The U.S. Government Accountability Office (2010) also reports the U.S. Attorney's office declines to prosecute nearly 52% of violent crimes that occur in Native communities.

Cable Satellite Pubic Affairs Network [CSPAN] (2015) televised an interview with Paulette Sullivan Moore, the vice president of Public Policy,

National Network to End Domestic Violence, stating "If a non-Native man comes onto, lives on, works on native land and commits an offense on a Native woman, tribal law enforcement authorities have jurisdiction over him." Up until recently, the only authority a tribe had on non-Native perpetrators was to drive them to the edge of reservations and release them. This provision is a victory for Native women and families.

Native American Communities' Mistrust of the United States Government

Non-Native direct service providers must establish trust and rapport in Native American communities. Understanding the significance of the history of each tribal community is vital. One of the most difficult chapters in child welfare is the boarding school era (Bussey & Lucero, 2013). Boarding schools were developed to assimilate Native American children into the culture of "white" America known for their motto "Kill the Indian, save the man" (Crofoot & Harris, 2014, p. 1668). Native families were forcibly separated and children were taken to boarding schools thousands of miles away.

Languages, dress, traditions, customs, spirituality, and culture were forbidden in boarding schools (Crofoot & Harris, 2014). As a result of the loss of culture and language, children who returned years later as young adults, experienced feelings of isolation as they were no longer able to connect with their families (Haag, 2007). Furthermore, the trauma not only affected these young Native Americans during this time, it appears the effects were also passed on

through their families and felt by the entire tribal community. One of the major impacts future generations experienced was the inability for Native Americans raised in boarding schools and subjected to severe systematic neglect and punishment, to transition naturally into parenthood (Haag, 2007). The majority of these Native Americans had no nurturing role models. These types of schools severed the most sacred and fundamental of all human ties, the parent-child bond (Haag, 2007). While many who have heard of the boarding schools think of them as occurring centuries ago, there are many still alive today that lived through that experience. Resentment and mistrust towards the U.S governmental agencies continues to propagate among Native American communities (Crofoot & Harris, 2014).

Theories Guiding Conceptualization

Historical trauma theory provides a context in how trauma that occurred decades ago continues to impact Native American families today (Brown-Rice, 2013). Evans-Campbell (2008) reports throughout generations, Native Americans have endured a legacy of chronic traumatic assaults that have had lasting consequences for families and their communities. Assaults include "community massacres, genocidal policies, pandemics from the introduction of new diseases, forced relocation, forced removal of children through federal Indian boarding school policies, and prohibition of spiritual and cultural practices" (Evans-Campbell, 2008, p. 316). Native Americans today, continue to suffer from

high rates of interpersonal violence, suicide, child abuse, neglect and poverty (Brown-Rice, 2013).

There exists a collective emotional and psychological pain that members of the community feel over their lifespan and across generations. This shared communal pain stems from the massive group trauma experience; the group reaction which manifests itself as an unhealthy community is the result of this (Brown-Rice 2013). Myhra and Wieling (2014) reports, historical trauma lead into internalized oppression. As a result of historical trauma, traumatized people may begin to internalize the views of the oppressor and perpetuate a cycle of self-hatred that manifests itself in negative behaviors. Emotion and/or reactions are self-inflicted, which often includes depression, self-destructive behavior, suicidal thoughts and gestures, anxiety, alcoholism and substance abuse, low self-esteem, anger, and difficulty recognizing and expressing emotions (Myhra & Wieling, 2014). These emotions and/or reactions also are also inflicted on members of one's own group, such as interpersonal violence, child abuse and neglect, and family dysfunction (Myhra & Wieling, 2014).

Summary

This chapter included a review of the literature linked to tribal social workers who work with co-occurring domestic violence and child maltreatment cases. Tribal social workers, the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA), co-occurrences of domestic violence and child maltreatment, challenges in Native

American communities and its mistrust of U.S. the Government were discussed. The purpose was to gain insight from the literature and explore the background of these topics to gain a better understanding of the experiences tribal child social workers may experience.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODS

Introduction

This study will describe Native American tribal child social workers' experiences and challenges with co-occurrences of domestic violence and child maltreatment cases. This chapter will discuss the methods for the qualitative study. Specifically, the emphasis of discussion will be placed on the study's design, sampling, data collection and instrument, procedures, protection of human subjects and qualitative analysis.

Study Design

The objective of this study was to explore the experiences and challenges Native American tribal social workers' encountered with co-occurrences of child maltreatment and domestic violence cases. Few research studies have specifically examined this topic from the perspective of Native American tribal child social workers. As such an exploratory, qualitative design research study with a phenomenological approach provided a greater understanding of this phenomenon. The phenomenological approach explored perceived experiences and challenges of the Native American tribal child social workers via face-to-face and over the phone audio-taped interviews. A phenomenological approach emphasizes the uncovering of an individual's perception and perspective of a specific shared experience in order to interpret and understand the essence of

the lived experience (Creswell 2013). The interviews included open-ended questions as the tool through which the researcher collected the data from the participants.

Utilizing an exploratory, qualitative design, with a phenomenological approach allowed participants to add their own personal experiences to their answers, rather than being restricted to a limited range of answers. Since the social workers' experiences and challenges were not solicited, this allowed participants to provide their perspectives on co-occurrences of domestic violence and child maltreatment. This study is within the phenomenological method because it is focused on discovering the significance of a collective "lived experience" (Kalfe, 2011, p. 188).

The purpose of this study was to gain insight on Native American tribal child social workers experiences and challenges with co-occurrences cases by seeking to answer the following question: What are Native American child welfare social workers' experiences and challenges with co-occurrences of domestic violence and child maltreatment cases?

Sampling

The study collected qualitative data; the researcher utilized purposeful sampling to encourage Native American tribal social workers from different tribes to participate in the study. Purposeful sampling called "criterion sampling" involves choosing participants who meet a particular criteria (Patton, 2002, p.

38); in this case being of Native American ancestry, employed by a federally-recognized tribe and have current experience in offering child welfare services to Native American children and their families. The sample size of this study was four participants, from four Native American tribes in Iowa, Oklahoma and California. Participants were recruited from Native American conferences on Indian Child Welfare in the United States. The researcher interviewed three women and one male. Although gender was not a significant focus of the study, the researcher attempted to recruit participants from both genders.

Data Collection and Instruments

The researcher conducted face-to-face and individual telephone interviews. Additionally, information during these interviews was gathered through use of audio recording and was transcribed for data analysis. Each interview began with an introduction and description of the study and its purpose. Demographic information, including age, number of years in current ICWA practice/field, level of education, ethnicity, tribal membership, tribal employer, and caseload count, was collected in addition and prior to presenting the key questions of the area of study.

Once demographics were collected, the researcher gathered the type of data noted by Giorgi (1997), fifteen (15) open-ended and informal questions (Appendix A). Patton (2002) described unstructured interviews as a natural addition of a particular observation. Patton (2002) contended that they rely

entirely on the spontaneous group of questions in the natural flow of interaction, how they “perceive it, feel it, make sense of it” (p. 104). As stated above, the purpose of this research is to explore Native American tribal social workers’ experiences in their own words and on their own terms. The interview questions presented in Appendix A were personally created by Elaine Brown and verified by supervisor Dr. Janet Chang.

Procedures

To obtain a purposeful sampling, Native American tribal child welfare social workers were solicited at Indian Child Welfare conferences across the nation to participate. Participants were informed that no benefits or rewards would be given for participation in this interview. Each participant was screened prior to setting up the interview to ensure they met the following criteria to participate in the study: be of Native American ancestry, employed by a federally-recognized tribe and have current experience in offering child welfare services to Native American children and their families.

The individual interviews were conducted between October 2016 and January 2017. Two of the face-to-face interviews were conducted separately at coffee shops and two were conducted over the phone. The interviews were conducted using a 15 question instrument. Each interview was estimated to last 20-40 minutes; variations in time were dependent on the conversation and time participants were available.

Data was captured using an audio recording device. A consent form (Appendix B) was distributed (in person or via email) and signed at the face-to-face meeting and via phone, respectively, in order to obtain permission to use a recording device during the interview. After the interview transcription of the data will be processed and interpreted in the final results section.

Protection of Human Subjects

The identity of the interviewees will be kept confidential. All data collected, including recordings, field notes, and transcribed data were stored in a secure locked cabinet. Participants read and signed an informed consent (Appendix B) prior to participating in the interview. Participants were provided with a debriefing statement (Appendix C) on the conclusion of each interview. Each participate was identified with a pseudonym which was used in transcribing the data, so that there would be information on the transcribed and printed data that may identify the participant.

Data Analysis

Data analysis for this study was conducted using a qualitative analysis technique. Four separate interviews were conducted for this research study. The participants of this study consisted of Native American tribal child welfare social workers. First, the researcher read each participant's transcript in its entirety more than once. This allowed the researcher to create a picture of each participant's experiences as a whole and interconnected phenomenon. While the

researcher reviewed the transcripts, the researcher utilized some tools in phenomenology, such as bracketing and epoche (Kafle, 2011). In order to execute this, the researcher was aware of personal preconceived bias based on the researcher's standpoint as a social worker experienced in tribal organizations.

Furthermore, the researcher engaged in phenomenological reduction by bracketing. Bracketing is the process of diminishing the potential harmful effects of misjudged presumptions and viewing them as an isolated phenomenon free from preconceived ideas or past knowledge (Tufford & Newman, 2012). This allows the phenomena to be identified without an external influence (Patton, 2002). The researcher took participants data and utilized a cross sectional analysis to determine what themes were present.

In addition to the information gathered in the interview, the researcher compiled nominal descriptive statistics on the participants themselves such as age, ethnicity, tribal membership, tribal employment, years of tribal child welfare experience, level of education and caseload count.

Summary

In summary, this chapter presented the methodology and procedures that were used to conduct this study on Native American tribal child social workers' experiences and challenges when working with co-occurrences of child maltreatment and domestic violence cases. The design of the study, sampling

methods that were used, the interview instrument, data collection analysis, procedures, the human subjects and confidentiality were discussed.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

Introduction

The intent of this study was to present the experiences and challenges of Native American tribal child social workers with domestic violence and child maltreatment cases. A qualitative design consisting of interviews conducted were used for this study. The study's demographics and major themes will be presented in this chapter.

Demographics

The participants consisted of four Native American tribal child social workers. Three of the four participants were women and one was male. All the participants were members of federally-recognized tribes in the United States. Each of the participants are members of the tribe they are employed with. The tribes included the following; Sox Fox Tribe of the Mississippi in Iowa tribe (Meskwaki Nation), Santa Rosa Band of Cahuilla Indians, Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma, and the Morongo Band of Mission Indians.

The participants ranged in ages between 30-44 years old. The participants' experience in working as tribal child social workers ranged between 7-14 years. Their level of education ranged from some college up to a Master's Level Social Work as well as a Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW). Caseload counts ranged from 5-25 cases per social worker. The interviews took

place in different locations depending on where the participants resided. Two interviews were completed over the phone because they resided out-of-state, and two were conducted in person.

Identifying Themes

The following themes emerged from the interviews: 1) Native American Culture means family 2) Trust is essential 3) Social service challenges exist 4) Social service experiences 5) Importance of establishing relationships between Tribal and State Child Welfare Systems. The unexpected theme revealed through my research was that Native American culture means family. The following sections will address each theme, with narratives from the participants' responses to the interview questions.

Native American Culture Means: Family

Participants were asked what Native American culture means to them. All four participants reported that Native American culture means: family. In Native American tribal communities there is an abiding tradition for the importance of family, tribe and the honoring of language, roots, spirituality and ceremonies. For instance, participant 1 stated, "It's different from the outside: it means family, more connected with our family, extended family, ceremonies, or spirituality. We have our beliefs, traditions, and stuff like that which make us who we are (Personal Communication, October 2016). Likewise, participant 3 stated culture defines who Native Americans are. For example,

> Native American culture means family, defining who you are, the people. From our language, traditions, morals, respect, ethics, spirituality, passing these sacred beliefs on to the next generations. Family and extended family and everyone in our tribe, it's our culture. Values, cores, and how we treat elders because they are the ones we learn from and it is where we get our wisdom from (Personal Communication, January 2017).

Trust is Essential

The four participants were asked how being from the same culture as the families they work with, impact their ability to engage with them. All four participants stated that being from the same culture as the families they work with positively impacts their ability to engage and build trust with their clients. They all stated trust plays a pivotal role in tribal communities. Examples include the following; participant 1, who has worked with tribal communities for 14 years stated;

> Being from the same culture, helps our families feel comfortable because they don't trust outsiders. Our families here, still feel that feeling that the "white people" are going to take my kids away. It helps our clients to know that we know the struggles they faced and continue to face. They know we will not judge them for that and will do what we can to keep their families together. They know I grew up here on the settlement and understand the hardships and barriers they faced, because I faced them myself. I know what we go through on this settlement. (Personal Communication,

October 2016).

Likewise, participant 2, who has worked with tribal communities for 11 years stated,

> Around here, there is a big difference from someone who is not from here, an outsider and not Native. Most people from here are very mistrustful or standoffish of people, employees or whoever attempts to ask them personal questions about their family. If someone they know from the tribe or a Native is helping them, they are more willing to cooperate. They know we get them, such as when it comes to Native jokes, history, frustrations, gestures, experiences. We don't take offense or say they are uncooperative. Sometimes, outsiders don't know how we communicate. Our families know we want to do everything we can to help them (Personal Communication, October 2016).

On the contrary, being from the same community as clients served requires a delicate balance, because Native American communities are interlinked and related by blood, marriage, or long time friendships. Confidentiality practices are critical because privacy is sometimes non-existent in tribal communities. For example, participant 1 further stated;

> Usually everyone knows everyone in the tribal community or at least one family member of a family. If I do know a family personally or if I am related, I remove myself from the case and ask to not have any access to the case. I must maintain trust, by taking confidentiality serious. This is

> important because I have to be ethical and keep the trust of all the families we serve. It's my responsibility to keep their case concerning domestic violence or child maltreatment, confidential. In a small town like ours, gossip is one thing you can't escape, everyone knows everyone, so it's up to me to make sure our families receive services in a comfortable and confidential manner. If our case concerns a domestic violence situation, the perpetrator's family could find out and tell him or they have to start picking sides and that might make things worse, which might place our client in more danger. We cannot allow that to happen. Once you lose trust with Native families, it's difficult to get it back, because the word spreads fast, and the consequences are the families will no longer trust us and not reach out to us for help (Personal Communication, October 2016).

Participant 3 also described how being from a close-knit community requires respect of confidentiality, for instance;

> Being from a Native community where everyone knows everyone, we have to be very careful to keep the privacy of our clients. I may know a client or be related to one, but it is up to me to keep their 'business' confidential. I want our clients to feel comfortable and safe when coming here. The last thing they need to worry about is us spreading their business. We sign a confidentiality policy when we first start working here and we do get trainings on the topic too (Personal Communication, January 2017).

Social Service Challenges

The participants were all asked what they find most challenging about working with co-occurring cases that involve domestic violence and child maltreatment. All four stated the most professionally challenging aspects about working with co-occurring domestic violence and child maltreatment cases is understanding the effects of historical trauma Native Americans have endured and continue to endure today. Additionally, the participants reported that the effects of historical trauma increase the normalizing and risk factors for children and families when experiencing domestic violence and child maltreatment. For example, participant 1 stated;

> Things were happening to the children in boarding schools, such as abuse. Our parents who are presently in the "system" are acting the way they do, because of the historical trauma and being taken away from their families, culture and sense of self, because before that our families focused on teaching our families how to parent through the old ways with love and no violence. Before our elders were taken from their families long ago and had to endure the trauma, we, our tribes were self-sufficient through hard work, passing down respect, wisdom through ceremonies. Cohesiveness was the norm. If families needed help, tribal members would help each other to have balance. Historical trauma plays a big role in our current community and now we have to try to treat the families and reverse the effects of it, which is challenging. It's difficult for even me

being from this tribe and seeing it all the time, to understand why a person stays in a violent relationship because she 'loves him.' She places her children at risk and her own self too. This has to do with the trauma she went through with her own family, it's normal to her and I have to understand how this trauma has become internalized and she believes it's okay. We need to go back to the old way, but before that, we need to understand how the trauma has affected so many of our culture's generations (Personal Communication, October 2016).

Similarly, participant 3 stated;

Domestic violence has become the norm in our Native communities. It has also become the norm to our children who witness domestic violence. Many children place their own safety at risk by attempting to protect a parent which makes them vulnerable to becoming victims themselves. My view on things like that, the impact of it, how it affects our kids stems from the generations of violence we as a people have had to ensure, historical trauma. It is important as an agency to help our families become aware of what's going on, educate them on the impacts that violence has on the family and the tribal community level. Therapy is my expertise but convincing some families to participate in therapy is sometimes difficult, because they don't see the violence as a problem, which is scary because this only increases the risks of future violence in the home, in front of their children. I always inform my families children witnessing domestic

violence is a form of abuse, because they can be harmed just by witnessing the violence (Personal Communication, January 2017).

A separate question was also asked concerning the proportion/percentage of cases that have co-occurring (domestic violence and child maltreatment) issues. All participants provided a general estimation of their percentage. For example, participant 1 reported “25%,” but did state “90% involved substance abuse (Personal communication, October 2016). Participant 2 reported “50%” (Personal communication, October 2016). Participant 3 reported “75-85%” (Personal Communication, January 2017), and participant 4 reported “25%” (Personal Communication, January 2017).

Social Service Experiences

All the participants were asked to share their experience in working with the co-occurrences of domestic violence and child maltreatment. All four participants discussed socio-economic issues that affect their tribes and the culturally appropriate services provided to the families they serve. Although all four participants’ tribes provide social services, one of the participant’s tribes has limited services. Participant 2 explained,

> I work with many cases who experience this co-occurrence. It’s tough especially because I see how these situations take a long time to get better. Parents try to do the right thing by raising their children but the social issues of poverty, lack of education, not knowing what a healthy relationship is, gets the best of them. They don't know how to deal with

> life stressors. My tribe offers limited social services programs which we provide services to our members such as parenting and domestic violence classes. We have a child welfare program that includes advocacy and case management. I believe these services help our families because we tailor them with our tribe's values and beliefs. At times, since we are a very small tribe, we have to collaborate with other Native organizations who we refer our members to, in order to provide culturally appropriate services, but we have good relationships with Indian Health Services, Native non-profits or other tribes who services other tribal members (Personal Communication, October 2016).

Likewise, participant 4 described working with co-occurring cases in a therapeutic sense as follows,

> My experience with the kids dealing with domestic violence and child welfare is the kids are very traumatized. Even when working with adults who themselves witnessed domestic violence as kids even when they were in the child welfare system, still deal with trauma. My job as a social work therapist is to help identify positive coping skills during therapy, because enduring this type of trauma really shapes how they view the world. I use play therapy or cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) approaches with Native adaptations. Life stressors can get to them and they can react, so I am so grateful our tribe has their own full service tribal social services so we can provide culturally appropriate programs to

> educate and intervene when our families are dealing with domestic violence and child maltreatment (Personal Communication, January 2017).

Importance of Establishing Relationships between Tribal and State Child Welfare Systems

Of the four participants, when asked how they would describe their level and/or quality of cooperation and collaboration between Child Protective Services (CPS) and Domestic Violence (DV) agencies they are associated with and what is an expectation or change that would produce greater collaboration between CPS and DV agencies they are involved with. All participants described positive relations when working with their own in-house tribal domestic violence agencies and child welfare, but discussed the difficulties that exist when working with state and county CPS and DV agencies. They all stated that establishing positive relationships between tribal and state child welfare systems and domestic violence agencies are paramount to serving the best interests of Native American children and families. Establishing strong positive relationships with state agencies increases Native families' connection to their culture, extended family, and tribal community. It also aids in streamlining cultural appropriate child welfare and domestic violence services to families in need, as well as lower state/county child welfare workloads. For example, participant 1 stated;

> We have our own tribal in house domestic violence on our settlement, which is really effective. They have a good working relationship with outside DV agencies too. We work with Department of Human Services

(DHS) all the time. They are getting really good at calling us when they suspect or can confirm they have Native children. They have the same process as ours, you go out, investigate and make determinations of 'founded' or 'unfounded'. Tribal-State agreement under ICWA states we take jurisdiction right away before they even take it to state court. We are not a Public Law 280 state, so we take full exclusive jurisdiction every time for our members. We will take the case because these are our children. They step out of it, which was not always the case. In the past, they didn't understand the ICWA law and would fight for jurisdiction and tell us what to do. I had to be firm with them and explain ICWA law and that we are a sovereign nation. Once they understood and respected that, we were able to work together for the best interest of the children and families, but it took some time to build that relationship, because again, in the beginning DHS felt they could come onto our reservation and take our kids without our input or anything. Now I am in good relations with the administrator and director of the DHS department. We laugh now sometimes when we remember how we didn't agree and argued all the time. Now they are very happy to hand over our children and families, even before the ICWA notice even gets sent out, because they are now understanding ICWA and also it lowers their caseloads. We have to fight for our children, because a lot of times in the past they would adopt our children out to non-Native families and these children didn't even know

> they were Indian, because they moved far away. Some of the adoptees, who become adults, came back to the settlement looking for us, because they wanted to know where they came from (Personal Communication, October 2016).

Comparably, participant 3 stated relationships with county child welfare departments and domestic violence agencies are important for the well-being of Native American children and families. For example,

> Yes, I am familiar with the child welfare department and domestic violence agencies on and off the reservation. We work pretty well with them. I did an internship with our local county child welfare services in my last year of my bachelors in social work (BSW). They are very different from us. County child welfare is a good program, we both are, but the county has, a lot, of red tape they have to go through a lot such as funding and procedures. They are good procedures in their own respect. On the tribal side, we have a lot more leeway, a lot more freedom to exercise how we service our kids and families. We have our own tribal social services, which include domestic violence, so it's a lot quicker and easier to get our families the services they need. I think CPS is a good program, it is just a different way of doing things. My preference is the tribal services. We have the ability to make a better impact with our families using tribal services, because we can provide one-on-one direct services, they are not just a number in a sea of numbers. It is also important to have a healthy

> relationship with tribal and state services, so we can learn from each other, possibly utilize some of their resources, if we need it. In addition, we all bring quality and true knowledge to the table, especially for our kids, we are a vital resource, as well as the county (Personal Communication, January 2017).

Participant 4 stated a similar statement, but did focus on increase training of federal laws pertaining to Native Americans. For example,

> We have a great tribal domestic violence program advocate on our tribe. She is well experienced with DV issues and agencies on and off the reservations. If any of our families need services, she is available, most times immediately, I never have an issues when referring my clients to her. Concerning expectation and change that would produce greater collaboration between us, would be for tribal and state child welfare services need to have a good working relationship. I would also say, it depends on the social worker. If the social worker sees we are a valuable resource, then cooperation works. We have our own social services programs here for the tribe. Many times social workers don't know that, other times, county social workers are very difficult because they don't understand or don't take the time to understand we are a tribal sovereign nation and ICWA applied. Some social workers appear to have an annoyance in working with us and it makes it difficult to build those relationships. The counties need to have consistent education and training

> on ICWA and working with Native families. They need to understand ICWA and how to apply it. They don't know the families like we know the families from our tribe, we have the best interest of the child, family and tribe. Our tribes are at risk of being extinct, we know the families and we are better able to assist them with one on one direct services. It is also important to know where you come from, so our children and families who utilize our services have a better chance at changing their behaviors. This helps to ensure the wellbeing of our children and overall families (Personal Communication, January 2017).

Summary

The participants in this study shared openly the experiences and challenges that come with working with co-occurring domestic violence and child maltreatment in tribal communities. All participants interviewed were able to freely express their experiences during the interview. Overall, the participants were from different tribes, but they all shared similar experiences and challenges working in their tribal communities.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

Introduction

This chapter provides a discussion of the themes discovered from this study and their significance as they relate to experiences and challenges of the tribal child social workers' servicing co-occurring of domestic violence and child maltreatment cases. As well an unexpected theme was revealed through my study of Native culture. A brief discussion on how the limitations of this study could have influenced the researcher's findings is included in this chapter. In addition, this chapter also reviews recommendations for social work practice and policy and further research.

Discussion

The purpose of the study was to gain a better understanding of the experiences and challenges tribal child social workers face when servicing co-concurrent domestic violence and child-maltreatment cases. After analyzing the data, several themes emerged that were common among tribal child social workers regardless, of age, experience, tribe, and background. All participants in the study understood there are unique challenges that exist when servicing Native American communities.

In regards to tribal social workers and the view on what Native American culture means to them, this study found that all participants, identified Native

American culture as family. Interestingly, the participants used terms such as traditions, extended family, tribal, ceremonies, beliefs, and values. When asked to describe culture, they categorized it as “family.”

This study also found that all participants recognize that trust is an essential component to serving Native American communities. Each participant stated building a level of trust was facilitated if they were from the same culture. This is due to the continuing negative effects of the recent boarding school era as well as the deeper wounds felt by the shared historical communal trauma. This has resulted in continued propagation of resentment, trauma and mistrust felt in all Native American communities (Crofoot & Harris, 2014). Because of this, the participants reported that the clients they serve don’t feel judged or fear their children will be unjustly removed. Trust is the core of healing and therefore effective therapeutic relationship (Goodkind et al., 2011). This finding is consistent to the findings presented in the literature, indicating Native Americans have a mistrust of U.S. governmental agencies. Therefore, agencies who serve Native American children and families should understand that there are cultural differences that exceed current social work textbooks and revolve around historical events and the traumas associated with them (Brown-Rice, 2013).

In regards to tribal child social worker’s experiences, the study’s participants reported that they provide culturally appropriate services to their children and families. Including, but not limited to, child welfare services, domestic violence services, counseling, positive Indian parenting and

relationships, substance and alcohol services, anger management, and Temporary Aid to Needy Families (TANF) programs. For example, one participant stated, “We use a Native American model by Albert Pooley’s, Linking Generations by Strengthening Relationships, because it focuses on how to parent positively, like our traditional ways.” The finding is consistent to the findings provided in the literature review indicating, tribal communities provide culturally appropriate services to the children and families they serve. For example, the majority of tribes provide their own culturally appropriate social service programs (Belone et al., 2002)

The study found that all participants understand that historical trauma plays a major role in working with Native American clients and the challenges working with domestic violence and child maltreatment. Furthermore, understanding Native American history, as well as the tribe they serve is vital, because history is paramount to working with Native Americans tribal communities. Participants often rely on their anecdotal experiences, trainings, understanding of ICWA, and historical trauma to help them effectively navigate through the challenges, to provide best practices for Native children and families. This finding is consistent to the findings provided in the literature review indicating, when Native Americans are direct service providers working in child welfare, substance abuse and/or domestic violence programs, they are more likely better prepared to understand the historic and current experiences of Native people from the cultural, spiritual and socioeconomic perspective (Cross

et al., 2013).

All the participants reported that collaboration and cooperation are needed between county and tribal CPS and DV agencies because it provides an effective avenue to get Native American families the services they need as soon as possible. Salinas (2014) findings show state/county social workers lack education and training when it comes to ICWA and tribes. Salinas (2014) continued to report many county social workers are not familiar with ICWA and if they have had one or more trainings, they have not read the law in its entirety in order to effectively apply it to their practice (Salinas, 2014). The research further stated, if county social workers did not familiarize and understand why ICWA was passed in 1978, then understanding the importance of the uniform application of the procedural steps gets muddled, which subjects Native American children and families to further suffering (Salinas, 2014).

In order to establish relationships between tribal and state child welfare workers, it is also important to understand and respect tribal sovereignty. For example, ICWA's policy recognized sovereignty and the unique political relationships between tribes and the federal government (Lidot et al., 2012). Participant 2 stated,

> Attempting to collaborate with surrounding counties is a hit or miss. Some are very good at noticing our tribe and cooperating with us to provide services to our families, but others are not, which is very frustrating. A lot of social workers don't understand sovereignty, ICWA, active efforts, or

> our culture, so it makes it difficult for us to collaborate with them at times, it depends on the social worker, it appears. Again some counties are better than others, as well as social workers. I try to do my best, I involve myself in county committees, so I can be a part of the solution (Personal Communication, October 2016).

Limitations

This study came across a few limitations. The first limitation was non-probability data collection and small sample size. The purposeful sampling used and having only four participants limits the ability to make this generalizable across all Native American tribal child social workers. However, for the purpose of this research it does speak for the four participants' tribal social workers' experiences that it studied. Additional research in this area with a larger sample size would benefit future study.

Second, the findings were a capture of four federally-recognized tribes' experiences in the nation of the 567 federally recognized tribes that exist. It is important that future studies would include more Native American tribal child social workers. To make this study generalizable, it would be beneficial to reach out to each federally-recognized tribe across the United States to capture a larger consensus of these experiences.

Recommendations for Social Work Practice, Policy and Research

This study has implications for state/county child welfare services. It is important for all tribal and state/county child social workers who service Native American communities to be educated and trained on ICWA and domestic violence affecting Native American communities. Currently, California state/county child welfare services are provided through common core curriculum (California Social Work Education Center, 2017). Only one component of this curriculum contains an eight hour ICWA training for new child welfare social workers. After this one-day training for new child social workers, there is no further training or updates on ICWA. In order to promote best practices, social workers should serve as effective competent advocates. Therefore, providing consistent, ongoing trainings, and hands on learning is essential. Examples include quarterly ICWA training from Native organizations such as Tribal [STAR] Successful Transitions for Adult Readiness, California Indian Legal Services (CILS), and NICWA (Tribal STAR, 2017; CILS, 2017; NICWA, 2017). It is recommended that a minimum of four hours of quarterly ICWA training be provided to assist state/county child social workers to continue providing competent services needed to stay within the parameters of the social work code of ethics (NASW, 2008).

Cultural competency is required when dealing with child welfare and policy. This is an important concept to apply to the state/county child welfare system. In addition to the legislative mandates to ensure equitable and culturally

competent state/county child protections services, child welfare administrators need to build a working relationship with tribes, in order to obtain a balanced approach in working with tribal communities. State/county government child welfare officials must be available to interact respectfully and competently with tribal government officials concerning Native children and families' cases.

The services and needs of Native American communities are identified by the population themselves, which is important for social workers interacting with this population to fully understand. Furthermore, by taking the perspective of Native American communities into consideration in determining best practices, state/county social workers can provide interventions and services which could be perceived as helpful by Native American communities, thereby resulting in an acceptance of services, and a further building of trust rather than refusal and mistrust.

For future research, it would be beneficial to expand this study and interview Native American tribal child social workers from additional federally-recognized tribes in order to increase data and strengthen analysis of findings. Furthermore, future research in examining Native American family climate would be valuable. This would include exploring the family dynamics and power structure to see how it influences the social behaviors within Native American families. This would assist service providers by having a better understanding of how the family structure may or may not influence domestic violence and child maltreatment in Native American families. These influences may result in more

effective solutions.

Conclusion

This study identified the experiences and challenges of Native American tribal child social workers working in tribal communities. Native Americans continue to be disproportionately represented in the child welfare systems. Native Americans are profoundly impacted by the consequences of historical trauma and are victimized by domestic violence at much higher rates than non-Native Americans (NICWA, 2016; Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2014). According to the U.S. Department of the Interior Indian Affairs (2016), in 2010 the U.S. Census Bureau reported the population of federally-recognized Indians is at 1,969,167. It is the hope that this study will help state/county child welfare services to increase their knowledge and be better prepared to provide culturally competent services to Native American populations.

APPENDIX A

PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS

Participant Demographic Questions

1. How old are you?
2. How long have you been a Child ICWA tribal social worker?
3. What is your level of education (e.g., BA, MA, MSW.....) ?
4. What is your ethnicity?
5. What tribe are you a member of?
6. What tribe do you work for?
7. What is your caseload count?

Developed by Elaine Brown

APPENDIX B

INSTRUMENT

Instrument

1. What does, in your view, Native American culture mean to you?
2. How does being from the same culture as the families you work with impact your ability to engage with them?
    a. Prompts: Empathy, trust, respect, and professional.
3. Describe any training(s) that you have gone through that has been helpful in your growth and development as a Tribal Child ICWA Social Worker?
4. Are you familiar with the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA)? If you are, please tell me about your views on the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA).
5. Are you familiar with the State Child Protective Services (CPS)? Please tell me about your views on it.
6. Are you familiar with domestic violence policies on this reservation and off? If you are, please tell me about your views on it.
7. Please describe your knowledge of co-occurring domestic violence and child maltreatment.
8. Do you believe that you have and are receiving adequate training opportunities to enhance your professional skills?
9. What is the proportion/percentage of cases that have co- occurring (domestic violence and child maltreatment) issues?
10. Please tell me about your experiences working with co- occurrences, in types of domestic violence and child maltreatment?
11. What do you find to be the most professionally challenging about working

with co-occurrences that involve child maltreatment and domestic violence?

12. Please tell me how do you navigate those challenges to allow you to carry on this work? Systematic challenges?
13. What motivates you to keep working with child welfare and domestic violence cases?
14. How would you describe your level and/or quality of cooperation and collaboration between CPS and DV agencies you are associated with? What is an expectation or change that would produce greater collaboration between CPS and DV agencies you're involved with?
15. What do you think would be effective strategies concerning safety of both women and children who are dealing with co-occurring issues?

Developed by Elaine Brown

APPENDIX C

INFORMED CONSENT

California State University, San Bernardino
Social Work Institutional Review Board Sub-Committee
APPROVED 4/12/16 VOID AFTER 4/11/17
IRB# SW16-43 CHAIR

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY
SAN BERNARDINO

College of Social and Behavioral Sciences
School of Social Work

INFORMED CONSENT

The study in which you are asked to participate is designed to examine Native American tribal social workers lived experiences and challenges with co-occurrences of child maltreatment and domestic violence cases. The study is being conducted by Elaine Brown, a graduate student, under the supervision of Professor Janet Chang, PhD., School of Social Work, California State University, San Bernardino. This study has been approved by the School of Social Work Sub-Committee of the California State University, San Bernardino Institutional Review Board.

PURPOSE: The purpose of the study is to examine Native American tribal social workers lived experiences and challenges with co-occurrences of child maltreatment and domestic violence cases.

DESCRIPTION: Participation in this study will require approximately 60-75 minutes of your time, and is not considered a requirement for any class or academic purpose. The study involves participation in a one time, one-on-one interview conducted by the researcher.
With your consent, the interview will be recorded. During the interview you will be asked a series of questions. These questions are designed to allow you to share your experiences as a tribal social worker who has experienced co-occurrences of child maltreatment and domestic violence.

PARTICIPATION: Your participation in this study is totally voluntary. You can refuse to participate in the study or discontinue your participation at any time without any consequences.

CONFIDENTIALITY OR ANONYMITY: Your responses to the interview questions will be tape recorded. Your name will not be attached to the audiotape or demographic information, rather pseudonyms will be used to protect confidentiality and descriptions will be written in a general and unidentifiable manner. Following transcription, the audiotapes will be destroyed. The data will be stored in a locked cabinet in the investigator's home and will be only seen by the investigators during the study for 1 year after the study is complete.

RISKS: There are no foreseeable risks to the participants.

BENEFITS: There will not be any direct benefits to the participants.

909.537.5501
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CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY
SAN BERNARDINO

College of Social and Behavioral Sciences
School of Social Work

CONTACT: If you have any questions about this study, please feel free to contact Dr. Janet Chang at (909) 537-5184.

RESULTS: Results of the study can be obtained from the Pfau Library ScholarWorks database at California State University, San Bernardino after July 2017.

This is to certify that I read the above and I am 18 years or older.

☐ I consent to being audio recorded

☐ I do not consent to be audio recorded

_____ _____

Place an X mark here Date

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APPENDIX D

DEBRIEFING STATEMENT

Debriefing Statement

This study you have just completed was design to gain insight on Native American tribal social workers' experiences and challenges when working with co-occurrences of child maltreatment and domestic violence cases. This is to inform you that no deception is involved in this study.

Thank you for your participation. If you have any questions about the study, please feel free to contact Dr. Janet Chang at (909) 537-5184. If you would like to obtain a copy of this study, please contact the Pfau Library ScholarWorks database at California State University, San Bernardino after July 2017.

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