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Through a Trauma-Informed and Culturally Sensitive Lens: A Qualitative Study of Effective Engagement with Native American Communities

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THROUGH A TRAUMA-INFORMED AND CULTURALLY SENSITIVE LENS: A

QUALITATIVE STUDY OF EFFECTIVE ENGAGEMENT WITH NATIVE

AMERICAN COMMUNITIES

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A Project

Presented to the

Faculty of

California State University,

San Bernardino

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In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Social Work

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by

Katie D. Hawkins

May 2021

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ABSTRACT

The focus of this project was on county and tribal professionals' views on

effective social work engagement with tribal communities in a large rural county

located in central California. The importance of this topic is recognized by

existing literature, as well as by the findings of this study, which indicate that

Native Americans are an understudied group that have unique cultural, historical

and service based needs. Additionally, the NASW Code of Ethics (2017)

endorses social work practice, research, policies and programs that are attentive

to different cultures and that challenge social injustices. The findings of this

research project support these ethical considerations and shows that

engagement with Native American communities necessitates a sensitive,

thoughtful, patient and transparent approach based on the generational traumas,

oppressions and stigmas that this group has experienced. This study utilized a

qualitative and trauma-informed approach through personal interviews and two

final group member check-in meetings to develop a shared understanding of the

research focus, as well as to attempt to develop an action plan by the

participants moving forward to address the problem. The major categories that

developed included 1) Historical and Cultural Factors, 2) Needs of the

Community, 3) Engagement Skills, 4) Barriers to Engagement and 5) Family and

Community Systems. The data that was gathered through this research can help

inform social work practice on both the micro and macro levels by leading to

more effective engagement with Native Americans through the identification of

factors that obstruct and facilitate service engagement in direct practice, as well

as through well-structured remedial services, and key agency policies and

procedures. While potential action plans were identified by participants to

address the research focus, no formal action plans were developed by the group

at the time of this report. Nonetheless, the research itself was important because

it led to in-depth dialogue, built professional relationships within the community

and increased knowledge of the topic.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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CHAPTER ONE:

ASSESSMENT

Introduction

The aim of this research project was to study helping professional's

perspectives on how to effectively engage Native American communities. The

constructivist paradigm was utilized to develop a shared meaning among

professionals relating to the research focus. Key informants were asked for their

subjective opinions and expertise about the factors that contribute to successful

engagement with Native Americans, Native American views about services,

factors that might hinder engagement, and any actions or steps that could be

taken to address this issue. The literature review identified several cultural,

religious, and historical factors that could be considered in the engagement

process. The topics of cultural competency, community collaboration, training

and resource provision came up in the literature as possible ways to facilitate

engagement. This study has the potential to inform social work practice related to

the engagement of Native American individuals, families and groups on both the

micro and macro levels.

Research Statement/Focus

The focus of this research involved professional's views around

engagement with Native American communities. Engagement is important

because it is the foundation of any helping process (Hepworth, Rooney,

Dewberry Rooney & Strom-Gottfried, 2017). Rapport building helps the client develop a positive perception of the clinician and the delivered service (Hepworth, Rooney, Dewberry Rooney & Strom-Gottfried, 2017). Moreover, engagement creates a climate of trust, helps clarify expectations and any misunderstandings, and can serve to increase client motivation (Hepworth, Rooney, Dewberry Rooney & Strom-Gottfried, 2017).

This project explored factors that can hinder and facilitate professional engagement with Native American communities in a large, rural county located in central California. The intention of this study was to develop an understanding of the beliefs and experiences of social workers and other key professionals who work in the county and tribal agencies that serve this community. The aim was the development of an action plan to improve the delivery of professional and social work services for this population. For instance, possible barriers that can affect engagement with Native American communities and that could be addressed through an action plan include the high levels of distrust and suspicion that can arise towards county and governmental agencies, as well as the complex needs that this community faces, such as historical and generational trauma, racism and systematic discrimination. The complex needs of the Native American community can impact their willingness to engage in and continue with services.

Engagement is further hindered when social services are mandated, such as is the case with Child Protective Services. Historically, the Native American

family has been victim to forced separation with children being removed from their parent's care and placed involuntarily into boarding schools. These experiences have created a climate of distrust, which makes it highly challenging for Child Welfare Workers and other social service professionals to build the rapport that is necessary to create a supportive and helping relationship towards the long-term success of the individual and/or family. Without a strong social worker and client relationship, it is virtually impossible to break through resistance, instill hope, or help a client create the momentum needed to help empower them to overcome the challenges or barriers that they face. Additionally, without this foundation, the provision of other generalist services by the social worker, such as assessment, planning and goal implementation will ultimately be rendered in effective.

<center>Paradigm and Rationale for Chosen Paradigm</center>

The paradigm that was used for this study was the constructivist paradigm. The constructivist paradigm assumes that knowledge is subjective and can only be understood through the development of a shared meaning about a need or issue (Morris, 2013). In essence, in the constructivist study, data is collected through partnering with individuals and groups to better understand their perceptions and experiences around a specific topic (Morris, 2013). According to this viewpoint, the researcher acts as a facilitator of the data gathering process and a colleague rather than a detached observer, expert or general collector of information (Morris, 2013).

For this study, the constructivist paradigm provided the best means of developing an understanding of the subjective experiences of social workers and other helping professionals who provide direct services to the Native American communities within the county. This was done through reciprocal dialogues about the research focus, both individually and on a group basis. Through these discourses, the study participants were able to provide valuable insight about their knowledge, education, work experiences and observations involving Native American communities, and to build upon a mutual construction around the topic. Again, the goal was that this perspective would not only serve the purpose of bringing these professionals, or stakeholders together to cultivate a shared meaning about the topic but would also lead to a commitment to action to address issues or needs among the Native community and/or helping professionals that create barriers to effective engagement.

Literature Review

According to the constructivist viewpoint, the literature review is seen as one component of many that can contribute to the meaning building process of the study and hermeneutic dialogue (Morris, 2013). This literature review looked at the beliefs, traditions and distinct challenges of Native American communities in order to develop a better understanding of how professionals can better engage these populations. This review also examined the social work and therapeutic interventions that could be used to build the helping relationship.

Cultural Factors

It is necessary for helping professionals to learn about the culture of the clients they are working with. A willingness to learn about and understand a client's culture ultimately leads to better engagement and service outcomes. Factors such as language, beliefs, traditions and family structure can help guide practice in a way that is in line with the individual or family's character. These factors can be used to improve identification and utilization of strengths, resources, protective factors and supports that work for the specific individual or family.

Some researchers have posited that developing sensitivity to the Native American culture, such as by recognizing and being open to diversity, can be more important than knowing about all of the nuances of the culture and history (Weaver, 1999). In this sense, the helping professional can take a stance of learner rather than expert. General skills, such as active listening, patience, humility, allowing for silence and being aware of personal bias are important contributions to culturally sensitive services (Weaver, 1999). Part of being culturally sensitive also means having an understanding of the impact of oppression on certain groups, as well as being attentive to the sovereignty of Native American Tribes (Weaver, 1999). For instance, a study that looked at Native American communities in the state of Illinois who were involved with the CWS found that "culturally responsive" services included those that were flexible, accessible, empowering, encouraging of involvement with stakeholders, and

accepting of the Native American culture and history (Mindell, Vidal de Haymes & Francisco, 2003).

Training and education for professionals is imperative in directing engagement and practice with Native American communities (Mindell, Vidal de Haymes & Francisco, 2003). There can be potential benefits in aligning universities and schools with professionals, such as in CWS and tribal agencies, who work directly with Native American communities, as the education centers can provide expert perspectives, resources and partnerships (Mindell, Vidal de Haymes & Francisco, 2003).

As mentioned above, it is not necessary for professionals to know everything about the Native American culture while working with these clients; however, there are some cultural considerations that are important to be aware of, as they can contribute to better engagement and can be utilized in service provision. One specific cultural consideration is the concept of the circle, which is an important cultural symbol throughout Native American history (Garrett & Garrett, 1994). The symbol can be seen in the Native American view on the Circle of Life, which encompasses countless circles that represent relationships within the natural world, as well as cycles of time that pass (Garrett & Garrett, 1994). In the local Native American community, this concept is seen in traditional practices, such as talking circles, sweat lodge and powwows.

Another cultural consideration is the Native American perspective on illness (Garrett & Garrett, 1994). Illness is seen as something that is within the

individual's control and that can be mitigated by staying in harmony with the tribal laws (Garrett & Garrett, 1994). The Medicine Man is an important support person in healing, as well as in traditional ceremonies by helping to restore balance to the natural order (Garrett & Garrett, 1994). Therapeutic services and interventions that incorporate Native American culture apply skills, such as respect, structure, silence, non-verbal communication, humor, asking permission, being patient, using expressive statements rather than questioning, utilizing of images when applicable, and demonstrating self-disclosure through the use of stories (Garrett & Garrett, 1994).

<u>Family Structure</u>

While culture can shape family structure, each family also comes with its own unique culture and value system. While working with Native Americans, it is important to be aware of the importance of the family unit and be willing to engage and offer therapeutic services on a family rather than individual level (Herring, 1990). Historically, the structure of Native American communities has been multigenerational rather than based on nuclear systems (Herring, 1990). Native American communities are also collective in nature, valuing the group over the individual (Garrett & Garrett, 1994). There are family values that are specific to the Native American culture, include sharing, collaboration and harmony (Garrett & Garrett, 1994).

Awareness around the structure of Native families and communities, is important for reducing provider biases around the concept of the ideal, nuclear

family system, that is pervasive in the dominant society. Being multigenerational in structure, families often include immediate, extended and non-related extended family and it is not uncommon for family members to stay at multiple households (Garrett & Garret, 1994). In the Native American family system children are often raised, not just by their parents, but also by aunts, uncles and other community members (Garrett & Garrett, 1994). Additionally, elders are highly respected within Native American communities and have a significant role in child rearing, as well as providing education, leadership and guidance to the community (Garrett & Garrett, 1994). This research points to the importance of not separating the individual from the cultural group, or family when engaging and providing services to this community (Garrett & Garrett, 1994).

Storytelling

Storytelling is another cultural consideration that can be used to help engage and effectively work with Native American communities. Since storytelling has occurred through mankind's history, as well throughout many cultural groups, it is a tool that many professionals can understand and utilize while working with Native Americans. Storytelling can be viewed as a form of communication for Native American communities. Storytelling often "parallels a real-life experience that is shared by the community" and can be utilized to facilitate transmission of culture, values, philosophies, traditions and language over generations (Inglebret, Jones & Pavel, 2008; Lenox, 2000). Storytelling can be a culturally responsive component of engagement and evidence-based

practice by helping to confirm cultural identity and by helping to educate other providers or support persons who might be involved with the Native American individual or family (Inglebret, Jones & Pavel, 2008). Storytelling can also be used to address feelings of isolation and separation within the Native American community by providing education on other possibilities and opportunities that exist outside of the tribal group (Lenox, 2000). These other opportunities might include advanced education and or employment opportunities that are not immediately available within rural tribal communities.

<u>Religion/Spirituality</u>

Religious and spiritual beliefs can facilitate engagement by bringing in specific strengths, natural supports and resources that are already available to Native American individuals and families. Religion and spirituality can be based on traditional beliefs rather than more formal organizations or structures, or on both, so it is imperative to understand what these terms mean to Native American clients. For instance, one project found that at least half of two Plaines Tribes that were studied described their indigenous beliefs as "very important" (Garroutte, et al. 2009). While about a third of these tribal members also rated beliefs around organized religion, namely Christianity and Native American Church (NAC), to be very important (Garroutte, et al. 2009). Spirituality, including organized religion, as well as traditional prayer, sweat lodge and ceremonies, can be very pertinent to the development of programs for Native American communities (Garroutte, et al. 2009).

Spirituality and religion can also be helpful during the assessment phase of services. Spiritual sensitivity can be just as important, if not more important that cultural sensitivity when engaging and assessing tribal individuals and families (Hodge & Limb, 2008). Hodges and Limb (2008) found that the best assessment tools include spiritual history, such as in the form of spiritual life-maps, eco-grams and genograms (Hodge & Limb, 2008). These tools can help create a contextualization of the values held by Native American individuals and families that can be readily viewed and understood by service providers (Hodge & Limb, 2008).

There are certain components of spirituality that are central to Native American beliefs and that are important for professionals to be aware of and utilize during the engagement process. Some of these belief's include the views that all things have an energy or life, and that everything in the universe is connected in a purposeful way, so that there is a balance (Garrett & Garrett, 1994). Other spiritual concepts include a deep respect for the natural order of things and a desire to live harmoniously with nature (Garrett & Garrett, 1994). Again, while it is not necessary for professionals to know everything about Native American beliefs, having understanding of these simple factors can help facilitate rapport building, reduce misunderstandings, and provide a platform for service assessment and planning that builds upon Native American principles.

Generational Trauma

The historical traumas and oppression that the Native American communities have experienced can clearly be linked to current issues and needs. Past suffering and ineffective coping responses can be transmitted throughout generations while the originating trauma might remain unspoken. The past traumas that this population has experienced have been significant and have included epidemics, biological warfare, genocide, boarding school placement, sexual abuse, as well as societal bans on culture, language and religion (Weaver, 1998). These traumas have resulted in the development of certain protective mechanisms within Native American communities, such as an inclination towards seclusion from the dominant society and a desire to self-isolate (Weaver, 1998).

Generational trauma has also been shown to be a contributing factor for problems specific to this community, such as higher than average rates of poverty, substance use, unresolved grief, early death, discrimination, disproportionate placement of Native children in foster homes, young fatherhood/motherhood and lack of identity (Horejsi, Craig & Pablo, 1992). These factors can contribute to a general sense of confusion and fearfulness, as well as misperceptions and lack of understanding among Native American peoples (Horejsi, Craig & Pablo, 1992). Ultimately, these factors can lead to behaviors that precipitate the labeling of Native Americans as "uncooperative and resistant" (Horejsi, Craig & Pablo, 1992). Consequently, there must be an awareness and

sensitivity around generational trauma when engaging and providing services. This must include awareness about the protective mechanisms, challenges and needs that have developed within the community, as well as recognition of the governmental responses that have been put in place to help mitigate the past, such as through services and resources specific to Native Americans, and the appointment of tribal sovereignty (Weaver, 1998).

Social Work and Therapy Interventions

  The literature has identified helpful interventions that social workers and other professionals can utilize while working with Native American individuals and families. There have been concerns raised in the past that social work has inadequately addressed the needs of Native American populations (Lewis and Ho, 1975). This failure was often the result of misperceptions about the culture, stereotypical thinking and the utilization of standardized interventions that were not sensitive to the needs of the culture (Lewis & Ho, 1975). Factors that have been demonstrated to be beneficial with this population, such as the development of mutual respect and trustworthiness, are universal and paramount to a successful therapeutic relationship (Lewis & Ho, 1975). It is important to consider that some common techniques, if used too early in the helping process, such as making direct eye contact, or encouraging the expression of disturbing feelings or personal problems can be deterrents to successful engagement with Native Americans (Lewis & Ho, 1975). Direct family and group interventions that allow Native American persons to open up at their own pace, which are non-

confrontational, empathetic and understanding of cultural norms will be the most effective with this community (Lewis & Ho, 1975).

As previously mentioned, culture specific tools, such as spiritual ecomaps and genograms, can be effective interventions to use when working with Native American populations (Hodge & Limb, 2009; Limb & Hodge, 2010). The use of concepts, such as images, circles, person-in environment, holism, focusing on the present, and spirituality/strengths-based approaches seems to contribute to the efficacy of these tools with this community (Hodge & Limb, 2009). In addition, it is important that social workers use terms that are accepted by the individuals or groups that they are working with, especially when discussing religion or spirituality (Limb & Hodge, 2010). These tools must be utilized in a respectful manner by asking for permission, recognizing the personal nature of spirituality, apologizing for any offenses, having a willingness to revisit any areas of concern brought up by clients, as well as, by being humble and transparent in all interactions (Hodge & Limb, 2009).

Lastly, it is imperative that providers use a flexible approach and adapt services to the specific needs of the community. Modern mental health interventions can generally be less helpful in meeting the needs of Native American individuals (Hodge and Limb, 2009). Rather, providers must utilize interventions that seek to address prominent cultural beliefs, such as the "lack of balance among spirit, body, mind and context" (Hodge & Limb, 2009, p. 216). In essence, the clinician should seek to treat the imbalance rather than the person

(Hodge & Limb, 2009). Other interventions that are more common to this community include focusing on values, traditions and family, storytelling, and reminiscing (Hodge & Limb, 2009). Additionally, there is a need to allow trust to develop gradually during the engagement process before attempting to use problem-solving interventions with members of this community (Hodge & Limb, 2009).

In summary, the literature review supports the need for effective professional engagement of Native American communities. The Native American population in general is an oppressed group suffering from disproportionate rates of poverty, substance use, mortality and child abuse/neglect. The roots of this oppression are historical extending back many generations and involving considerable trauma, mistreatment and suffering. Native American Tribes have distinctive needs due to their sovereign state, and due to the diversity that exists within and among tribal groups. Effective engagement by professionals requires cultural competency rather than cultural proficiency. This cultural competency can be developed through an awareness of important factors, such as Native American spiritualism, healing practices, storytelling, harmony, family values, and traditions, as well as through an open, patient and unbiased approach.

Theoretical Orientation

While this research has likely been influenced by the other theoretical orientations of the key informants who participated in the study, a framework that

aligns well with the problem statement is Trauma-Informed Social Work

(Kimberly & Parsons, 2017). Trauma-informed practice is sensitive to the fears,

hypervigilance, distrust and anxiety that oppressed groups, such as the Native

American community, might experience (Kimberly & Parsons, 2017). Key

components of the trauma-informed approach include empathy, allowing for

silence, offering a safe and comfortable treatment setting, respecting boundaries,

behaving in a non-threatening manner, being present, and affirming strengths

and resiliency (Kimberly & Parsons, 2017). Trauma-informed skills can provide a

platform for effective engagement and outcomes with Native American

communities through the provision of open, safe and stable interactions and

therapeutic environments.

Contribution of Study to Micro and Macro Social Work Practice

This study has the potential to contribute to social work practice on both

micro and macro levels. Engagement is a key phase of the generalist model in

micro and macro practice, as well as when conducting research. Effective

engagement of Native American Communities can greatly contribute to the

development of rapport and commitment, as well as to overall success of the

clients. On a macro level, this research would hope to inform professional social

work agencies, such as child welfare, and lead to the development of more

effective programs and policies that better support Native American communities.

Summary

The focus of this research was on professional engagement of Native American communities, namely, a tribal group located in an expansive region in Central California. The literature review provided one possible pathway towards the understanding of this topic through consideration of cultural, tradition, spiritual and historical factors pertaining to this population. This study could be understood through a trauma-informed approach, but the theoretical orientation has ultimately been at the discretion of the professionals who helped with the construction of the research. This study has the potential to contribute to the field of social work on the individual, family, group and societal levels by developing a better understanding of the factors that promote and inhibit engagement with Native American people.

CHAPTER TWO:

ENGAGEMENT

Introduction

This chapter covers important topics pertaining to the engagement phase of this research. According to the constructivist paradigm, the subjectivity of all participants including the researcher, the qualitative data gathering process, the development of a shared understanding and the action plan are all topics that needed to be considered from the outset of the study (Morris, 2013). The identification of the study sites and key gatekeepers, as well as the initial contact with these individuals was paramount. Additional factors, such as ethics, politics, diversity and technology were addressed from the engagement phase onwards, and adjustments were made as the study progressed.

Research Site

The study sites included county and tribal agencies within an expansive, but mostly rural county in central California. The county agency provides social services for children, adults, families and elderly persons who reside in the county through four primary divisions or programs, which include CPS, Adult Protective Services (APS) and the Families Intensive Response Strengthening Team (FIRST). The primary roles of each agency are distinct.

Social workers who are employed by CPS investigate reports of suspected child abuse and neglect (Child Protective Services, 2020). These

workers provide interventions and services to help families who do not meet a minimum sufficient level of care to maintain the safety of their children (Child Protective Services, 2020). A primary goal of CPS workers is to maintain the child in the home whenever it is safe to do so by providing services, such as assistance with referrals, case management, family preservation and support to help stabilize the household (Child Protective Services, 2020). Services through CPS can be voluntary or mandatory depending on the severity of the abuse or neglect issue, and other complicating factors, such as parental substance use, mental illness or domestic violence (Child Protective Services, 2020). If it is determined that it is necessary to remove a child from their home and place them into foster care, CPS social workers provide family reunification services over a court regulated time frame with the aim of helping the family come back together when the issues of abuse or neglect are sufficiently resolved according to a case plan (Child Protective Services, 2020).

APS Social Workers conduct investigations of suspected elder and dependent adult abuse and neglect (Adult Protective Services: What You Need to Know, 2020). These workers offer case management, counseling, brokerage and in-home services to elders age sixty-five and older, or dependent adults in order to promote well-being, alleviate safety concerns and encourage self-sufficiency (Adult Protective Services: What You Need to Know, 2020). A significant difference between CPS and APS is that in APS, clients have a right to self-determination and can decided whether or not to allow the agency to

intervene (Adult Protective Services: What You Need to Know, 2020). Special legal provisions might also apply in cases involving the abuse of Native American elders (Elder Abuse in Tribal Communities: A Guide for California State Judges, n.d.). Due to their sovereignty, tribes have the ability to endorse their own law and judicial courts to address matters of elder abuse (Elder Abuse in Tribal Communities: A guide for California State Judges, n.d.).

FIRST provides voluntary services to children and families that are at risk of child abuse and neglect. FIRST includes social workers and specialists who provide intensive interventions, such as Family Team Meetings (FTM), case management, coordination with other service providers, support, assistance with transportation, and crisis intervention (Wraparound Basics or What is Wraparound: An Introduction, 2020). This team also works with a variety of ethnic groups include Native American clients. The concept of "wraparound" that is utilized by FIRST is a culturally competent approach that offers "circles of care," which is based in cultures, such as the Native American Community (Implementing Culture-Based Wraparound, n.d.).

As previously outlined, the social workers and specialists in these agencies come into contact with many cultural groups and have been trained to provide culturally competent and trauma-informed services to the communities that they serve. These county social workers are composed of diverse individuals with different levels of educational and training, ranging from a high school education with professional experience, to a master's level education. These

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workers also receive ongoing professional training through the county. In addition to the professional line staff, other key persons include the supervisors of each division, the Deputy Director, Chief Program Manager, Assistant Director and Director.

There are five Native American Tribes that are spread throughout the large region and make up approximately thirteen and a half percent of the total county population (United States Census Bureau, 2019). One of the largest tribes in the county is also the fifth largest in the state and has approximately two-thousand enrolled members. The study sites within this large tribe included Tribal Social Services, Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) and Family Services.

Within this tribe's organization, ICWA is housed within the Tribal Social Services program. The Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) applies in all Child Welfare cases involving Native American children and dictates that tribes must be given the option to intervene (Active Efforts, n.d.). While working with Native American families, CWS social workers are required to provide active efforts to prevent the breakup of Indian families and keep children in their homes (Active Efforts, n.d.). These active efforts also apply if a child is removed from their home and include efforts and close partnership with the tribe to help reunify the family (Active Efforts, n.d.). Furthermore, ICWA designates an order of placement if the child is removed from the home, which includes placement with relatives, placement with another approved Indian family, or if none of these options exist,

placement in a tribally approved foster home (ICWA Guide Online: 16 Placement, n.d.).

According the agency's website, tribal Family Services includes mental health counselors and licensed substance use professionals. This program offers individual, group and family services, as well as youth prevention to the Native Americans. Family Services also provides outreach services to the larger Native American community through mental health and substance use-based advocacy and educational events.

Engagement Strategies for Gatekeepers at Research Site

The strategy that was used to engage the county agency involved setting up in-person meetings with at least three key gatekeepers, including the CPS Social Worker Supervisor, the FIRST Supervisor, the APS Supervisor, as well as the Child Program Director in Behavioral Health to provide information on the area of focus and the constructivist methodology, as well as to request their input on the subject and on possible key informants. Unfortunately, the Child Program Director in Behavioral Health did not elect to meet with the researcher during the data gathering phase of research and thus Behavioral Health staff did not participate in the current study.

In regard to the tribal agencies, engagement began with telephone calls to the Director of Family Services and the Director of Social Services to request telephonic and/or video meetings in order to provide information on the research, to start developing rapport, to learn about their perspectives and knowledge, and

to determine if there might be other key gatekeepers within the tribe who would be important to talk to. During engagement of these gatekeepers, it was discovered that the Director of Social Services was no longer employed with the agency and the gatekeeper who was covering for the program at the time was the Chief Operative Officer (COO) of the tribe, so this individual was engaged in place of the Director of Social Services. Additionally, another key gatekeeper who was engaged based on participant's recommendations was the Executive Director of the tribal agency that houses the Tribal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Program.

It was imperative to speak with the gatekeepers in both agencies about the criteria for the research informants, which included honesty, a basic verbal/written communication ability, the capacity to share decision making power, an openness to other people's ideas, beliefs and principles, as well as the time involved in the study (Morris, 2013). These factors were central to the participants' ongoing engagement and commitment to the research. Additionally, during engagement, the researcher assured the gatekeepers that the research was professionally relevant to them through discussion about the potential benefits of the study, including more effective engagement and utilization of services by Native American clients, a reduction in racial disparity, as well as the development of a shared action plan to alleviate any barriers or obstacles to utilization of services for these communities.

Self-Preparation

Professional experience within one of the study sites, namely the county, has set the stage for this research by providing some perspective about the experiences of many Native American children and families who have become involved in local Child Welfare Services. It is apparent that within this county, the representation of Native American persons is disproportionate, as is apparent by multiple child abuse and neglect referrals and increased risk of child detentions, as compared to other ethnicities. Additionally, the Native American communities in this county appear to present with significant suspicion and distrust of not only county agencies, but of tribal agencies as well, increasing barriers to effective engagement.

In addition to professional experience, self-preparation for this study involved the implementation of narrative and reflective journals to document the progress of the research, the rationale for any changes in the research, and any concerns or issues that arose during the study (Morris, 2013). Preparation required flexibility on the part of the researcher, both with the time commitment, as well as conceptually. This is because in a constructivist approach, the power is meant to be shared among the group and the focus of the research can change and evolve depending on the hermeneutic dialectic among the participants (Morris, 2013). Readiness included an understanding that the perspective of the researcher and literary review were only two components of the comprehensive study (Morris, 2013). Thus, close attention to preserving

transparency and reliability, not just while preparing, but throughout the research continued to be very important (Morris, 2013).

Self-preparation also involved the understanding of the study sites, as previously outlined, and the ability to communicate with these gatekeepers through a variety of methods when necessary, including introductory telephone calls, email and video conferencing (Morris, 2013). Other considerations included the diversity of the participants and how to best gather the data in such a small community (Morris, 2013). It was important to practice self-awareness and consider any biases that arose, either related to familiarity with study sites, or related to the focus of the research. It was also important to anticipate any strong emotions that came up among participants during the interviews due to the sensitive nature of the research focus and the ethnic group being discussed. Moreover, it was imperative that the researcher continued to develop an understanding of the cultural group and history, such as through the research review and the trauma-informed lens, as well as practice good attending and facilitation skills (Morris, 2013).

Additional preparations pertaining to data collection involved careful consideration of the interview questions, and the development of interviewing and observational skills, such as using more open-ended questions rather than closed ended questions, clarifying, paraphrasing and using sensitive, non-intrusive questioning (Morris, 2013). It was also important to keep in mind that the data collection and evaluation were occurring simultaneously, so a good data

recording system, which included thorough written documentation, was essential (Morris, 2013).

Diversity Issues

The diversity issues for this study included the unique characteristics of the gatekeepers, study participants, as well as the culture of the research focus. It was important to approach these individuals and groups from a strengths-based rather than deficits-based perspective, as well as be mindful of potential differences in appearance, power hierarchies, customs, behaviors, views, verbal and non-verbal methods of communication, and history (Morris, 2013). Likewise, the study participants came from different educational, experiential and cultural backgrounds. The researcher had to maintain awareness around the fact that these different backgrounds and experiences could impact the development of a shared meaning around the issue and/or could create conflict among the participants. For example, some participants who belonged to a dominant culture, such as White male participants, might have had some difficulty understanding the perspectives of oppressed and under privileged groups and individuals, such as Native Americans.

While no conflicts arose during this study, the project still required an awareness that if conflict did arise, the conflict needed to be addressed with the individuals and/or among group to come to a resolution or agreement around the issues. This constructivist approach also required an awareness of personal bias, and a basic knowledge of the effects of oppression and privilege on different

groups (Morris, 2013). Therefore, cultural humility rather cultural expertise was a

necessary component of the entire study process. Cultural humility was

accomplished through an attitude of learning and curiosity, as well as open

consideration of the unique viewpoints of the participants. This was also

accomplished through careful and respectful wording of questions during

individual and group interview processes, so as to not upset any of the

participants.

Ethical Issues

Ethical issues pertaining to the constructivist paradigm include

confidentiality, privacy, competency, trustworthiness and transparency (Morris,

2013). It was important that the study participants were fully informed in advance

of the nature of the study, as well as the barriers to confidentiality and anonymity,

so that they could make informed decisions about their participation in the study

(Morris, 2013). While direct identifiers, such as names, are not included in the

research report, the participants needed to understand that there was still a

minimal risk that their identities might be ascertained indirectly by means of the

data gathering process, such as through the final group meetings. Written

informed consent was provided to each participant in a simple, easy to

understand manner and included an explanation about the voluntary nature of

the study and the participant's options to continue or exit the study at any time.

The participants were also provided with a copy of the informed consent to retain

for their records (refer to Appendix A: Attachments section of this report to view a copy of the Informed Consent).

As previously mentioned, due to the nature of the study, it can be difficult to fully maintain confidentiality and privacy, hence there could arise a need to reevaluate and re-compromise as the study progresses (Morris, 2013). The participants were made aware that the researcher was unable to fully guarantee confidentiality, especially in the group setting, as participants ultimately may choose whether or not to share the information outside of the study group. This required ongoing conversation with the participants both on individual and group levels to ensure that they understood the risks to their privacy, as well as the need to respect the other participants and be open to new opinions and beliefs.

There was also a risk that ethical concerns could arise around the sharing of personal, professional and political opinions about the topic, thus resulting in possible embarrassment, psychological distress or even damage to one's professional character. Furthermore, dialogue about a group that has suffered much stigmatization and stereotyping, namely the Native American community, could present further ethical risks involving potential emotional or social harm. These risks were mitigated with the study's commitment to open communication, unbiased viewpoints and a motivation for positive social action by the researcher and circle of informants. These ethical issues were also further addressed through reviews by the Human Subjects Review Board (IRB) and with the county agency, as well as through approval from these entities prior to proceeding with

the research plan (refer to Appendix B to view a copy of the IRB Approval Letter) (Morris, 2013).

Political Issues

When using the constructivist approach, political issues are more likely than with other paradigms to be addressed prior to the commencement of the study, such as during initial engagement with key gatekeepers (Morris, 2013). Issues such as the focus of research, social construction, data gathering, dissemination of the information and collaboration were areas that were discussed and built upon during the meetings with the county and tribal gatekeepers and study participants (Morris, 2013). Furthermore, factors such as trustworthiness, open-mindedness and the development of a shared understanding around the topic were areas that were considered, discussed and resolved by the individual participants and the dialectic circle. It should be mentioned that it was also important to consider that familiarity with the research site, namely the county agency in the case of this researcher, required additional monitoring in order to monitor for and control the interference of associates on the research outcomes and to ensure participant privacy (Morris, 2013).

The Role of Technology in Engagement

Face-to-face contact is vital during the initial stages of engagement with gatekeepers and study participants (Morris, 2013). However, technology can serve to help to maintain relationships following initial meetings and throughout

the research process (Morris, 2013). The technology that was used for this research included telephone, email and video conferencing. For purposes of this study, video conferencing was used in placed of the in-person interviews and final group member check-in due to the COVID-19 pandemic. According to Morris (2013), technology used in this way can help strengthen the hermeneutic dialogue. When electronic communication was used for purposes of this study, the communication contained as few identifiers as possible in order to safeguard participant confidentiality.

Summary

This chapter drew attention to the importance of considering such issues as diversity, politics, ethics and technology during the engagement phase of research. Engagement using the constructivist approach required strategies aimed at building relationships with research sites and key gatekeepers. Providing education on the research focus and process was imperative to the overall structure, as well as the outcomes of the study. All of this was accomplished through careful self-preparation by the researcher, including the consideration of matters, such as informed consent, interviewing techniques, agency politics, integrity, and open-mindedness.

CHAPTER THREE:

IMPLEMENTATION

Introduction

This chapter describes the study participants, including the professionals of the county and tribal agencies in the region, and how these participants were selected in accord with the constructivist paradigm. The topic of data collection, recording and analysis procedures are reviewed, including information on the phases and methods that were used, as well as a description of the specific demographics of the final participant group.

Study Participants

As previously outlined, the study participants included key professionals employed with county and tribal agencies that worked with the Native American community in the local region. A total of twelve individuals participated in this study. These employees included four social workers, one paraprofessional, one ICWA representative, one employment coordinator, and four individuals in management roles, including one practicing therapist. These stakeholders made up the hermeneutic dialogue. The social workers among the circle were comprised of child welfare and family services staff. These social workers provide various services to the local Native American Communities, including, but not limited to case management, brokerage services, counseling, crisis

intervention, advocacy, counseling, education, investigative functions (i.e. surrounding the abuse or neglect of children, elders or dependent adults) and facilitation of team meetings.

The therapist who participated in the dialectic circle was employed with tribal Family Services. Therapists deliver valuable therapeutic services to Native American individuals and families that help to address issues, such as mental illness, emotional difficulties, substance abuse and challenges in coping. Therapists might utilize a range of therapeutic models when working with these communities, such as Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy (CBT), Psychotherapy, Mindfulness, Strength-Based Therapy, Trauma Informed Therapy and Narrative Practice.

Lastly, ICWA plays an important role in advocating on behalf of Native American children who have been removed from their home and placed into foster care (National Indian Child Welfare Association [NICWA], 2020). As previously explained, ICWA promotes active and timely efforts and services by child welfare, that help to alleviate the breakup of Native American families (NICWA, 2020). ICWA Representatives have the right to intervene on behalf of tribes in child welfare court cases and must be provided advance notice according to the law (NICWA, 2020). Due to the nature of their work, ICWA Representatives must be aware of federal mandates, such as about placement preferences for Native American children (NICWA, 2020). ICWA Representatives

might also intervene in other legal cases involving Native American youth, such as custody cases and juvenile delinquency court cases (NICWA, 2020).

Selection of Participants

This study used a combination of maximum variation and snowball sampling, which is typical of constructivist research (Morris, 2013). Maximum variation sampling was appropriate for this research because in this type of sampling method, the selection of participants is diversified, meaning that there is an increased probability that participants will have different ethnic, cultural, gender and/or other defining characteristics, which they can bring to the construction (Morris, 2013). On the other hand, the snowball sampling technique helps with recruitment of participants via chain sampling, such as one individual referring someone who they know who refers another and so on (Morris, 2013).

In this study, these sampling methods were accomplished by selecting a small, but diverse group of professionals within the local county and tribal agencies to participate in the research. The snowball sampling started with the gatekeepers of these county and tribal agencies. The gatekeepers were asked for their recommendations on potential participants for the hermeneutic dialectic and then asked to provide the researcher's contact information to these potential participants, so that these professionals could reach out to the researcher on their own if they were interested in joining the study. Subsequently, each of the recommended participants were asked for their recommendations for other professionals who might be interested in participating in the study and who might

have a different construction, and then asked to provide the researcher's contact information to these potential subjects. This chain of inquiries continued until the data collection was adequate and the professional resources seemed to be exhausted. These sampling methods were used to increase the probability of obtaining a purposeful sample of constructions, which was representative of the community professionals, while reducing the possibility of selection bias by the researcher (Morris, 2013).

To highlight the diversity that was obtained using the maximum variation and snowball sampling methods described above, the specific demographics of the final participant group in this study included 50% Native American, 8% Hispanic, 30% Caucasian and 8% East Indian decent. Additionally, 25% of participants had a high school education, 50% had a bachelor's degree and 50% had graduate degrees. Gender was almost proportional with 58% of participants identifying as female and 42% identifying as male.

Data Gathering

The data gathering phase of this research involved individual interviews and final comprehensive group member check-in meetings (Morris, 2013). The individual interviews were done in stages, involving preparation, engagement, maintenance and termination (Morris, 2013). According to the constructivist paradigm, the researcher performs the role of the interview data-gathering tool, so the interview questions are explored based on the researcher's developing insight, observations, beliefs and experiences about the topic (Morris, 2013).

Nevertheless, for this study, the researcher did prepare some general questions in advance to bring to the interview while building on the shared construction among the participants (Morris, 2013).

The topics that were covered in the interviews included inquiries about the participant's experiences in engaging Native American clients, as well as their thoughts, principles, feelings, and understanding (both cognitive and sensory) about the subject (Morris, 2013). The study participant's professional perceptions of the how, what and why surrounding the utilization of services by Native Americans in the community, helped to shed light on how to best develop a good working relationship with this population. Specifically, a working relationship that would encourage ongoing service attendance, participation and ultimately success. Some questions that were included in the interviews included: What professional experiences have you had in engaging Native American individuals or families? What does the process of engagement with this community typically look like in your job/position? What do you think are the biggest facilitators and barriers to engagement? What do you hear other professionals in your workplace and/or community saying about this topic? What do you know about the needs of this community? How have your engagement techniques with this community evolved over time? (refer to Appendix C for a full listing of the structured interview questions).

The concluding member check-in meetings brought together all of the key stakeholders in the study to review the key themes that arose during the

individual interviews, and to finalize the joint construction on the topic of

professional engagement with Native American communities. During the member

check-in meetings, the researcher facilitated discussions with the groups about

the accuracy of the conceptual interpretations and associations, as well as any

need for future action by the entire group. The group member's input on the

areas of agreement and disagreement related to the topic and the construction

were explored through a directed discussion about the participant's assertions

and concerns, as well as how best to address their concerns (Morris, 2013).

Phases of Data Collection

The first phase involved the individual interviews. As previously

mentioned, the interviews started with preparation involving the development of

questions relevant to the topic of engagement with Native American communities

(Morris, 2013). The interview questions were carefully selected, unintrusive, and

focused on the beliefs, feelings, values, experiences and sensory understandings

of the participants in the study (Morris, 2013). The wording of the questions was

adjusted as needed based on the participant's background, such as their direct

or indirect involvement with the tribal community. Examples of questions that

were included involved the professionals about their views regarding the

utilization of services by the Native American community, and their feelings about

the topic. The participants were also asked what they have seen and heard when

they observed other professionals engaging with this populations, and what they

felt the attitudes were about this topic among other employees who they have worked with.

The researcher also prepared to ask identifying questions about the study participants, including their career, education, training, age and ethnicity for categorical purposes (Morris, 2013). This identifying information was maintained by the researcher separately from the research journals and kept in a locked cabinet. Alpha-numerical keys were used to tie the identifying information to corresponding interview data in the research journals. This identifying information was destroyed when the research project was completed. The participants were informed that this information was voluntary and any refusal to provide their identifying or demographic information would not affect their ability to continue in the study.

The researcher began the interviews by building rapport with the participants through relaxed, friendly and non-research-based questions (Morris, 2013). Once adequate rapport seemed to be established for the interview process, and the interviewee appeared comfortable, the researcher went on to outline the research focus and the nature of the constructivist paradigm, including the need for open-mindedness, the limits around confidentiality, the time commitment involved, and the termination and dissemination plans (Morris, 2013). Then the researcher shared the results of the literary review, as well as any prior constructions on the topic (Morris, 2013).

The participants were asked focus interview questions to elicit their understanding of the topic (Morris, 2013). The researcher listened actively to the participant's answers and use of encouragers, such as nods, reflection and prompts as needed to help the dialogue along (Morris, 2013). With each subsequent interviewee, the prior constructions continued to be shared to develop a comprehensive understanding of the topic moving forward. The interviews were terminated with a summary of the discussion to check for accuracy (Morris, 2013). Following each interview, the information that was gathered was dictated and then sent back to the interviewees by email to elicit their input and to further ensure that the data was accurate and truly reflective of their responses (Morris, 2013). This process continued until all members of the hermeneutic dialectic were interviewed.

The second phase of the data collection process involved bringing all of the key stakeholders together for a member check-in meeting (Morris, 2013). Prior to the meeting, the researcher provided each stakeholder with an outline of the major themes and constructions that surfaced through the interviews and requested that they check the information for accuracy (see Appendix D for a copy of the final qualitative coding). The researcher elicited input from all participants on their availability for the final meeting. Based on participant's responses, two video conference meetings were scheduled over the course of a two-week period to accommodate schedules and allow everyone who desired to participate to attend. The participants were also informed in advance that if they

were unable to attend either of the meetings, they could provide the researcher with input on the final construction which the researcher would share with the group. The researcher also provided each stakeholder with a meeting agenda (refer to Appendix E for a copy of the Meeting Agenda).

During the member check-in, the researcher acted as a facilitator to help the meeting stay on focus and move through the stages of the generalist model starting with engagement and ending with termination (Morris, 2013). In the engagement stage of the meeting, the participants were introduced to one another and reminded of the need for open and flexible communication, as well as the limits on confidentiality (Morris, 2013). The participants were encouraged to be respectful of one another's confidentiality and privacy by keeping whatever information that was discussed within the group setting. The researcher encouraged the group to identify group rules, which included items such as how team members would like to be treated or how participants would like to address conflict should it arise.

During the assessment stage of the meeting, the purpose of the meeting and the joint construction were shared with the group. The participants were encouraged to provide their input by clarifying, identifying areas of agreement and identifying any areas of disagreement (Morris, 2013). The researcher was careful to ensure that all participants were able to share their views on the subject matter if desired (Morris, 2013).

The planning and implementation stage involved discussion about the possible development of an action plan to address the research focus, as well as an attempt to develop specified roles and tasks moving forward (Morris, 2013). The first group was able to identify possible areas for action, but was unable to commit to any plan, assign roles or tasks. The information and possible action plans from the first group were shared in the second group meeting. While the second group also agreed with the construction and areas of potential action, the group was also unable to commit to an action plan. However, participants in both group meetings consented to the sharing of their contact information with the entire group for purposes of possibly reconvening at a later time to discuss the issue and develop a plan. During the evaluation stage of the meetings, the researcher reviewed or summarized the final construction with the group (Morris, 2013). This led to the termination of the group, a plan to disseminate the final constructivist report on the subject, and a review of the potential action plans (Morris, 2013).

Data Recording

According to the constructivist paradigm, data collection can take the form of data recording, observation, as well as the collection of documentation and social artifacts (Morris, 2013). For this study, all of the interviews and group meetings were conducted through video conferencing due to COVID-19 precautions. The researcher primarily utilized data recording by means of note taking and email communications. Audio recording equipment was not used for

purposes of this research. Due to the use of video conferencing, it was not possible for the researcher to uncover documents or social artifacts at the study sites, such as posters, statues, artwork, beadwork, basketry or newspaper clippings, that could be included in the joint construction and member check-in meeting (Morris 2013). However, upon termination of the final group check-in meetings, the researcher informed the participants that if desired, they could submit culture specific drawings or pictures to include in the final report and/or poster.

Narrative and reflective journals were also used to record study data, researcher observations, researcher contemplations and researcher justifications pertaining to the analysis of the qualitative information that was gathered (Morris, 2013). The narrative journal told the story of the research starting with engagement through termination (Morris, 2013). While the reflective journal included contemplations about the research process, as well as the reasoning behind the methodology and direction of the study (Morris, 2013).

<div align="center">Data Analysis Procedures</div>

The data analysis for this study primarily involved the examination of the qualitative information that was provided by the hermeneutic dialectic including the key stakeholders, the perspective of the researcher and the literary review (Morris, 2013). The data that was gathered through interviews with the county and tribal professionals was broken down into the most basic components in order to identify repetitive themes upon which to build a shared understanding

about the research topic (Morris, 2013). During the data gathering phase of research, open coding was used to reduce the interview information down to units or groupings of analysis (Morris, 2013). The next stage involved axial coding, which was used to construct associations among the individual units (Morris, 2013). The researcher checked back in with the participants to ensure that the themes and correlations were accurate according to each participant's individual construction. Finally, these associations, or relationships were compiled to create the shared construction, which was distributed to all members prior to the final meeting. To illustrate this process, the final categories that arose out of the data collection for this research included 1) Cultural and Historical Factors, 2) Needs of the Community, 3) Engagement Skills, 4) Barriers to Engagement and 5) Family and Community Systems. Each of these categories encompassed the units of information that had been extracted from the individual interviews. Then the units of data were sorted and matched to the appropriate categories.

<center>Summary</center>

Implementation was accomplished through maximum variation and snowball sampling within county and tribal social service and mental health agencies. The study was executed through individual interviews and two final member check-in meetings. The interviews and member check-in meetings occurred using the stages of the generalist model, including engagement through termination. Total inclusion of all participants was encouraged by summarizing

and checking back in for accuracy on the individual and joint constructions

relating to the study focus.

CHAPTER FOUR:

EVALUATION

Introduction

This chapter covers the data analysis, data interpretation, and implications of the research for micro and macro social work practice. The data analysis began with the twelve semi-structured interviews that were conducted with various county and tribal professionals pertaining to their views around engagement with local Native American communities in the county. The data that evolved from the individual interviews was combined systematically through a process of open and axial coding into a shared, joint construction on the research topic. Accuracy of the coding was ensured by means of the participant's individually reviewing their personal interview transcripts and coding, as well as through group review of the complete qualitative coding in the final member check-in meetings.

Data Analysis

Data analysis began with the qualitative information that was gathered from the individual interviews. Following each interview, the interview transcripts were typed and sent back to the participants to check for accuracy. The participants were asked to report back on any information in the transcript that did not match their views and statements, and, if needed, to correct the document and return it to the researcher, or report back on any changes that

needed to be made, so that the researcher could make the corrections. The transcripts were modified as needed according to the participants' specific input.

The next step involved open and axial coding of the amended interview transcripts. The coding was initiated by highlighting key units of information throughout the individual interviews and then by examination of the information to determine the key relationships. Five major themes or categories were developed out of this process and each unit of information was subsequently assigned to the category that appeared to be the best match. As previously mentioned, the categories that developed included 1) Historical and Cultural Factors, 2) Needs of the Community, 3) Engagement Skills, 4) Barriers to Engagement, and 5) Family and Community Systems. For instance, generational trauma was a unit that came up often throughout many interviews. Generational trauma and associated events that were mentioned in the interviews, such as genocide, loss of cultural identity and forced assimilation to the dominant society were assigned to the category "Historical and Cultural Factors." This process continued until all of the units of information were assigned to a category. After the coding for the individual interviews were complete, the information was sent back to the participants for their review and so that they could check the coding for accuracy. This process continued through all twelve interviews.

The final step in the data analysis involved the joining of the separate coding into a unified construction. This was accomplished by merging all if the data from each coding into one document. The information was separated

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among four columns including the five major categories, areas of group agreement, areas of group disagreement, as well as a blank section for potential action plans pending the final group check-in meetings. When the same units of information occurred in more than one interview, such as mentioned above with the topic of generational trauma, the information was only entered once on the final document to reduce redundancy. Additionally, other units of information that were similar were grouped together, such as under the "Needs of the Community" category there were a variety of socioeconomic needs that had been identified throughout the twelve interviews. These units were consequently listed together under the appropriate column, such as "socioeconomic needs, including unemployment, lack of housing, poverty and lack of education," rather than being listed separately. Once the final qualitative axial coding was complete, a copy was sent to all participants for review. Lastly, during the final group member check-in meetings, these areas of agreement and disagreement were considered and clarified by the group, to further ensure accuracy, and to discuss potential action plans based on the final construction.

<div align="center">Data Interpretation</div>

The data that emerged from the shared construction will be clarified below using the five major categories that were mentioned above, including "Historical and Cultural Factors, Needs of the Community, Engagement Skills, Barriers to Engagement, and Family and Community Systems."

<u>Historical and Cultural Factors</u>

The participants identified many historical and cultural factors that can influence the engagement process with the Native American community, as well as serve as strengths for the community. The historical factors that were mentioned by many of the participants included generational trauma, loss of personal and cultural identity, segregation, displacement from native lands, and forced assimilation with dominant cultures. According to **Participant #1**, the local Native American communities are unique because "there was a real loss of culture here due to genocides and displacements from tribal lands," which resulted in the creation of an "adapted culture," or a culture that combined traditions from other tribal groups (personal communication, May 26, 2020). **Participant #4** added, "The historical trauma, systematic racial inequality and everything that's going on, they are hesitant to engage" (personal communication, July 06, 2020).

> **Participant #1**: The tribes of the United States were victims of an aggressive approach to assimilation that stemmed from harsh judgement of their ways of tribal life. This approach was centered in improving their living standards, while also targeting a radical decrease in tribal populations. This approach resulted in boarding schools, forced sterilization of Indian women, laws that made it illegal to speak indigenous languages, practice indigenous religion, attend indigenous ceremonies, and disallowed Indian parents retaining custody of their children past the

age of four. While this approach has since been recognized as inhuman, and the laws and regulations revoked, the resulting trauma plays an important role in the dysfunction and barriers that Native populations face to successfully sustain wellness and self-sufficiency (personal communication, May 26, 2020).

Participant #2: Past trauma can be a barrier to engagement if it is not addressed. Trauma comes from their grandparents through the generations. This population has been separated the removed from their reservations and segregated. There are emotional effects down the pipeline. I really think treating historical trauma is big in this community (personal communication, Mary 27, 2020).

Participant #3: There is a huge role that historical trauma plays with every single family on the reservation. We have a hugely disproportionate level of Native American inmates in our local jail and justice system all the way down through juvenile justice. Different families have experiences with loss of lands, traditions and language. There are increased rates of sexual abuse and addictions among families who were displaced and later forced into boarding school situations (personal communication, June 02, 2020).

Participant #7: There is a mistrust within the tribal community knowing that there is this dark, looming history. A hopeless feeling exists in this community due to historical trauma. However, this is not talked about in

the community. They grow up watching family going to jail, fighting, and engaging in toxic behaviors, so they start thinking it is normal (personal communication, August 03, 2020).

Participant #9: There is generational trauma, lost culture and lost family that occurred over time. There is a need to re-establish it. These things lead to other problems like distrust with agencies outside of the tribe or substance use. Generational trauma is not discussed enough. There is a need to get input from tribal members who know the history (personal communication, August 05, 2020).

Participant #12: There is a disintegration of the family. They have not come back from that. Their families were broken apart intentionally. How can they overcome that tragedy that happened to them? They inherited these issues. However, Native American people are very resilient, have a strong identity and are a proud people (personal communication, August 18, 2020).

The participants viewed remedial services, such as ICWA to be necessary but insufficient in addressing the historical traumas that the Native American community has suffered. This could be due to a variety of factors, such as the underlying trauma within the community, as well as the lack of adequate knowledge by both providers and community members about the programs or services available. For instance, **Participant #2** commented on the importance of

"knowing what's out there for them and having those special services" available (personal communication, May 27, 2020).

> **Participant #1:** ICWA was put into place to remedy the disproportionate levels of Indian children placed in foster care and adopted by non-Natives; however, ICWA did not become law until 1980. While ICWA addressed this serious issue that impacted generations of Indian people, service providers are now working with populations that have evolved with long-term damaging factors that support dysfunction, including substance use and domestic violence. Service providers are working with what is left over and trying to rebuild the positive factors that influence health, safety and wellness. Professionals cannot remedy it all (personal communication, May 26, 2020).

> **Participant #7:** People do not understand why, with all these extras that the Native American community receives, people are still struggling. It is a real misunderstanding of that inner trauma. You can give everyone a free house and other things, but it is not going to help that trauma. There is a frustration about why people are still making bad decisions (personal communication, August 03, 2020).

> **Participant #10:** There is the potential to do good things in the community due to the community's sovereign status. However, this population struggles to see their potential, or they do not have the resources to meet their potential. This is traced to issues, such as lack of education,

generational trauma and substance use. There is a loss of culture, which

tribal members might not even be aware of, and that has more of an

impact than most would realize. Tribal services have good intention, but

the issue is with the follow-through, trouble implementing programs, or

lack of understanding around regulations. More education is needed in

this area (personal communication, August 13, 2020).

The cultural factors that were discussed included traditional events, such

as powwow, dance and song, as well as the importance of gatherings, sharing

food, religion, spirituality, tribal government and respect towards the earth.

Participant #10 spoke about how there is the traditional tribal culture, but there

is also a new culture that is influenced by the Western culture" (personal

communication, August 13, 2020). Additionally, **Participant #1** emphasized that

this is a "collective community, connected to community centers, tribal centers,

elder's programs and powwow" (personal communication, May 26, 2020).

> **Participant #2:** How do we continue to promote cultural connection? How
>
> do we still value your cultural connections, but give you the space and
>
> resources to have a fresh start? The tribe can give a native-centric voice
>
> to the process. There is a huge role of culture in recovery. Not a system-
>
> imposed solution, but the healing supports and systems that come directly
>
> from the heart of the community (personal communication, May 27, 2020).
>
> **Participant #4:** There is a spectrum with cultural and traditional practices.
>
> You have to leave out the assumptions about practices and belief

systems, such as how engaged they are with their culture. Providing

cultural events and activities [is important for engagement]. Native people

are generous and want to share. It helps to provide food, such as

facilitating a gathering. There is also the power of humor, using humor to

cope and connect with each other, such as by laughing and sharing

stories (personal communication, July 06, 2020).

Participant #7: [Professionals] need a sense of the culture and need to

connect to the culture through respect, good morals and hard work. It

helps to make connections about the importance of reading and other

cultural practices, such as singing (personal communication, August 03,

2020).

Participant #9: I ask about culture during my first contact with individuals

and families, such as by asking if their culture is important to them and

what it is about their culture that is important. Some traditional events that

might be important include sweat lodge and gatherings. There are spiritual

needs, heritage and beliefs. People need to have a sense of purpose,

fulfillment, pride, joy and sense of belonging to the community (personal

communication, August 05, 2020).

<u>Needs of the Community</u>

The participants identified various unmet needs within the Native

American community. These included socioeconomic needs, such as high rates

of unemployment, lack of housing and poverty. Concrete needs, such as limited

access to technology, telephones or transportation. Personal needs, including

substance use, mental health concerns, criminal behaviors, lack of motivation,

lack of confidence, history of abuse as a child and being a single parent. As well

as, social needs, such as domestic violence, co-dependency, and a need for

more activities and mentorship opportunities for Native children. Participants also

agreed that they felt that there was a need in general for more conversations

within the community about race and ethnicity. For instance, **Participant #1**

linked some of these needs to "isolation, which results in increased rates of

substance use, domestic violence, generational poverty and unemployment" and

explained that "the needs are different depending on whether the community is

urban or rural" (personal communication, May 26, 2020). While **Participant # 2**

reported, "Substance use occurs in all [Native American] families who I have

worked with" (personal communication, May 27, 2020).

> **Participant #3:** One of the biggest barriers for these families is addiction
>
> to alcohol or other substances. It is difficult for these individuals to reach
>
> long-term stability. Progress is slow. It is so cyclical and difficult for people
>
> to get out of. It is challenging to find the right support. There is a role that
>
> family and community play in either in supporting or hindering recovery.
>
> For example, substances can be a way for the entire family to make
>
> money and an individual might start to earn money this way starting as
>
> early as junior high school. If this is the way you support yourself, and it is

so deeply enmeshed in your entire family's way of life, how can you get away from it? (Personal communication, June 02, 2020).

Participant #4: One of the real challenges is housing. There is a lack of good, affordable housing and not a safe place for them to land. The tribe serves a vast geographical area, and it is sometimes difficult to reach these individuals and families (personal communication, July 06, 2020).

Participant # 10: This population struggles to see their potential, or they do not have the resources to meet their potential. This is traced to issues such as education, generational trauma and substance use. Also, are the right infrastructures in place to manage tribal programs and is there enough funding to support the programs? There are legal aspects as well, such as among tribes that go to court around jurisdiction and treaty rights. There are legal battles that prevent tribes from going certain things. Education is another need. There is a lot of misinformation out there on what tribes are and what they do. Education is one of the first steps to address this topic (personal communication, August 13, 2020).

Participant #11: The community needs a youth center, such as a Boys and Girls Club. Young children are walking the streets looking for something to do. Also, having mentors is a need. The Big Brother Big Sister program would have a positive impact on children in this community (personal communication, August 13, 2020).

Participant #12: There are more issues occurring in this community than in any other community I have worked with. These issues include substance use, mental health concerns and having children out of wedlock (personal communication, August 18, 2020).

<u>Engagement Skills</u>

The participants identified a number of engagement skills that can be used to build rapport and trust with Native American individuals and families. Many of the skills that were identified can be key to working with individuals of any ethnicity, such as allowing time to build trust, avoiding biased thinking, practicing cultural humility, using a strengths-based approach, being inclusive of spiritual/religious beliefs, being empathetic and using active listening, just to name a few. For example, **Participant #8** indicated, "Honesty and accommodating needs are important" (personal communication, August 04, 2020). While **Participant #11** talked about the importance of "professionalism, they need to know that their needs will be met, and there needs to be a reflection on what is the culture of the organization" (personal communication, October 21, 2020).

Other engagement approaches that participants identified that could related specifically to Native American communities, included intervening on a macro level to target racial disproportionality, such as intervening in the judicial and Child Welfare Systems. Additionally, being aware of how the community's past has influenced the present, talking about other tribal community members or

professionals who the professional knows in order to build a sense of familiarity, paying attention to quality of life rather than material things, and offering relevant cultural services.

>**Participant #1:** It is important to establish rapport. Family searching is more common on the reservation because they want to know where you are placed. I engage this community by letting them know that I am Native American, and I am married to a local tribal member. This can put me in a spot in the network (personal communication, May 26, 2020).

>**Participant #1:** In regard to the macro view, engagement with tribal council, providing outreach and collaboration with small groups, such as the Elders Program and Tribal TANF. On the micro level, rapport building, understanding how interconnected people are, being aware of confidentiality and looking at the reservation through a lens of neutrality. You have to park your ego at the door. You cannot compare your life to theirs (personal communication, May 26, 2020).

>**Participant #3:** I let all families who I work with know that I understand there are different racial, ethnic and cultural views, including different family cultures. I let them know I am welcome to all ideas. Service is about what is best for the family and how to honor the culture that is already there (personal communication, June 02, 2020).

>**Participant #4:** I have grown in trying to have more cultural humility and to recognize that I do not necessarily have all the knowledge or education

that will apply to this community. Being humble and recognizing that clients are the experts in their own life and honoring that. There is a spectrum with culture and traditional practices. You have to leave out the assumptions.

Participant #5: It is hard to get this community engaged if services are not mandated. You have to use incentives of some sort. You have to be creative, such as by presenting topics, giving something back or raffling things off. Food is customary. You have to reach out to the community and get the word out there. Providers need to be more consistent and they need to be available to clients. However, the most important thing is to listen (personal communication, July 17, 2020).

Participant #10: Unless people see the value or benefit in what they are doing, they are not going to engage with you. The services need to be valuable to the person. Professionals may need to look at it more individualized. They need to try to figure out the best way to help the person who is seeking services. Also, having an understanding about tribal communities. Not just the cultural side, but also the political, or governmental side. Non-tribal professionals are more likely to struggle with this. They need to expand their knowledge about tribes (personal communication, August 13, 2020).

Participant #11: Having a familiar face helps to motivate and engage people. It is important to help them feel welcome and to provide them with

accurate information. Follow through and a willingness to communicate

with clients in whatever way necessary is helpful. My agency puts out

newsletters, posts updates on a Facebook page, sets up booths to share

information, and collaborates with other agencies (personal

communication, August 13, 2020).

<u>Barriers to Engagement</u>

The barriers to engagement could be the result of professional's actions or

inactions, as well as individual or community specific factors. For instance,

participants identified certain factors specific to professionals, such as using a

deficits-based approach, imposing personal views or solutions, failing to follow

through, making poor first impressions on clients, having privilege as a result of

belonging to a certain ethnic group or agency, and/or coming across as frustrated

due to burnout. Additionally, some members talked about how new professionals

who are non-Native might be overly cautious or hesitant in engaging this

population, thus reducing community member's confidence in their ability to help.

The community and/or individual specific factors that participants identified

included feelings of isolation, trauma, discouragement and distrust, as well as

negative influences from family and friends that prevent people from engaging in

services. Structural considerations that were mentioned included a lack of

adequate funding among agencies to meet the needs of the Native American

community, loss of existing grant money, legal issues that affect the availability of

services and resources, or programs having so many requirements that they are overwhelming to potential clients.

There were mixed perspectives among participants about the benefits of offering referrals to tribal versus non-tribal agencies. For instance, **Participant #10** reported, "I can understand both points of view, as the tribe can offer culturally based services and comfort to the community, but there are concerns that arise among community members around confidentiality. It really depends on the person who is seeking services" (personal communication, October 15, 2020). While **Participant #7** recognized the importance of "finding common ground," but explained, "Tribal agencies are so unstable and it is hard to believe you are going to get help out of it" (personal communication, August 03, 2020). All participants seemed to agree that confidentiality could be a concern of clients in such a small community and that the "instability" that tribal agencies face is often the result of high rates of staff turnover. **Participant #7** suggested that a solution to some of these barriers is for tribal agencies to offer more employment and promotional opportunities to tribal members to "provide security and [feelings of] value" among the tribal community (personal communication, August 03, 2020).

> **Participant #1:** Trying to break down the privacy and co-dependency that this community has around individual and family dysfunction is necessary. Especially if there is a history of substance use. It is difficult for outsiders to engage with this community. Professionals need to find a neutral, safe

place to engage. Other tribal members can be a barrier to engagement and will work against you. If you are not knowledgeable about the services, they will lose trust. They are not going to trust you after that. Concerns around confidentiality can also be a barrier to service engagement, especially pertaining to other tribal members (personal communication, May 26, 2020).

Participant #4: Trust is the biggest barrier because of the historical trauma and systematic racial inequality. Providers need to be patient and build trust over time. There is also this struggle with providers who are tribal members because of the small community. It is hard to feel a sense of privacy. There is also a lack of financial resources in this community and sometimes inconsistencies with telephones, so it is hard to track people down and keep them engaged (personal communication, July 06, 2020).

Participant #9: There are barriers on both sides. Professionals have their own biases that get in the way. There are the assumptions we make. There is also the distrust that this community has with other agencies either due to prior negative experiences or due to generational traumas (personal communication, August 05, 2020).

Participant #11: Getting people to where they need to be. There are a lot of people who do not have transportation, or they have suspended driver's

licenses and cannot drive. They might just need a ride [to access services] (personal communication, August 13, 2020).

Participant #12: The biggest barrier is the trust issue without a doubt. This leads to miscommunications or a lack of communication among individuals in this community (personal communication, August 18, 2020).

<u>Family and Community Systems</u>

The participants identified a variety of family and communal factors unique to Native American groups in general, as well as unique to the rural area that could be beneficial for engagement. These factors included the role of tribal council and tribal government in supporting positive change, the role of tribal services, the collective nature of the community, and the importance of long-term relationships, extended family, and elders within the community. The participants agreed that while Native Americans belong to a certain cultural group, tribal members also have their own unique cultures that exist within the larger culture. Moreover, as previously mentioned, participants acknowledged that tribal centers could be important locations for gatherings, activities and tribal events that bring the community together. For instance, **Participant #1** commented, "The community itself has its own character and identity, a third person, or collective conscious" (personal communication, May 26, 2020). Additionally, **Participant #10** spoke about how "every tribe has differences in their governmental structures, programs, community dynamics and cultural practices" (personal communication, August 13, 2020).

In summary, these individual and group dialogues provided a foundation of useful information that service providers can utilize while engaging with and providing culturally sensitive and trauma-informed services to Native American communities. This shared construction provided many clues as to where social workers and helping professionals can best intervene to build helping relationships, and improve service utilization by addressing needs, reducing barriers, and appreciating cultural strengths and pre-existing tribal resources. Overall, the participants agreed that better collaborations and knowledge both among professionals, as well as within local communities is key to addressing this research focus.

Implication of Findings for Micro Practice

The research findings demonstrate the importance of intervening on the micro level with Native American individuals, families and small groups by using basic social work engagement skills, such as taking time to develop rapport, providing good information on the services being offered, discussing limits around confidentiality and addressing any barriers to participation in services. However, engagement with this particular community must be viewed through a culturally sensitive and trauma-informed lens, which recognizes the unique nature of the community, the history, culture, tribal resources and different types of family systems that exist. This can only be accomplished by taking the time to listen compassionately and to understand the individual or family's exceptional

strengths, beliefs, history and needs while examining and reducing any self-biases or judgements that occur.

There must be an awareness that distrust of social workers and other service providers is likely to arise due to the historical trauma and systematic discrimination that this community has suffered from. When services are mandated, such as in CPS, social workers must have the knowledge to engage with these families with an awareness of the complex factors that can contribute to child abuse and neglect within the tribal community, good knowledge about the resources and remedial services that exist for Native Americans, as well as a willingness to engage with children and families on a community wide level, which involves teaming with tribal professionals, elders, relatives and other non-related tribal supports.

Implication of Findings for Macro Practice

From a macro perspective, this research points to the importance of effecting national, state and local policies and procedures that address the unique needs of Native American communities, break down barriers and promote social justice. However, as the research points out, there must also be adequate training and education on regulations for professionals, so that they practice in accord with the law, as well as offer the most beneficial resources to the community possible. When professionals are well acquainted with the laws and services available to tribal groups, this helps to create a sense of trust within the client-provider relationship, thus promoting effective engagement. Additionally, as

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Participant #10 pointed out, due to sovereign status, there is a need to engage with tribes on the local level through tribal elections, council and government. These resources can also be a source of empowerment to tribal members who can advocate for their own needs and the needs of their community on a local level, such as by promoting leadership development to decrease employee turnover, increasing access to needed resources, reinforcing networks and collaborations with other community partners, and improving the overall structure of tribal programs.

Summary

This chapter covered the evaluative process of the research, such as how the qualitative data was analyzed using open and axial coding. There were five major categories that arose out of the coding process, including 1) Historical and Cultural Factors, 2) Needs of the Community, 3) Engagement Skills, 4) Barriers to Engagement, and 5) Family and Community Systems. These categories were further considered from the standpoint of the hermeneutic dialogue that occurred among each of the participants, as well as the final group check-in meetings. The results of this research are applicable to both micro and macro social work practice and highlight the need to engage the community using both general social work skills, as well as through a unique cultural and trauma-informed lens.

CHAPTER FIVE:

TERMINATION AND FOLLOW UP

Introduction

Effective social work practice and research must consider the phase of termination from the beginning, such as by planning and informing participants of what to expect at the termination of the study and how they can access the results. This allows members to make an informed choice regarding their participation. This chapter covers the final termination process, how results will be communicated to stakeholders and research participants, any ongoing relationships, as well as how the research findings will be disseminated.

Termination of Study

In line with the constructivist paradigm, termination began at the time of engagement, starting with the first interviews with stakeholders and the study participants. This involved educating gatekeepers and participants on what to expect throughout and at the end of the research. However, the final termination of the research officially transpired at the end of the member check-in meetings when the construction was complete (Morris, 2013). The researcher separated from the participant group and went on to work on the final report with the hope was that the group would continue on with one or more of the proposed action plans.

While no further tasks were identified by the group at the end of the two meetings, the researcher left the option open to the group and offered to follow-up on any identified tasks should the group like to reconvene to develop an action plan to address the research focus. The researcher also reminded the group of that the researcher would once again depart from the group once the tasks, if any, were completed. For example, the researcher offered to provide the group with information necessary for the success of the action plan, such as a list of community resources, assistance in helping the group identify action plan roles and a new facilitator, assistance setting up a video session, and/or information on how the participants could move forward using the constructivist paradigm (Morris, 2013). Lastly, the researcher thanked the participants for their valuable contributions to the research and advised them again of the dissemination plan, as outlined below.

While no participants have reached out for assistance commencing a plan of action or reforming the group at the time of this report, this researcher remains hopeful that the study has at least led to a helpful deliberation among the professionals who participated around the identified factors that can hinder and facilitate engagement with the local Native American communities. Perhaps this contemplation will lead to more collaboration and networking between local tribal and county partners in the future for purposes of reducing barriers to services, strengthening the tribal community and empowering tribal members.

Communication of Findings to Study Site and Study Participants

The researcher has analyzed and presented the final construction with consideration of how it can provide the most substantial contribution to direct social work practice, advocacy, policy development and ultimately social change on both the micro and macro levels. Following competition of the report, the research findings were published on the university website and presented at a social work research symposium. Additionally, a poster was developed to display the findings. The poster was distributed to the county and tribal agencies who participated in the study. Again, the gatekeepers and key stakeholders were advised early in the study on the dissemination plan during the initial interviews. This information was presented to the participants again at the member check in meetings, so that they were aware of how they could gain access to the research findings and the final report.

Ongoing Relationship with Study Participants

Continuing relationships with study participants are inevitable, since this researcher is employed by the county agency and often works directly with tribal members, tribal service providers and other county professionals. Whether or not an action plan is implemented, ongoing engagement between and among participants for purposes of developing stronger professional collaborations and/or for general sharing of information on this topic can be helpful. Additionally, as mentioned by many participants, trust can be established with the tribal members by knowing and referencing individuals who are members of the

community, as well as by having sufficient knowledge around the tribal resources and services that are available to them. Thus, ongoing contact with the professionals who joined in the hermeneutic dialogue is not only sufficient, but necessary to better engage and provide quality social work services to tribal members.

Summary

This chapter covered the final stage of generalist social work model, namely termination, and how that stage was accomplished for purposes of this research. Participants were provided with information in advance on what to expect for the entity of the project, so that they could make informed decisions around their participation. Termination ultimately occurred once the final construction was complete and after the member check-in meetings had occurred. The findings were disseminated through the university database, posters were developed by the researcher and the posters were provided to the agencies who participated in the study. Ongoing relationships between researcher and participants are likely to continue on a professional level. However, the researcher will continue to be available to the participants should they decide to reconvene to develop an action plan to address the research focus.

APPENDIX A:

INFORMED CONSENT

INFORMED CONSENT

The study in which you are being asked to participate is designed to examine engagement with Native American Communities by county and tribal professionals in a large, rural county in Central California. This study is being conducted by Katie Hawkins, a graduate student, under the supervision of Dr. Theresa Morris, Professor Emerita in the School of Social Work at California State University, San Bernadino (CSUSB). The study has been approved by the Institutional Review Board at CSUSB.

PURPOSE: The purpose of the study is to assess professional engagement with Native American Communities.

DESCRIPTION: The participants will be asked a series of questions about their experiences, beliefs, and understanding of the issue during face-to-face interviews. The participants will be brought back together at the end for a final group meeting.

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

CONFIDENTIALITY: Your personal interview responses will remain confidential and the study findings will not include any direct identifying information. Please be advised that although the researcher will take every precaution to maintain confidentiality of the data, the nature of the final group meeting prevents the researcher from guaranteeing full confidentiality. The group participants will be encouraged to respect fellow participant's confidentiality and privacy.

DURATION: It will take approximately one hour to complete the initial interview and the final group meeting. There will also be limited time commitments involved outside of the interview and group to review the data and check for accuracy.

RISKS: Although not anticipated, there may be some discomfort or feelings of vulnerability in answering some of the questions. You are not required to answer all questions. You can skip questions or end your participation in the interview if desired.

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

CONTACT: If you have any questions about this study, please feel free to contact Dr. Morris at (909)537-5501.

RESULTS: Results of the study can be obtained from the PFAU Library ScholarWorks database (http://scholarworks.lib.csusb.edu/) at California State University, San Bernadino after May 2021.

****

I agree to have this interview be audio recorded: _____ YES _____ NO

I understand that I must be 18 years of age or older to participate in your study, have read and understand the
consent document and agree to participate in the study.

X_____

APPENDIX B:
IRB APPROVAL LETTER

May 3, 2020

CSUSB INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
Administrative/Exempt Review Determination
Status: Determined Exempt
IRB-FY2020-283

Katie Hawkins Teresa Morris
CSBS - Social Work
California State University, San Bernardino
5500 University Parkway
San Bernardino, California 92407

Dear Katie Hawkins Teresa Morris

Your application to use human subjects, titled "Professional Engagement of Native American Communities" has been reviewed and approved by the Chair of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of CSU, San Bernardino has determined your application meets the federal requirements for exempt status under 45 CFR 46.104. The CSUSB IRB has not evaluated your proposal for scientific merit, except to weigh the risk and benefits of the study to ensure the protection of human participants. The exempt determination does not replace any departmental or additional approvals which may be required.

You are required to notify the IRB of the following as mandated by the Office of Human Research Protections (OHRP) federal regulations 45 CFR 46 and CSUSB IRB policy. The forms (modification, renewal, unanticipated/adverse event, study closure) are located in the Cayuse IRB System with instructions provided on the IRB Applications, Forms, and Submission webpage. Failure to notify the IRB of the following requirements may result in disciplinary action.

- Ensure your CITI Human Subjects Training is kept up-to-date and current throughout the study
- Submit a protocol modification (change) if any changes (no matter how minor) are proposed in your study for review and approval by the IRB before being implemented in your study.
- Notify the IRB within 5 days of any unanticipated or adverse events are experienced by subjects during your research.
- Submit a study closure through the Cayuse IRB submission system once your study has ended.

If you have any questions regarding the IRB decision, please contact Michael Gillespie, the Research Compliance Officer. Mr. Michael Gillespie can be reached by phone at (909) 537-7588, by fax at (909) 537-7028, or by email at mgillesp@csusb.edu. Please include your application approval number IRB-FY2020-283 in all correspondence. Any complaints you receive from participants and/or others related to your research may be directed to Mr. Gillespie.

Best of luck with your research.

Sincerely,

Donna Garcia

Donna Garcia, Ph.D., IRB Chair
CSUSB Institutional Review Board

DG/MG

APPENDIX C:
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Interview Questions

Engagement Questions:

How long have you been employed in this position?

What are the daily functions of your job?

Focus Questions:

What has been your professional experience in working with Native American individuals and/or families?

What do you know about the needs of this community?

How would you typically seek to engage Native American clients in your job/position?

What do you think are the most significant barriers to service engagement with this community?

What do you believe are the biggest facilitators of engagement with the Native American Community?

What do you hear other employees within your agency and/or in the community saying about this topic?

How do you see other employees in your agency approach and engage with Native American individuals and/or families?

Can you describe the attitudes of other employees who work with this community?

How have your engagement techniques in engagement with the Native American population evolved over the course of your profession?

Termination Questions:

Would you be willing to share your demographic information for categorical purposes, including age, race/ethnicity, and educational background?

Do you have any questions pertaining to the research focus, literature review or constructivist paradigm?

Can I send a copy of the interview and construction to you to verify accuracy? What would be the best means of delivering the information to you for review?

Developed by Katie Hawkins

APPENDIX D:
QUALITATIVE CODING

Qualitative Coding from Research Construction:
Professionals Views on Engagement with Native American Communities

Major Categories	Areas of Agreement	Areas of Disagreement	Potential Action Plans
Historical/Cultural Factors	-Historical and generational traumas are significant factors affecting the community. - Traditional events, such as powwow, dance and song, are important for the community's cultural identity. - There has been a significant loss of original cultural identity in local communities due to past segregations, displacements and forced assimilations. -Importance of maintaining the indigenous language of the local tribes. -Importance of community gatherings and offering food to share.	-Remedial services, including laws and regulations, such as ICWA are necessary. -Remedial services are not sufficient in addressing the underlying trauma. -Remedial services can be ineffective due to a lack of "follow-through" by providers, trouble implementing services, misunderstandings and/or misinterpretations about services.	-More education for professionals, as well as for the community on remedial services, such as ICWA.

	-Local tribes are unique in culture, structure and government. -The role of tribal religion and spirituality. -A sense of respect towards the earth.		
Needs of the Community	-Socioeconomic needs that exist include unemployment, lack of housing, high rates of poverty, and lack of education. -Concrete needs include limited access to technology, such as telephones, lack of transportation or other resources. -Personal needs include substance abuse issues, selling drug for money, mental health concerns, disabilities, criminal activities and incarcerations, distrust, disconnect from value systems, lack of motivation,		

	lack of confidence, sexual abuse, lack of support network, and young/single parenthood. -Social needs include domestic violence, co-dependency, need for child mentorships and activities for children. -There is a need for more conversations about race/ethnicity.		
Engagement Skills	-It is essential to develop relationships and rapport with community members over time in order to establish trust. -Professionals must be aware that they cannot remedy the past. -Professionals must be aware of how the past influences the present.	-Professionals need to have open conversations with clients about historical and generational traumas. -Professionals need to "honor" the individual. Not all individuals are aware of how generational trauma influences their present. -Openly confronting clients	

- It can be helpful to develop a sense of familiarity by talking about other tribal community members who the professional knows. -Professionals need to receive more training and education specific to the local tribal community's history, practices and culture. -Professionals need to avoid making biased assumptions or judgements, and get to know the individual/family on a personal level. - Professionals must practice cultural humility while working with the tribal community and initiate discussions about culture from the start of services. - It is important to offer relevant resources and	regarding concerning behavior and choices. -Using confrontation discreetly to address concerning behavior and promote positive change. -Mixed perspectives about the benefits of referring clients to tribal versus county resources. -Mixed perspectives or preferences by clients for culturally based versus county services.	- Addressing client concerns around privacy and confidentiality.

	accurate information.		
	- Teamwork within the agency is necessary.		
	-Effective collaborations with other agencies is helpful towards building trust in the tribal community.		
	-It can be helpful to include a client's religion and/or spirituality in service provision.		
	-Interpersonal skills, such as trustworthiness, empathy, active listening, being accessible, maintaining hope, being respectful, being open to discomfort, being creative, consistent and following-through are very important.		
	-Addressing quality of life versus material things.		
	-It helps to seek community support, as well		

	as, input from other tribal members or agencies while providing services for clients.		
	-Professionals can intervene on a macro level to target disproportionality within systems, such as child welfare and the jails.		
	-Importance of providers getting information out to the community about their programs, such as through workshops, outreach, raffles, newsletters, websites, flyers/brochures and word of mouth.		
	-Providing warm hand-offs when clients transition out of services.		
	-Extending offers of support with basic needs, such as transportation		

	and help filling out paperwork. -Offering options, such as group-based services, individual services, in-person and virtual services to clients. -Utilizing good customer service skills. -Professionals need to provide good first impressions. -Importance of having good leadership within the agencies. -Providing comfortable and welcoming spaces for clients and providers to meet. -Engaging clients in meaningful ways, such as by addressing underlying needs and offering services/resources that are valuable to the client. -Helping clients work towards self-		

	sufficiency and empowerment.

-Importance of using a strengths-based rather than deficit's-based approach.

-Need to collaborate with clients and treat them as the expert on their lives rather than lecture them.

-Being open to talking about difficult topics and feelings.

-Using appropriate self-disclosure to increase comfort levels and build trust.

-Non-native professionals can benefit from consulting with native professionals.

-Be accommodating of client's schedulers.

-Involving children and family in services. | | |

	-Spending grant funds judiciously. -Intervening on an administrative level with the tribe. -Advocating on a governmental level for change. -Encouraging participation in tribal elections to support positive change in the community. -Focusing on the process of change, as well as, the outcome on both individual and community levels. –There is value in recognizing successes within the community, as well as among professionals who work with the community.		
Barriers to Engagement	-Clients have concerns about their confidentiality and privacy. -Non-native professionals might view	-It is difficult for non-native professionals to engage with tribal members. -There are different levels of assimilation, commonality and	-Improved collaboration and networking between tribal, county and other community agencies.

reservations as dangerous. -Intentional or unintentional derogatory statements or negative attitudes towards the Native community by professionals. -New professionals might be uncomfortable, fearful and overly timid in their approach. - Community members feel "isolated" and are less likely to seek services. -Community members might not be motivated to seek services due to factors, such as difficult emotions, trauma, discouragement and distrust. -Lack of adequate professional education on the Native American community and culture.	comfort with the dominant culture that can affect individual's desire to seek non-tribal services. -Individuals might be hesitant to allow "outsiders" into their lives or be distrustful of government systems. -Individuals might not want to engage with tribal services due to concerns about their confidentiality and privacy. -Community members view tribal agencies as "unstable" due to high turnover rates and/or changes in funding sources (i.e. grant money). -Feelings of "culture shock" can occur for individuals who try to seek services and resources out	-Obtaining "buy in" from decision-makers within the organizations to start or build upon existing collaborations. -Using collaborations to build upon the prevailing agency missions and values. -Increasing opportunities

	-Negative influences from other family or friends that prevents community members from taking advantage of services. –Negative peer influences that enable individuals to continue to engage in unhealthy behaviors. -Clients might dis-engage when professionals try to impose their own views or solutions, and/or use a deficits-based approach. -Services might have too many requirements, which is overwhelming or not feasible for individuals. -There may not be adequate information on the program available to the community. - Professionals failing to follow	of the community, such as higher education. -Feeling unaccepted by the tribal community when seeking services or resources outside of the community.	for employment and promotion within local tribal agencies for Native Americans to provide "security and value."

	through when offering help or services to clients. - Professionals making poor first impressions on clients. - Lack of dialogue about historical traumas that have affected the community. -Professionals who become frustrated, resentful towards clients, or suffer burn out. -Poor communication by professionals. -Lack of adequate funding to support programs. -Program structures are inconsistent with the community's needs or are outdated. -Limitations on services or resources due to legal conflicts within the tribe. - Clients have barriers to		

	services, such as substance use, mental health concerns, lack of housing and poverty.		
Family and Community Systems	-The role of tribal council in supporting tribal members and supporting positive change. - The importance of maintaining long-term relationships. -The community is collective in nature rather than individualistic. -Each tribal community is unique. -Recognizing that there are unique family cultures and organizational cultures that exist within the larger culture. -The role if tribal programs and agencies within the community. -The importance of community centers for gatherings,	-The tribal community can be a support to individuals and families. -The tribal community can create barriers for tribal members.	

	activities and events.		
	-Tribes have their own laws and regulations as sovereign nations.		
	- The important role of elders within the community.		
	- Relationships with extended family members are important.		
	-The connections that the tribe and tribal members have with other non-native communities in the county.		
	-The importance of having a community identity.		
	-Tribal government and tribal elections can support positive change in the community.		

APPENDIX E:

MEETING AGENDA

Professionals Views on Engagement with Native American Communities
October 15, 2020 and October 21, 2020
Agenda

-Introductions

-Review of the purpose of the meeting

- *Confidentiality*

- *Research Focus*

- *Research Methods*

-Discussion of areas of agreement/disagreement among the major categories

- *Historical/Cultural Factors*

- *Community Needs*

- *Barriers to Engagement*

- *Facilitators of Engagement*

- *Family/Community Systems*

-Identification of an action plan

- *Assignment of Roles*

- *Allocation of tasks*

- *Next group meeting?*

-Evaluation of the group's final construction

-Conclusion

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