United South and Eastern Tribes Inc. (USET)

USET is an intertribal organization which collectively represents 26 Tribes in 24 states, East of the Mississippi and one in Texas.
USET

USET has a number of programs to support Tribes:

- Tribal Epidemiology Center (TEC)
- Environmental Management
- Economic Development
- Policy and Legislation
“Good Health and Wellness in Indian Country”

CDC Overall Program Goals

- Fund the 12 Tribal Epidemiology Centers as the nucleus for managing the project regionally and providing guidance and technical support
- Build Tribal Capacity to improve health status through intervention and prevention programs
- TEC’s redistribute the funds through a sub-award process
7 Health Target Areas

1. Reduce tobacco use and exposure to secondhand smoke
2. Increase access to and consumption of healthy food and beverages
3. Increase promotion of healthy foods and beverages and reduce discretionary calories
4. Increase support for breastfeeding
5. Increase opportunities for physical activity
6. Increase health literacy
7. Strengthen team-based care and community-clinical linkages to prevent chronic diseases
Defined Activities for Tribal Sub-Awardees

**Year 1**
- Complete Tribal Community Health Assessment (CHA)
- Select priority areas identified in CHA
- Evaluation

**Years 2 - 5**
- Implement interventions to improve priority areas identified in the CHA
- Evaluation
Step 1: Community Health Assessment (CHA)

- Community Based Participatory Research
- Gather data from many sources: Community members, Tribal council, policy and procedures, providers, health center, staff
- Methods include:
  - Focus Groups
  - Surveys
  - Key Informant Interviews
- Results should identify “community selected” health priorities
- Develop intervention plans based on results
Results of CHA’s

- Quantitative and qualitative analysis of results both reflect the desire to meld behavioral health and physical health approaches
- Mind, body, spirit approach
- Healing must include the entire being and interventions must be culturally adapted
Preliminary Findings

- In Tribal culture physical and emotional wellbeing are intertwined.
- Eastern and Western Medicine are integrated much more so than in other cultures.
- Care models include traditional healing with community based providers and community programs.
- “It takes a village” model.
Long range Goal of the CDC Project

- Tribal Departments and citizens working together
- Comprehensive treatment, including culturally competent care
- Continuation of generational learning and traditions
- Strengthening of Tribal capacity
- Healthier Tribal Nations
ACKNOWLEDGING
HISTORICAL TRAUMA
What is Historical Trauma?

Historical trauma refers to cumulative emotional and psychological wounding, extending over an individual lifespan and across generations, caused by traumatic experiences. American Indians have, for over 500 years, endured physical, emotional, social, and spiritual genocide from European and American colonial policies.
Examples of Historical Trauma

- The population of Native Americans in North America decreased by 95% from the time Columbus came to America in 1492 and the establishment of the United States in 1776 (Plous, 2003).
- An 1883 federal law prohibited Native Americans from practicing traditional ceremonies including mourning ceremonies for deceased. This law remained in effect until 1978, when the American Indian Religious Freedom Act was enacted.
- President Andrew Jackson forced the removal of nearly 100,000 Native Americans East of the Mississippi River through the Indian Removal Act of 1830 (Plous, 2003).
- Many died from often intentional exposure to diseases such as smallpox. For example, in 1763, Lord Jeffrey Amherst ordered his subordinates to introduce smallpox to the Native American people through blankets offered to them (Plous, 2003).
How Historical Trauma Affects Health

- Higher prevalence of conditions such as depression, anxiety, PTSD, suicide attempts, substance abuse, obesity, etc..
- Depression is associated with the development of hypertension, heart disease, diabetes and stroke*

Nutritional Impact of Historical Trauma

- Colonization of Tribes from historical homelands resulted in a shift in subsistence living
- Climate and environment changes forced changes including which crops were grown, what, if any fish were available, what wildlife existed
- I.E. A primarily fishing oriented community may be forced to become livestock based
- This in turn forced a change in diet and a loss in traditional cooking methods
Social Implications of Historical Trauma

- Loss of some Traditions: storytelling, dancing, ceremonies
- Loss of some craft and handiwork expertise
- Loss of certain language and symbolism
- Persistent feelings of detachment
Historical Trauma is linked to:

- Loss of culture, language, land
- Diabetes
- Depression
- Post-traumatic stress disorder
- Suicide ideation and completion
- Substance abuse disorders
- Cardiovascular disease
- Obesity
- Dental problems
- Fear and mistrust

- Low breastfeeding rates
- Cancer
- Chronic pain
- Lack of parenting skills
- Anxiety
- Anger
- Domestic violence
- Infant death
- Injuries
The Medicine Wheel: 4 Directions

Many Different interpretations of the 4 colors (directions): Some examples:

- The human races
- Stages of life: birth, youth, adult (or elder), death
- Seasons of the year: spring, summer, winter, fall
- Aspects of life: spiritual, emotional, intellectual, physical
- Elements of nature: fire (or sun), air, water, and earth
- Animals: Eagle, Bear, Wolf, Buffalo and many others
- Ceremonial plants: tobacco, sweet grass, sage, cedar
An Sample Medicine Wheel
Maintaining and Reintroducing Cultural Practices
WEAVING THE PAST WITH THE FUTURE
Next Steps

➢ Generational learning
➢ Health promotion and disease prevention activities
➢ Technical support from TEC’s to assist with measuring inputs, outputs and changes over time
Examples of Generational Learning

- Youth are engaged in developing and managing community gardens to grow vegetables used in traditional recipes.
- Elders participate in cooking classes to teach the youth how to cook with the vegetables they’ve grown.
- Other traditions are passed on verbally in these sessions.
- All learn about the nutritional value of foods.
A Brighter Future
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