

FROM TRAUMA TO TRUST: WORKING WITH NATIVE AMERICANS IN TREATMENT COURTS THROUGH A CULTURAL LENS

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DISCLAIMER

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▶ LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Learn about cultural values and traditions of Native American participants.
2. Discuss culturally informed practices in treatment courts.
3. Explore strategies to bridge cultural differences.



▶ UNDERSTANDING CULTURAL VALUES

Core Values

- ❖ Connection to the land and environment
- ❖ Emphasis on community and collectivism
- ❖ Respect for elders and traditional knowledge
- ❖ Respect for Veterans

Traditional Practices

- ❖ Sacred ceremonies (e.g., sweat lodges, talking circles)
- ❖ Use of storytelling as a teaching method



▶ CHALLENGES IN TREATMENT COURTS

Barriers

- ❖ Mistrust due to historical trauma
- ❖ Misalignment of Western court practices with Native cultural values
- ❖ Lack of culturally competent resources

Impact on Engagement

- ❖ Participants may not feel connected to the practices
- ❖ Participants may feel misunderstood



▶ APPLYING A CULTURAL LENS

A perspective that integrates understanding and respect for Native American cultures into treatment court practices.

Core Principles

- ❖ Recognizing Tribal sovereignty and self-determination
- ❖ Building relationships with Tribal leaders and communities
- ❖ Incorporating traditional healing practices into court processes



▶ IMPLEMENTING CULTURALLY INFORMED PRACTICES

Examples

- ❖ Integration of traditions: include ceremonies, prayer ties, or use of feathers in the program
- ❖ Community involvement: engage Tribal elders and cultural advisors
- ❖ Flexible court schedules: allow participants to attend cultural events or ceremonies

Tools

- ❖ Culturally competent staff training
- ❖ Partnerships with Tribal organizations



▶ STRATEGIES FOR BRIDGING CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

Cultural Humility

- ❖ Approach participants as learners, not experts
- ❖ Acknowledge and respect Tribal differences

Active Listening

- ❖ Use reflective and nonjudgmental listening techniques

Collaborative Goal Setting

- ❖ Involve participants in creating treatment plans that align with their cultural values



▶ CASE STUDY

Scenario

A participant hesitates to follow standard treatment due to conflicts with cultural practices

Approach

- ❖ Consultation with Tribal Elder
- ❖ Adapt treatment plans to incorporate practices that align with their cultural traditions

Outcome

Increased engagement and adherence to the program



BENEFITS OF A CULTURAL LENS

Participant Outcomes

- ❖ Enhanced trust and participation
- ❖ Improving participants starting a wellness journey and path of recovery

Community Impact

- ❖ Strengthened relationships between the court and Native American communities
- ❖ Reduction in recidivism



CALL TO ACTION

Key Takeaways

- ❖ Understand and honor the cultural values of Native American participants
- ❖ Integrate cultural practices into treatment court practices
- ❖ Build meaningful relationships with Tribal communities
- ❖ Education is key

Next Steps

- ❖ Attend cultural competency training
- ❖ Partner with local Tribes and cultural organizations
- ❖ Attendance and participation in state conference
- ❖ Visiting a Tribal Healing to Wellness Court or other Treatment Court





QUESTIONS?

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