

Assessing Mental Health in Indian Country

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Objectives

- ❖ Mental Health Issues in Native Communities
- ❖ Considerations for utilizing MH assessment tools in Native Communities
- ❖ Mental Health tools for incarcerated individuals
- ❖ Co-occurring disorders in Healing to Wellness Court

Mental Health Issues in Indian Country

According to the Indian Health Services 2011-2013 Strategic Plan, high rates of substance abuse, mental health disorders, suicide, violence and behavior-related chronic diseases continue to significantly impact Native American and Alaskan Natives.

Mental Health Issues in Indian Country

In a 2004 American Journal of Public Health article, Dr. Bonnie Duran (et al) documented the higher prevalence of Mental Disorders among Native American Woman. Results included high rates of alcohol use disorders, anxiety disorders and the co-occurrence of anxiety/depression as compared to their non-native sisters.

*Research conducted in an Indian Health Services primary care setting

Why a Mental Health Assessment?

- ▶ Gives an overall picture of emotional well being and cognitive functioning (ability to think, reason & function)
- ▶ Rule out any physical causes for behavior
- ▶ Severity of Drug or Alcohol issues
- ▶ Development of Treatment Plan to include medication if necessary or specialized treatment techniques

What is included in a Mental Health Assessment?

- ▶ A psychologist, psychiatrist or specialized social worker may administer or request the following:
 - ▶ Interview
 - ▶ Physical
 - ▶ Lab Tests
 - ▶ Written or Verbal Tests(MMPI, BDI,WAIS)
 - ▶ Possible MRI or CT scan
 - ▶ Collateral information also important

Considerations for Mental Health Assessments in Indian Country

- ▶ Traditional beliefs
- ▶ Tools utilized for evaluation are not normed with Native American individuals
- ▶ The availability to have such a comprehensive assessment done

Who to refer?

- ▶ 35yo native male, in Phase 1 of HTWC. History of a traumatic brain injury at the age of 18yo. He is compliant with curfew, call ins, testing, however he sometimes calls in more than once. He is doing well in individual counseling, however in group seems to struggle with feedback from others & inappropriate outbursts. He is recently complaining of headaches.

Who to refer?

- ▶ 27yo native female referred by state court. Is participating minimally in group, asks for several exceptions such as late curfew to attend concert at local casino, excuse from testing because she is too tired to make it in by time. Male HTWC participants have reported that she has been sending them inappropriate text messages. While in individual counseling she appears to “space out” when asked about her childhood. Other participants are reporting her bragging about being out after curfew and drinking.

Mental Health Screening Form for Incarcerated Individuals

- ▶ Brief Jail Mental Health Screen
 - ▶ Given in jail
 - ▶ 8 questions
 - ▶ Helps get you in the ball park
 - ▶ Policy Research Associates SAMHSA'S GAINS Center



Questions?