

Tribal STAR Tips for Cross-Cultural Training (long version)

In order to effectively increase understanding of the complex issues surrounding Child Welfare Services for Tribal youth it is necessary to illuminate historical events and how they have shaped today's Tribal and non-Tribal relationships.

Key topic areas that increase understanding include how federal policies relating to *relocation*, and *assimilation* (e.g.: by putting Indian children in Boarding Schools) which resulted in the break-up of Indian families and many Indian family systems. As a result, many youth who became adults through the boarding school systems did not receive traditional teachings about how to raise children, how to be a good parent, and had few role models on how to maintain a healthy sense of cultural identity while also existing in contemporary society. These unresolved grief and loss issues have been identified as antecedents for many of the self-destructive behaviors that are seen among Native youth today, and as contributing factors to many of the currently identified health disparities (substance abuse, homicide, diabetes, etc.) Native Americans experience when compared to other ethnic/cultural groups.

Training Natives and non-Natives about these issues is a challenging task that requires each trainer to have confidence and resolve to thoroughly cover key topic areas while maintaining a collaborative and optimistic spirit. The risks are that non-Natives can feel guilt or shame to a point where they close themselves off from the experience. Additionally, Natives may feel this is the time to illuminate local historic and even personal-familial events that relate to federal policies, grief and loss, and Tribal mistrust, and may vent their frustrations at representatives of local non-Native programs. Steps that can help achieve understanding during the training session:

- 1) Acknowledge that these historic events are in US History, and as residents on the US we all share this history, some closer than others.
- 2) Illuminate apologies by the Child Welfare League of America and the Bureau of Indian Affairs¹ and that current CW systems are recognizing that active effort is needed to rectify these issues. This is why we're all here today!
- 3) Build on collaborative discussion and use the group's emotional charge to brainstorm new ways to work together.
- 4) Ask a local Tribal Elder to be part of the training and ask their support for this specific segment with the goal to end this section in a positive manner.²
- 5) End this section with time dedicated to the discovery of contributions Native peoples have made to contemporary society.³

The website is located at <http://pcwta.sdsu.edu/TribalSTAR>. Tribal STAR provides training and technical assistance to increase positive outcomes for Tribal foster youth by ensuring access to culture, community, and resources. For more information, please call Margaret Orrantia at 619-594-3192 or email at MOrrantia@projects.sdsu.edu.

###

¹ Tribal STAR Interdisciplinary Participant Manual, page 98

² Check upcoming Fact Sheet on Protocol at <http://pcwta.sdsu.edu/TribalSTAR>

³ Ibid

Tribal STAR Tips for Cross-Cultural Training (Short Version)

In order to effectively increase understanding of the complex issues surrounding Child Welfare Services for Tribal youth it is necessary to illuminate historical events and how they shaped today's Tribal and non-Tribal relationships.

Training Natives and non-Natives about these issues is a challenging task that requires each trainer to have confidence and resolve to thoroughly cover key topic areas while maintaining a collaborative and optimistic spirit. The risks are that non-Natives can feel guilt or shame to a point where they close themselves off from the experience. Additionally, Natives may feel this is the time to illuminate local historic and even personal-familial events related to federal policies, grief and loss, and Tribal mistrust, and may vent their frustrations at representatives of local non-Native programs. Steps that can help achieve understanding during the training session:

- 1) Acknowledge that these historic events are in US History, and as residents on the US we all share this history, some closer than others.
- 2) Illuminate apologies by the Child Welfare League of America and the Bureau of Indian Affairs and that current CW systems are recognizing that active effort is needed to rectify these issues. This is why we're all here today!*
- 3) Build on collaborative discussion and use the group's emotional charge to brainstorm new ways to work together.
- 4) Ask a local Tribal Elder to be part of the training and ask their support for this specific segment with the goal to end this section in a positive manner.*
- 5) End this section with time dedicated to the discovery of contributions Native peoples have made to contemporary society.*

For a full-length version go to the TribalSTAR website <http://pcwta.sdsu.edu/TribalSTAR> or contact Margaret Orrantia at 619-594-3192 or MOrrantia@projects.sdsu.edu . * More information about these items is provided in the TribalSTAR Interdisciplinary curricula.