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Culturally Relevant Career Development Programs for Native American Youth

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Culturally Relevant Career Development Programs for Native American Youth

Annie N. Crippen

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Abstract

Native American society today is plagued by a host of social and economic disparities, largely the result of historical trauma experienced by generations of the Native American population stemming from the European colonization of the Americas. This paper seeks to identify some of the key elements needed to create culturally relevant solutions to career development challenges facing Native youth by understanding the historical legacy of Native American people in the U.S. and how this history has shaped contemporary Native American society. After identifying historical lessons and contemporary challenges, potential culturally relevant solutions to the systemic cycle of poverty, unemployment, and poor education are identified. By understanding the past and its influence on the present, organizations can weave the lessons of yesterday with the insights of today to create a brighter future and a better tomorrow for Native youth in the United States.

Keywords: Native American, youth, historical trauma, school-to-work transition, career development

Dedication

To the Quileute Tribal youth and community who inspired this research. Thank you for welcoming me into your lives and allowing me to work, learn, and grow alongside you.

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Firstly, I would like to thank my parents. Your support (both financially and emotionally) and your sacrifices have given me great privilege in my life and I owe all that I am, all that I have done, and all that I will do, to you.

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Introduction

The Native American community has been referred to as the “forgotten minority,” invoking a sense that they are overlooked or forgotten in public discourse (Hunt, Kerr, Ketcher, & Murphy, 2010). As Hunt et al. (2010) argued:

If statistics on American Indians are provided in scholarly work, American Indians are treated as one among many groups—and are given only passing consideration...reinforce[ing] the claims of scholars like Geoff Peterson and Robert Duncan, who argue that in discussions of American politics American Indians are the forgotten minority. (p. 409)

Statistics provided by agencies such as the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), U.S. Census Bureau, and the Center for Disease Control (CDC), depict the Native American population to be on par or in some cases even below that of their minority counterparts.

Moreover, as Long, Downs, Gillette, Kills in Sight, & Iron-Cloud Konen (2006) identified, the breakdown of Native American society (tribal systems, communities, families) “over the past 500 years is due to social, cultural, and economic devastation that has resulted in the highest rates of most social problems in the U.S.” (p. 290). Similarly, Jackson and Hodge (2010) argued that Native youth in particular were more likely to suffer from a host of social problems and inequalities—including poverty, substance abuse, school drop-out rates, suicide, and domestic violence— compared to other racial/ethnic groups in the U.S.

One explanation for the apparent lack of representation in mainstream U.S. dialogue may have to do with the historical legacy that is specific to Native Americans. As Herring (1992) stated, “[Native Americans] are separated from other ethnic groups by

history, culture, and image. These differences have resulted in a lack of communication between Native Americans and other Americans” (p. 36). Yet, communication between these groups is important as Native American cultures, traditions, and histories need to be acknowledged in order for U.S. society to better understand the social problems and challenges facing Native Americans today (Herring, 1992).

Given the intricate dynamics of history and its role in shaping the challenges faced by Native Americans today— particularly as they relate to issues associated with education, employment, and poverty and the challenges they pose to Native American youth— this paper will focus on the research, programs, and practices that specifically address the challenges and needs of Native American youth as they relate to education and employment within the context of career development programming and services.

Literature Review

The historical relationship between the U.S. government and its indigenous peoples has been complex. As Levitan and Johnston (1975) stated, “[f]ederal policy towards [Native Americans] has zigzagged between the conflicting aims of assimilation and separation” (p. 6). It is this historical legacy that has shaped the construction of Native American communities within the larger U.S. society today, making them simultaneously separate from, and a part of, U.S. society. This historical legacy has had a lasting impact on Native American peoples and is often considered to be the source of historical trauma and generational unresolved grief that has resulted in a variety of problems and challenges facing Native Americans today (Brave Heart & DeBruyn, 1998). The following literature review will identify the history and how it has shaped the current challenges facing Native American populations with a specific focus on youth. In

addition, it will identify available literature, on culturally relevant practices to address these challenges within the context of the Native American population and its youth.

Historical Legacy: U.S. Policy Towards Native Americans

Pre-European contact, the Native American population in what is now the United States exceeded 2.5 million; however, by the end of the 19th century, this number had been reduced to 250,000 (Herring, 1992). While much of this loss is attributed to the waves of unfamiliar European diseases, there is no doubt that the indigenous civilization of North America was also decimated— not only in physical numbers but culturally— by the actions and policies enacted by the Euro-American colonists and later U.S. government (Brave Heart & DeBruyn, 1998). As noted by Brave Heart and DeBruyn (1998), the history of the Native American peoples was similar to that of the Jewish holocaust in that it was a systematic cultural genocide of the Native population.

According to Anderson (1995), the initial encounters between European colonists and the indigenous peoples were not primarily hostile. However, as the numbers of Euro-American colonists grew, tensions between Native American populations and colonists increased (Anderson, 1995). In addition, cultural differences and ways of life practiced by Native people were viewed by the greater white society to be uncivilized and culturally inferior (Churchill, 1999). Animosity and fighting between Native populations and white settlers further increased with the American Revolution as American colonists and the British army pushed fighting onto indigenous lands (Calloway, 1995).

Some Native peoples saw the war as a chance to aid the British in the hopes of keeping the Americans from encroaching into their territories. Some however, aided the American colonists while others yet hoped to remain neutral (Calloway, 1995). The

struggle to remain neutral, however, was difficult as both British and American troops sought to establish support from Native peoples (Calloway, 1995). As a result, tribes were divided and began fighting amongst themselves, as well as with white settlers, and British or American troops depending on their allegiance (Calloway, 1995). According to Calloway (1995), in many ways the American Revolution was as much an American-Indian war as it was an American-British war.

In addition, Calloway (1995) argues that the attacks by American troops on Native communities, particularly west of the Mississippi, were not only made in retaliation to Native peoples aid to the British and their refusal to support the Americans, but were also conducted out of desire to gain control of Native American lands and resources. The strategy of American troops was to “carry the war into Indian country, destroy Indian villages, and burn Indian crops late in the season when there was insufficient time for raising another crop before winter” (Calloway, 1995, p. 47). As Calloway (1995) stated, “American soldiers were impressed by the cornucopia they destroyed in Indian fields and villages...American frontiersmen were often eager to join campaigns into Indian country, and anxious to seize fertile Indian lands once the war was over” (p. 55).

The war not only brought destruction to those Native communities that were in the physical proximity of warfare but also those that were far removed from the battles (Calloway, 1995). The loss of Native warriors, whether defending the home front or joining the battle “in some distant campaign,” left villages of women and children without hunters and protectors (Calloway, 1995, p. 56). In addition, the goods provided by established trade routes into the far reaches of the west were disrupted by war

(Calloway, 1995). As a result, Calloway (1995) argued, “[w]ith normal subsistence and commercial activities thrown out of joint, Indian communities became increasingly dependent on British, American, and Spanish allies to provide them with food, clothing, and trade” (p. 57). Such dependency often meant tribes had no choice but to enter into war in return for the provision of goods and support for their people (Calloway, 1995).

As the war continued, many Native communities pushed farther west fleeing from the fighting and destruction, causing a chain reaction as they encroached on other tribal territories that in turn were forced to move into the occupied territories of their neighbors (Calloway, 1995). This was a cause of further tension and strife amongst Native peoples (Calloway, 1995). In the end, most Native peoples sided with the British (Calloway, 1995). When the newly proclaimed United States defeated the British, Native Americans were “treated as conquered nations to whom the U.S. owed protection under its signed treaties” (Levitan & Johnston, 1975, p. 5). As such, the Native American population east of the Mississippi River technically became wards of the state as part of U.S. policy during the late 18th and early 19th centuries (Levitan & Johnson, 1975).

Segregation and reservations. The period following the American Revolution marked the initial creation of the reservation system whereby tribes were considered separate and sovereign nations while simultaneously being regulated by the U.S. government and its white constituents (Anderson, 1995). Prucha (1994) argued that the primary purpose of the treaties following the Revolution was to establish peace with the “once hostile Indians” (p. 3). The establishment of treaties was based upon the U.S. government’s recognition of Tribal sovereignty (Prucha, 1994). As such, treaties gave Native Americans a special legal status through which indigenous territories were

recognized and boundaries were established separating Native American lands from that of their white counterparts (Prucha, 1994). Internationally, however, European countries recognized Indian territories as belonging to the United States (Prucha, 1994).

Thus, as Anderson (1995) stated, “Congress and the Supreme Court contended that tribes were to be treated as sovereign nations but became wards of the state with politicians and bureaucrats acting as their trustees” (p. 89). The systemic removal to and regulation of tribes on reservations became standard U.S. diplomacy when the government formally established the Office of Indian Affairs in 1824 as part of the War Department; this eventually became the Bureau of Indian Affairs and was moved to the Department of the Interior in 1849 (Brave Heart and DeBruyn, 1998). The purpose of the Office of Indian Affairs was to carry out the negotiations of treaties and the regulation of tribal reservations and their peoples (Anderson, 1995; Brave Heart and DeBruyn, 1998; Churchill, 1999; Olund, 2002).

The practice of negotiations was often done with the intent of removing Natives from inhabited land to make way for white settlement (Anderson, 1995). Compensation was often insufficient in that Native Americans were moved further west to areas the government believed to be lacking in natural resources (Anderson, 1995; Olund, 2002). However, it was often the case that once resources were discovered or political gain was to be had, treaties would be broken and Native peoples would be forcibly and strategically relocated and stripped of their rights (Olund, 2002; Brave Heart & DeBruyn, 1998). This strategic policy and removal of Native peoples is exemplified the 1830 Indian Removal Act (Davis, 2008-2010). The Removal Act allowed President Andrew Jackson “to have unrestrained authority to survey and subdivide millions of acres West of the

Mississippi as he saw fit” and use whatever financial inducements necessary and provide subsistence aid for up to one year after removal to ensure that Native populations would remove themselves from the territories of southern states (Davis, 2008-2010, p. 52)

In addition, negotiations often sought to create division and fragmentation amongst tribes so as to weaken their communal bonds. As Churchill (1999) explained, “provisions were explicitly designed to induce an outright physical separation of mixed-bloods from their people” through special rights and a sense of elevated status (p. 49). In addition, blood quantum (the degree of Indian ancestry, generally one-half to one-quarter minimum) was applied in formal policy to determine who would or would not be recognized by the U.S. as a *real* Indian (Churchill, 1999). As Champagne (1999) described, “this policy introduced categories of race into Indian Country, [where before] most tribal classifications had been based on kinship and culture” (p. 11).

Additionally, while assimilation was not the primary focus at this time, Native people were encouraged to adopt Euro-American customs and values, particularly Christianity and education (Anderson, 1995; Churchill, 1999; Grinde, 2004; Olund, 2002). This would encourage division amongst and between tribes, helping to diminish opposition to U.S. government and colonial expansion (Anderson, 1995; Olund, 2002). The idea being that so long as their presence did not interfere with westward expansion, Native Americans were free to live as they pleased (Olund, 2002). Overall, Native people were considered in the way, physically and culturally, of white settlement and expansion (Anderson, 1995; Churchill, 1999; Olund, 2002). Establishing reservations was the first step in dealing with what would be referred to as “The Indian Problem” (Churchill, 1999, p. 47). As Olund (2002) argued, “by the 1870s Native people were in fact ‘domestic

dependent nations', largely hemmed in by the US Army, increasingly regulated by agents from the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and proselytized by protestant missionaries with the encouragement of the federal government" (p.130).

According to Anderson (1995), increased westward settlement in the wake of the adoption of Manifest Destiny (the divine right to western expansion by white American citizens) led to greater conflict and incidence of violence to settle disputes over land. Particularly as settlers came into contact with Plains tribes, which tended to be nomadic in nature and had less sense of ownership over land, white settlers and government officials had no real trading or negotiating power with many tribes (Anderson, 1995). At the same time, a newly established army following the Mexican War (1846-1848) and Civil War (1861-1865) provided the government with the ability to establish military forts for the protection of the frontier and its white citizens settling in Native American lands (Anderson, 1995). According to Anderson (1995), this created an opportunity for the U.S. government to expand its bureaucratic power through the maintenance of its military force and continued westward expansion.

Though skirmishes and warfare between Native people and white settlers had existed previously, the establishment of the U.S. military force in the mid-1800s marked a period of time referred to as The Indian Wars. According to Churchill (1999), by 1871 the decimation of the Native population was so great that they no longer proved a threat to the U.S. military forces and, as a result, Congress ended recognition of Tribes as independent nations (although previous treaties would remain in effect). However, "[i]t was not until after the massacre of the Sioux at Wounded Knee in 1890 that the final removal of the last Indians onto reservations was completed" (Levitan & Johnston, 1975,

p. 7). This event marked the beginning of a shift in U.S. policy toward Native Americans, one of segregation to one of assimilation.

Assimilation and Reform. Although the primary policy of the U.S. government towards Native populations up until 1871 had been the removal and segregation of tribes to reservations via treaties, there had always been an underlying understanding that eventually the indigenous populations would have to be assimilated into dominant white society; the alternative would be their extermination (Grinde, 2004; Olund, 2002).

According to Grinde (2004), assimilation was based on three pillars of strategy: education, Christianization, and the installation of private property.

Education was the primary method of assimilation beginning as early as the 1700s when Christian missionary schools were established to provide a Christian education to Native peoples (Churchill, 1999). Europeans “often typified Native American education as ‘primitive,’ defective, or nonexistent” (Grinde, 2004, p.26). However, Grinde (2004) argued, “in actuality, Native Americans had a rich educational system imparted by elders and knowledgeable individuals with specific skill sets that included a broad range of disciplines; however, it was delivered in a manner that was contradictory to European values” (p. 26). As such, there was a strong resistance by Natives to partake in Euro-educational initiatives, as “Native Americans believed that education should feature an emphasis on human beings existing in relation with the natural world and not as lords over it” (Grinde, 2004, p. 26).

According to Grinde (2004) by the 19th century “white Americans took these assumptions [of inferiority] one step further and declared that American Indians had no government, education, or spirituality...these ideas and policies were important to the

reformers, educators, and missionaries who wanted to convert Native peoples to the civilization of white Christian capitalism” (p. 26-7). Based on these assumptions, U.S. policy was strategically enacted to break down Native cultures. As Levitan and Johnson (1975) stated,

By the 1860s or shortly thereafter Euro-American academicians had forged the full range of conceptual tools necessary for their government to use the traditionally inclusive structures of native American societies in a manner that would facilitate their rapid division, fragmentation, and, so it was thought at the time, ultimate dissipation (p. 47).

However, it was not until after the 1871 act by Congress to end the recognition of Native tribes as independent nations that assimilation became the main focal point for U.S. policy. As Churchill (1999) identified, “there then followed a decade of reorganization during which the government shifted from what had been primarily a policy of subjugating native people to an emphasis upon assimilating what remained of them, both geographically and demographically” (p. 49). This period of time, spanning the 1880s-1890s, became known as the Indian Reform era (Grinde, 2004; Levitan & Johnson, 1975; Olund, 2002; Anderson, 1995).

Once again, education became the primary method of assimilation. As Grinde (2004) stated, “[a]s the genocidal policies to eliminate Native American populations in North America began to lose momentum at the end of the nineteenth century... American Indians faced a new U.S. colonial policy that aimed to obliterate American Indian culture through education” (Grinde, 2004, p. 25). According to Brave Heart and DeBruyn (1998), federally operated boarding schools administered by the Civilization Division

under the Bureau of Indian Affairs were designed to facilitate the process of assimilation by taking children away from their communities and families. These boarding schools were located in remote places far from Native communities to assist in the cutting of communal ties (Churchill, 1999).

Among the first of these boarding schools was the Carlisle Indian School, established in 1875 in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, and headed by military veteran Captain Richard Henry Pratt (Brave Heart & DeBruyn, 1988; Churchill, 1999; Grinde, 2004). According to Grinde (2004), “Pratt’s policies were to strip the American Indian of his Indianness and replace the traditional Native culture with a new set of religious and social attitudes and skills in concert with the values of the dominant white society” (p. 29). As Churchill (1999) described the boarding school system systematically de-culturated its pupils: children were taken from their homes, forbidden to practice their Native languages and religious beliefs, and were prevented from learning their own histories. Instead Native children were indoctrinated in Christian morality, clothed and groomed to the dictates of white society, and provided an Anglo-American education of English, math, and natural sciences (Churchill, 1999). As a result, according to Brave Heart and DeBruyn (1998), Native children “were subsequently raised...without the benefit of culturally normative role models” for the purposes of stripping youth of their Native culture and replacing it with that of the white Euro-American (p. 63). Failing to comply or attend to these teachings and rules often resulted in severe punishment and beatings (Brave Heart & DeBruyn, 1998).

Originally, boarding schools were voluntary. However, this did not yield the best results as they were met with strong resistance by Native peoples (Brave Heart &

DeBruyn, 1998; Grinde, 2002). By 1890, “attendance was enforced through threats of cessation of rations and supplies and incarceration” (Brave Heart & DeBruyn, 1998, p. 63). In 1891 and 1893, Congress approved the use of police troops to remove children from their communities to boarding schools (Churchill, 1999). According to Churchill (1999), by 1900, 21,568 indigenous children (1/3 of the targeted age group) were in boarding schools; by the 1920s, 80 percent of each generation was being “comprehensively acculturated” (p. 52).

This generational breakdown of the family system and cultural destruction of Native American youth has had lasting effects. As Brave Heart and DeBruyn (1998) argued,

The destructive and shaming messages inherent in the boarding school system...were that American Indian families are not capable of raising their own children and that American Indians are culturally and racially inferior...[and as a result] boarding schools have had devastating consequences for American Indian families and communities; abusive behaviors— physical, sexual, emotional— were experienced and learned by American Indian children raised in these settings. Spiritually and emotionally, the children were bereft of culturally integrated behaviors that led to positive self-esteem, a sense of belonging to family and community, and a solid American Indian Identity (p. 63-4).

In addition, Long et al. (2006) reflected that this relocation of youth to boarding schools and forced assimilation practices “robbed reservation communities of their youth” effectively resulting in what they termed a “missed generation” (p. 290).

Federal legislation was also enacted to promote the civilization of Native peoples. The first of these was The Seven Major Crimes Act of 1885 (Anderson, 1995; Churchill, 1999; Olund, 2002). As individuals living in separate sovereign spaces and not legally recognized as individual citizens of the United States, Native Americans within their territories were governed by their own tribal court systems, under the directive of the Bureau of Indian Affairs and its agents, and were not subject to the jurisdiction of the federal or state and territorial courts (Olund, 2002). The Major Crimes Act identified that federal jurisdiction would now be applicable to Native Americans and their occupied territories as it “brought Indians under the same criminal code as their white neighbors” (Olund, 2002, p. 134). These 7 major crimes included: murder, manslaughter, rape, assault (with intent), arson, burglary, and larceny. As Olund (2002) described, “for the civilizing mission to succeed, for Indians to become individuals, their actions had to be describable and actionable in legal terms, their rights and responsibilities as (future) American citizens made known to them” and thus, there was a need to formally and legally reconstitute Indian Country as a governable space within U.S. society (p. 134).

Major Crimes was a first stepping-stone towards bringing Natives under U.S. citizenship. However, as Olund (2002) identified,

Although Major Crimes did begin breaking the tribal bond by redescribing Indians as juridical individuals, it also adopted a gradualist approach as national policy; full citizenship would not happen by fiat, but neither would it happen by choice. This was reaffirmed in General Allotment (p. 135)

General Allotment, also known as the Dawes Allotment Act of 1887, recognized the ability for the U.S. government to redistribute reservation lands and territories so as to establish private land ownership among Natives (Anderson, 1995; Olund, 2002).

Native peoples were highly encouraged to voluntarily choose to participate in the General Allotment system with the incentive that heads of households would be given 160-acre parcels; single individuals were given 80 acres and children were given 40 acres (Churchill, 1999). However, ownership was conditional as, once the lands were allotted, they were originally to be held in trusts by the federal government for twenty-five years after which time the land was no longer considered Tribal land but that of the individual (Anderson, 1995; Olund, 2002; Taylor, 1980).

Only upon granting of citizenship would Natives have full control of their land and be able to do with it as they pleased (Churchill, 1999). According to Churchill (1999), “The balance of the reserved territory would be opened up to homesteading by non-Indians, corporate usage, or designated under federal trusts” (p. 50). As Anderson (1995) identified, prior to 1900, the price for these surplus lands were paid to tribes by the government and homesteaded by settlers. After the turn of century, though, the government sold lands to whites on behalf of the tribe. However, lands sold by the government on behalf of the tribe were often sold significantly below that of the market value because of their ability to threaten military force (Anderson, 1995).

The Dawes Act was designed to break down communal land holdings and instill Anglo-American values of private property to: 1) promote westward expansion and white U.S. dominance and 2) “civilize” the Native American (Anderson, 1995; Churchill, 1999; Olund, 2002). As Churchill stated, “[the act] expressly intended to dissolve the collective

relationship to land that was the fundament of traditional cultures by imposing the allegedly superior Anglo Saxon system of individuated property ownership” (p.49). The idea was that Native Americans would use the lands to become self-sufficient farmers so that they would no longer be dependent on federal government funds (Levitan & Johnson, 1997).

In addition, it was hoped that by breaking down the communal properties of Native populations and enforcing private landholdings Native people would more easily be assimilated into white society. As Anderson (1995) explained, “[the] General Allotment Act was “necessary...for improving the welfare of Indians” (p. 91)— a way to “Americanize the Indian” by forcing them “to abandon their communal way of life” (p. 92). It was believed that by giving Native people private property it would dissuade the practice of polygamy, provide them with purpose via a self-sustaining occupation in society (farming), and ultimately end the nomadic lifestyle that threatened individual property rights and white settlement (Olund, 2002).

Rather than for the so-called social welfare of Native Americans, Anderson (1995) described allotment as the result of political special interest theory—“laws are passed because they confer benefits upon interest groups that are influential in the political arena” (p. 91). According to Anderson (1995), the special interest groups benefiting from allotment included the white settlers who received the confiscated land, the politicians who received votes from the white settlers, and the bureaucrats who received bigger budgets as their agencies grew.

In addition, “Native resistance to assimilation was great” as policies were forcefully rejected and fought given past mistrust (Olund, 2002, p. 147). Moreover, of

those who chose to enter into allotment, many were unable to adapt to this privatized model and agriculture economy (Levitan & Johnson, 1997). As such many Natives sold their land at a significantly low value to return to their reservations only to once again be dependent on the federal government (Levitan & Johnson, 1997). Thus, while the General Allotment Act successfully claimed millions of acres for the U.S government, it did not achieve the desired assimilation of Native peoples into dominant U.S. society (Anderson, 1995; Olund, 2002).

The overall result was a decrease, rather than the desired increase, in economic self-sufficiency. According to Churchill (1999), by 1934 two-thirds of approximately 150 million acres of land that had been given to indigenous peoples via treaties and reservations had passed to whites. As Taylor (1980) identified the Natural Resources Board estimated that between 1900 and 1934 “one-half of Indian allotments had been released in patent fee,” the majority of which was either “sold or seized for nonpayment of taxes” (p. 6). Thus, Native landowners whose land, one way or another, was lost had no other resources with which to support themselves. According to Churchill (1999), “by the turn of the century virtually every indigenous nation within the U.S. had by way of an unrelenting substitution for federal definitions for their own, been stripped of the ability to determine for themselves in any meaningful way the internal composition of their polities” (p. 50). The failure of the allotment system to fully assimilate Natives into U.S. polity as designed was soon recognized and “[p]rivate property was no longer the savior it was supposed to be (Olund, 2002, p. 147).

Reorganization, termination, and self-determination. With assimilation efforts failing to create what the U.S. considered independent self-sufficient citizens of Native

Americans, the U.S. government, in its guardianship role over Native communities, needed to establish other means by which to improve economic conditions and provide for their welfare: healthcare, education, and other social services for Native Americans (Taylor, 1980). In 1924 the Indian Citizenship Act was enacted to force all those who did not already attain citizenship, through allotment or some other means, to become U.S. citizens (Churchill, 1999; Olund, 2002). By 1925, a committee of business leaders and academics agreed that the allotment and assimilation policies should be abandoned; the arguments of this committee were accounted for in what is known as the Merriam Report, a document that paved the way for the Indian Reorganization Act of 1935 (Churchill, 1999).

Thus, once again U.S. policy towards Native Americans had shifted; as Olund (2002) argued, “[t]he impoverishment that resulted from the ever-changing assimilation project set the stage by the Depression era for a reversal of federal policy” (p. 147). Native land was again placed under federal trust. This time, however, tribal governments were introduced whereby “what remained of traditional Native governments were for the most part supplanted by federally designed tribal councils meant to serve as the medium for long term administration of the freshly conceived internal colonial domain” (Churchill, 1999, p.52). Therefore, while once again semi-dependent on and under the jurisdiction of the federal government, reservations now had their own tribal governments, which were seen by some as the return of tribal sovereignty and control over their own people and lands. In addition, tribes were allotted federal funding for the provision of social services and aid as well as for the support of various economic strategies for self-sufficiency.

However, the “Indian New Deal” (Indian Reorganization Act of 1935) was short lived. By the 1940s, U.S policy was again focused on dismantling Tribal sovereignty and a new wave of assimilation practices would be implemented throughout the 1950s (Beck, 2002; Churchill, 1999). This was known as the Termination era, which was initiated by Congress in 1953, when the federal government sought to end the relationship between tribes and the federal government by cutting aid, dependency, and recognition of tribes (Beck, 2002; Churchill, 1999). As Beck described (2002), “[termination] eliminated the government-to-government relationship between Indian nations and the United States, closed tribal rolls, removed tribal lands from trust status, and allocated tribal wealth to individual tribal members” (p. 119).

Termination was applied to over 100 Tribal Nations (Beck, 2002), which Churchill (1999) argued were reservations that did not prove resource rich. In addition, those that were considered “too small and insignificant to warrant the expenditures needed to administer them” were terminated and lands were dissolved back into the U.S. corpus (Churchill, 1999, p. 54). As a result, many individuals lost their tribal membership status and therefore the ability to access resources such as healthcare, housing, and other social services that had been provided via their reservation status. Meanwhile, further cutbacks in reservation funds caused tribes who maintained their federal recognition to have more stringent tribal requirements (Churchill, 1999). As Churchill (1999) explained, “in the face of declining federal appropriations to the BIA,” tribal councils sought to reduce the number of tribal members who could make claims for services such as healthcare and food commodities as well as for per-capita from tribal resources incomes (p. 54).

By the 1950s, the economic situation for Native Americans was dire as U.S. government attempts to terminate tribal dependency on federal funds only exacerbated the situation (Beck, 2002). As Beck (2002) explained,

Tribal economies had been destroyed in the nineteenth century, Indian lands had been stolen, economic development and self-sufficiency programs established by the U.S. government were largely failures, federal wardship crippled attempts by tribes to resolve these problems, and many individuals became victims of a well-founded sense of helplessness. (p. 119).

Couched within another attempt at assimilation, one of the solutions to the economic situation of Native American communities was the 1956 Voluntary Indian Relocation Program, which offered incentives for Native Americans to relocate from reservations to urban areas (Brave Heart & DeBruyn, 1998).

The Relocation Program, also known as the Adult Vocational Training Program, was administered by the BIA and involved the relocation of over 100,000 American Indian men from reservation areas to urban locations (Brave Heart & DeBruyn, 1998). BIA relocation officers were established on reservations and in cities to assist relocation efforts, providing money for travel and start-up funds for food and rent (Beck, 2002). Once relocated, BIA relocation officers in the city would arrange opportunities for apprenticeship and vocational training to live and work in mainstream society (Beck, 2002; Brave Heart & DeBruyn, 1998). Such incentives, compounded by an economic boom rivaling that of the 1920s, enticed many Native Americans to move to the cities as they sought to improve their economic situation (Beck, 2002). As Beck (2002) stated,

“After the war [WWII] many Indian people, veterans, for example, migrated to cities in search of work and a way to support their families, disgusted with impoverished conditions in their reservation homelands” (p. 119).

Termination and Relocation, however, turned out to be one of the major failures of federal policy of Native American Nations and had significant implications on the Native peoples as individuals and their communities (Beck, 2002). As Brave Heart and DeBruyn (1998) argued, “[o]nce in the urban area, American Indians faced racism and discrimination in employment and housing similar to other ethnic minority groups and became relegated to second class status, sometimes in urban ghettos” (p. 64). Moreover, many ended up returning home after a short period of time or bounced between the reservation and their urban life (Brave Heart & DeBruyn, 1998). According to Brave Heart and DeBruyn (1998), “[t]his situation created additional stresses on American Indian families economically, socially, and spiritually” (p.64). It was via the Relocation program that the shift of Native Americans from reservation to urban areas was established, a phenomenon that has had a significant impact on shaping contemporary Native American society (Beck, 2002).

The backlash of Termination and the infringement such policies had on Native peoples and tribal lands incited strong opposition among Native peoples (Riggs, 2000). The National Congress of American Indians’ (NCAI) outspoken and forceful opposition to such policies influenced the U.S. government’s renewed focus on sovereignty and cultural preservation was established (Riggs, 2000). In 1970, President Nixon made self-determination—the establishment of internal control by Native tribes over their own people and territories (i.e. self-governance) to rebuild tribal communities and

development— the official U.S. policy, which continues to be the policy used today (Beck 2002). According to Beck (2002)

‘Self-determination’ is in the narrow sense a term with legal implications in which the federal government recognizes the authority of tribes to govern themselves under the political and judicial definitions of limited sovereignty. In a larger sense, self-determination means the ability of a people to determine the direction of their own society and community in political, economic, social, and spiritual arenas (p. 117).

This self-governance approach was established with a series of legislation designed to protect Native Americans rights to self-determination under federal law: the Indian Civil Rights Act of 1968; the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act of 1975; the American Indian Religious Freedom Act of 1978; and the Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978 (Ennis & Mayhew, 2013-2014).

The Indian Civil Rights Act (ICRA) “applies the majority of the U.S. Constitution’s Bill of Rights to tribes and tribal courts” (Ennis & Mayhew, 2013-2014, p. 434). Prior to the passage of this act there was no assurance of civil liberties for tribal peoples on tribal lands (Ennis & Mayhew, 2013-2014). On the one hand, the passage of the ICRA demonstrates the authority of U.S. federal government over tribes by requiring tribal governments to uphold these liberties (Ennis & Mayhew, 2013-2014). However, the Act also “played an important role in affirming the right of tribal courts...and defining tribal ‘powers of self-government’” as it recognized “tribal judicial authority” (Ennis & Mayhew, 2013-2014, p. 435).

According to Garroutte (2003), the Indian Religious Freedom Act, “allow[s] Indian people to seek protection from prosecution for the possession of specific ceremonial objects, otherwise restricted by law” (p. 17). This includes the ownership of eagle feathers, which are used in prayer and ceremonies—for non-Indians this is a federal offense as the Eagle is an endangered species— and the use of peyote, a legally classified hallucinogen and therefore illegal for non-Indians, which is used in ceremonial worship practices as part of the Native American Church (Garroutte, 2003).

Garroutte (2003) also identified that prior to the Indian Child Welfare (ICW) Act of 1978, “as many as 25 to 35 percent of Indian children in some states were being removed from their homes and placed in the care of non-Indians through such means as adoption and foster care” (p. 17). Garroutte (2003) argued that many scholars believed the high rates of Indian children being taken from their homes were another instance of forced assimilation tactics. Thus, the ICW Act was implemented to protect Native children from being taken from their homes and communities (Garroutte, 2003). The act requires that in instances “where Indian children must be removed from their homes, efforts be made to place them with another family member, or at least with another Indian family rather than a non-Indian family” (Garroutte, 2003).

Moreover, since the 1960s and self-determination era legislation and court cases, tribes have been able to determine their own enrollment policies and membership (Champagne, 1999). Legal recognition is important as it allows tribes to define and limit the distribution of certain resources such as reservation land, tribal monies, and political privileges (Garroutte, 2003). However, the federal government also has ways to define and distinguish Indians from non-Indians for the purposes of identifying who should

receive access to social and economic resources, as well as the benefits presented in treaties, and the applicability of federal protections specifically for individual Native Americans (Garoutte, 2003). Without federal recognition it is difficult for tribes to have legal representation and advocate for their rights (Garoutte, 2003).

Despite the ability of Native American populations to gain certain protections and freedoms and maintain much of their culture and traditions, the ramifications of European colonization and U.S. policies have left their mark on the Native American peoples (Champagne, 1999; Olund, 2002; Long et al., 2006). In general, the policies that were enacted by the U.S. government sought to systematically destroy the Native American population, not only physically but culturally: ripping them from their lands and homes, denying them their beliefs, languages, and traditional education, breaking down family structures and communal way of life (Anderson, 1990; Champagne, 1999; Duran, Duran & Brave Heart 1998; Olund, 2002). Moreover, the success of U.S. policies in accomplishing such outcomes is apparent when looking at the general state of Native American society today. As Duran, Duran and Brave Heart (1998) stated, “the creation and expansion of America produced an inevitable disintegration of the rationality of everyday Native American life. This disintegration is at the root of many present-day social and health problems” (p. 62).

Today’s Challenges

National demographics. In the U.S., as of 2012, there are 566 federally recognized American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) tribes and villages, as well as over 100 others that are state recognized only, and others tribes that have no recognition the state or federal government (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office

of Minority Health, Profile: American Indian/Alaska Native, para. 3). The Native American population is an extremely diverse group consisting of hundreds of different cultures and Nations, and while there are many similarities, researchers have identified that it is important to recognize their heterogeneity (Cameron, 1999; Champagne, 1999; Hawkins, Cummins & Marlatt, 2004). This includes their “many distinct traditions, languages, and spiritual histories” (Champagne, 1999, p. 8) as well as “tribal-specific factors; degree of Indian ancestry or blood quantum; residential pattern; and cultural affiliation, identity, and participation” (Hawkins et al., 2004, p. 305).

According to the 2010 U.S. Census, of the total U.S. population, 5.2 million people (1.7 percent) living in the United States self-identified as being American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN), either alone or in combination with one or more races (Norris, Vines, & Hoeffel, 2012). Of this 5.2 million, 2.9 million (or 0.9 percent overall) identified as AI/AN alone and 2.3 million (or 0.7 percent overall) identified as being AI/AN in combination with one or more races (Norris et al., 2012). The AI/AN population increased at a rate faster than that of the total U.S. population growth rate (27 percent vs. 9.7 percent) (Norris et al., 2012).

Geographically, the highest percentage of the AI/AN population lived in the Western United States, with the second largest percentage living in the South followed by the Mid-West and Northeast (Norris et al., 2012). Moreover, the majority of all AI/AN individuals lived within ten states: California, Oklahoma, Arizona, Texas, New York, New Mexico, Washington, North Carolina, Florida and Michigan (in order of largest population size as written) (Norris et al., 2012). However, those of mixed race were more

regionally dispersed than those who identified as being AI/AN alone with the AI/AN alone population more concentrated in the Western states.

Additionally, of the total AI/AN population, 78 percent lived outside of recognized AI/AN areas, although where there were high concentrations of Native Americans, they were near AI/AN tribal land areas. One-third of the 22 percent of the AI/AN population living near an AI/AN area identified as being AI/AN alone while eight percent identified as AI/AN in combination (multiple race) (Norris et al., 2012). In addition, 60 percent of the national AI/AN population lived in metropolitan areas, which was the lowest percentage of any racial group (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Minority Health, Profile: American Indian and Alaska Native, para. 2).

Native youth population. The AI/AN population is made up of 44 percent of individuals between the ages of 0-24 and 32 percent are under the age of 18. In comparison, 34 percent of the total U.S. population is under the age of 25 and 24 percent is under 18 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014). Moreover, the median age of AI/ANs (28.8) is the second youngest population with Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islanders being the youngest (26.4). For AI/ANs living on reservations, the median age is 26 compared to the U.S. national median age of 37 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014). Moreover, AI/AN youth have the highest rates of suicide and have among the highest rates of drug and alcohol abuse, juvenile delinquency, school dropout, living in poverty and foster care and unemployment.

These social ills are rooted in the continued colonization and oppressive practices employed by the U.S. government and society towards Native Americans (Duran, Duran,

& Brave Heart, 1998; Brave Heart and DeBruyn 1998). As Brave Heart and DeBruyn (1998) stated,

Racism and oppression, including internalized oppression, are continuous forces, which exacerbate these destructive behaviors. We suggest these social ills are primarily the product of a legacy of chronic trauma and unresolved grief across generations. It is proposed that this phenomenon, which we label historical unresolved grief, contributes to the current social pathology, originating from the loss of lives, land, and vital aspects of Native culture promulgated by the European conquest of the Americas (p. 60).

This historical unresolved grief has been passed from generation to generation so that “[m]any Native American families are plagued by the symptomatology of alcoholism, poverty, learned helplessness and dependence, violence, and the breakdown of values that correlate with healthy living” (Duran et al., 1998, p. 61). In a population that is significantly younger, the historical unresolved grief and generational trauma—which has broken down family traditions and Native culture, including traditional parenting, life skills and values, and coping mechanisms—has had a critical impact on Native American youth (Brave Heart & DeBruyn, 1998). As Herring stated (1992),

The disruptive influences non-Native Americans have had on the historical Native American family has resulted in Native American youth continuing to be plagued by poor testing results, suicides and drug related deaths, negative career ideations resulting in disproportionate unemployment and underemployment, little recognition of Native

American nonverbal communication styles, and family dissatisfaction trends among adolescents (p 36).

Social, health, and economic disparities. The AI/AN population is disproportionately affected by health problems and quality-of-life issues related to social and economic disparities (Cameron, 1999; Jackson & Hodge, 2010; Long et al. 2006). As a population that is largely made up of adolescents and young adults, these disparities are particularly evident in the lives of AI/AN youth as they suffer a host of problems created by poverty, including social disenfranchisement and the tribulations of living in a world where they must balance both the demands of mainstream society alongside their Native traditions and cultures (Cameron, 1999). As Cameron (1999) stated, “[b]y almost any measure, the health status of [AI/AN] teenagers in the United States is below that of the general adolescent population. These youth exhibit more serious problems than the U.S ‘all races’ population in such areas as depression, suicide, anxiety, substance use, general health status, and school dropout rates” (p.297).

According to the National Vital Statistics Report, among the leading causes of death for AI/AN individuals between the ages 15-34 are accidents, suicides, and assault (Heron, 2013). According to the Center for Disease Control Health Disparities and Inequalities Report (2013), in 2009 AI/ANs had the second highest homicide death rate (9.0 deaths per 100,000) following non-Hispanic Blacks (19.9 deaths per 100,000). The highest percentage of deaths caused by homicides occurred between ages 15-29.

According to the CHDIR (2013),

Socioeconomic factors play a substantial role in homicide disparities by race/ethnicity, sex, age, and geographic area. For example, racial/ethnic

minorities are more likely to live in disadvantaged neighborhoods.

Residential areas with high levels of poverty, unemployment, and jobs with low wages can increase risk of income-generating crimes such as burglary and robbery, stress and conflict, and substance abuse among residents, all factors that increase risk for homicide and violence. One longitudinal study reported that after controlling for similar socioeconomic factors, such as living in a disadvantaged community, being on welfare, and having a young or single parent, race was not predictive of being a homicide offender (p. 168)

In addition to having high rates of homicide, in 2009 the AI/AN population, along with the white population, had the highest suicide rates. While the overall suicide rates for AI/ANs were similar to those of whites, the 2005–2009 rates among adolescent and young adult AI/ANs aged 15–29 years were substantially higher than those among other racial/ethnic groups. While these rates leveled off with an increase in age, suicide was still “the fourth leading cause of years of potential life lost (YPLL) for AI/ANs aged <75 years, accounting for 6.8% of all YPLL among AI/ANs” (CHDIR, 2013, p. 180).

According to the CHDIR (2013)

Studies examining the historical and cultural context of suicide among AI/AN populations have identified multiple contributors to the high rates such as individual-level factors (e.g., alcohol and substance misuse and mental illness), family- or peer-level factors (e.g., family disruption or suicidal behavior of others), and societal-level factors (e.g., poverty, unemployment, discrimination, and historic trauma [i.e., cumulative

emotional and psychological wounding across generations]). Although certain protective factors exist within AI/AN communities, including spirituality and cultural continuity, these factors often are overwhelmed by the magnitude of the risk factors. (p. 180)

Alcohol and substance abuse. One of the major risk factors, often cited as being among the foremost health concerns particularly detrimental to AI/AN communities, is alcohol abuse and misuse (Hawkins, Cummins, & Marlatt, 2004). Although Hawkins Cummins and Marlatt (2004) conceded that there is a substantial proportion of the Native American population who do not drink or abuse alcohol, it continues to be a destructive force in Native communities. As Cameron (1999) stated, alcohol abuse “takes a disproportionate toll among the AI/AN population [which was] reported to have the highest frequency of drinking-associated problems of any ethnic group” (p. 298). This is consistent with CDHIR (2013) research, which identified that, alongside whites, AI/AN individuals were among those with the highest prevalence, frequency, and intensity of binge drinking, in comparison with other racial/ethnic populations.

According to CHDIR (2013), binge drinking—“consuming four or more alcoholic drinks on one or more occasions for women and five or more drinks on one or more occasions for men” (p.77)—is considered a risk factor for poor health and social consequences including “unintentional injuries (e.g., motor vehicle crashes); violence; suicide; hypertension; acute myocardial infarction; sexually transmitted diseases; unintended pregnancy; fetal alcohol syndrome; and sudden infant death syndrome” (p.78). Moreover, the CDHIR (2013) reported that drug induced deaths among AI/AN

individuals 30-39 years of age were the highest compared to other racial/ethnic groups between the years 1999-2010.

This prevalence of drinking and alcohol consumption is particularly predominant among AI/AN youth. According to Cameron (1999) “[a]lcohol misuse is the leading and perhaps most costly risk factor among AI/AN youth today, underlying many major causes of Indian deaths and contributing to an array of physical conditions and premature death” (p. 297). As Hawkins, Cummins and Marlatt (2004) identified,

[a]dolescent alcohol use is associated with a wide-range of high-risk behaviors, such as driving while drinking, delinquency and running away, and unprotected sexual activity. It is also associated with psychiatric distress, including concerns such as depression, conduct disorder, and suicide; academic difficulties; and later problems with substance abuse (p.308).

These risk-behaviors induced by alcohol abuses and misuses are often related to rates of unintentional accidents (including motor vehicle accidents), suicide, and homicide (Hawkins et al., 2004).

According to the National Survey on Drug Use and Health Report (2011), those identifying as AI/AN alone between the ages of 12-17 (accounting for 6 percent of the total population of this age group) had a 1.5 percent higher rate of alcohol use (17.5 percent) in comparison to the national average (16 percent). Though this is not a particularly significant difference, when looking at the rates of alcohol use among 12-14 year-olds the difference between AI/AN use and the national average is much greater (10.2 percent vs. 6.2 percent). These rates begin to balance with age: the rate of alcohol

use among AI/AN 15-17 year-olds is 24.9 percent as compared to 24.5 percent of the national average. As such, the report highlights that although AI/AN youth may have similar rates to those of non-AI/AN populations when looking at lifetime averages, AI/AN youth are more likely to begin using alcohol at an earlier age (NSDUH, 2011; Hawkins et al., 2004). In addition, AI/AN youth tend to “drink more frequently and to consume alcohol in larger quantities when they do drink” (Hawkins et al., 2004, p. 308).

AI/AN youth are also “more likely to have tried tobacco, inhalants, and marijuana, and to use these substances on a regular basis” (Hawkins et al., 2004, p. 308). For example, AI/AN youth aged 12-17 had significantly higher rates in comparison to the national averages for cigarette use (16.8 vs. 10.2), marijuana use (13.8 vs. 6.9), and nonmedical use of prescription drugs (6.1 vs. 3.3) (NSDUH, 2011). The report also found that AI/AN youth were more likely to use at a younger age with rates for AI/AN 12-14 year olds being significantly higher than the national average: cigarette use (7.7 vs. 3.5); Marijuana use (5.6 to 2.0); and nonmedical use of prescription drugs (3.8 vs. 2.0).

According to Hawkins, Cummins and Marlatt (2004), these substance abuse patterns and trends are influenced by individual (beliefs, behaviors, and attitudes) environmental (community, family, peer settings, etc.), and cultural (stresses of forced acculturation, urbanization, disruption, etc.) factors. In particular, the statistical reports represented by the CHDIR (2013) and NSDUH (2011) suggest that many of the risk factors and health and safety concerns identified for at-risk youth in general are heavily related to the dynamics of education, employment, and poverty (each of which in turn influences, and is influenced by, various individual, environmental and cultural factors. According to the CHDIR (2013), the high rates of homicide among youths in general

during late adolescence and young adulthood suggest that the years of primary and secondary education mark an important developmental period during youth's lives. Additionally, the CHDIR (2013) also reported that suicide rates were tied to educational attainment as "persons with the highest educational attainment had the lowest rates, those with the lowest educational attainment had intermediate rates, and those who had completed only the equivalent of high school (or 12 years of education) had the highest rates" (p. 180).

Educational attainment is also influenced by drug use and abuse. As Reynolds, Fisher, Estrada, and Trotter (2000) stated, "the younger an individual is at the time s/he begins using drugs, the greater the chance that s/he will stop his/her education if involved heavily in drugs" (p.19). Considering AI/AN youth begin using at a younger age (NSDUH, 2011), there may be a connection to the effects of drug use on the overall educational performance of Native American populations. In addition, according to a study conducted by Reynolds et al. (2000), drug users who were employed upon entering a treatment facility were more likely to have lower drug-taking risk behaviors upon leaving compared to those who entered without employment. While this study indicated "all drugs users...have difficulty transitioning from unemployment to employment," it also highlighted that AI/AN individuals were more likely to be unemployed at point of entry into a treatment facility than other racial and ethnic groups and, if unemployed at intake, were also less likely to transition to employment (p. 25-27).

In addition, according to the NSDUH (2011), the rates of cigarette use and marijuana use increased significantly for AI/AN youth ages 12-17 living in poverty, especially as compared to the national average. However, while the NSDUH (2011)

report indicated that income levels did not reflect significant differences in the levels of alcohol use or nonmedical use of prescription drugs consumed by youth, AI/AN populations nevertheless have high rates of prescription drug and alcohol use which often lead to harmful risk-taking behaviors— risk factors which frequently occur in low income communities and neighborhoods.

Overall, the relationship between educational attainment, employment, poverty and income levels have a significant impact on one's health and quality of life, both in terms of their access to healthcare and resources as well as their propensity or likelihood to partake in risk taking behaviors that may be detrimental to their health and livelihood (CHDIR, 2013).

Education, employment, poverty, and crime. Historically AI/AN individuals have not heavily participated in the labor force (Reynolds et al., 2000; Martin, 1991). The reasons for this may be attributed to a host of different factors. According to Reynolds et al. (2000), “[e]mployment success depends on many variables” with education level and age being two of the most important variables along with ethnicity, which “...plays an important part in employment success and accounts for differences not captured by education and age alone” (p. 19). As such, Reynolds et al. (2000) argued that “AI/ANs carry the twin burdens of less education and younger age, hence less experience” (p. 19).

Martin (1991) emphasized that “individuals living in environments with high rates of unemployment and limited job opportunities may have restricted knowledge of the world of work” as an individual's environment determines the amount and variety of exposure to different occupations and possibilities (p. 274). In other words, if a person does not know an occupation exists, they cannot know if they wish to pursue it. In

relation to the context of the AI/AN population, Martin (1991) pointed out that AI/AN reservations typically have high rates of unemployment because they have limited job opportunities. Additionally, Martin (1991) identified that individuals living on reservations generally displayed a more limited knowledge of the world of work in terms of occupational possibilities and the methods or training needed to attain them than compared to non-Native Americans. Controversially, Gaiko, Wickle, and Kavennaugh (1999) argued that many Native Americans feel that in order to obtain work and be successful in mainstream society they must assimilate to the dominant culture. This feeling of cultural sacrifice limits access and/or desire by Native peoples to enter into the “traditionally non-Native workplace” (Gaiko et al., 1999, p. 161).

Related to AI/AN unemployment levels, is education. Educational attainment is directly related to employment status and income levels: as education levels rise, so do employment and income levels. As the 2013 U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) Report 1050 (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014) stated, “[f]or all major races and ethnicity groups, higher levels of education are generally associated with a greater likelihood of employment... Individuals with higher levels of education generally are more likely to be employed in higher paying jobs...” (p. 4). In 2011, AI/ANs were the second largest group (Hispanics being the largest) among adults aged 25 years and older of those not completing high school (18.8 percent) in comparison to whites (7.3 percent), blacks (16.1 percent) and Asian/Pacific Islanders (12.1 percent) (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014). Of those between the ages of 18-24, 26 percent of the AI/AN population did not complete high school in comparison to whites (17.2 percent), blacks (24.3

percent), and Asian/Pacific Islanders (16.2 percent) (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014).

The 2011 National Indian Education Study (NIES), which is part of the National Assessment for Educational Progress (NAEP), assesses the educational progress of AI/AN students in grades 4 and 8 (National Center for Education Statistics, 2012). The NIES reported that, when comparing reports from 2005 and 2009, AI/AN students in both grades consistently had significantly lower scores in reading and math compared to non-AI/AN students. However, socioeconomic factors also played a key role when comparing differences among AI/AN students' scores (National Center for Education Statistics, 2012).

According to the NIES, scores were lower for both 4th and 8th grade students who qualified for the National School Lunch Program (a service provided for low-income families) than those who were not eligible (National Center for Education Statistics, 2012). Scores were also higher for 4th and 8th grade students from suburban areas and those who attended public school systems as opposed to students who lived in rural areas and students who attended Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) schools (National Center for Education Statistics, 2012).

Corresponding to educational attainment levels, as identified by the CHDIR, in 2010 AI/ANs also had the second highest unemployment rate (15.8 percent) among adults aged 18-64 (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2013). This was a substantial increase in unemployment rates for AI/AN individuals from the 2006 rate of 8.8% (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention). The BLS Race and Ethnicity report (2014) identified slightly lower numbers of unemployment rates (12.8 percent) among

AI/ANs due to differences in definitions of unemployment. Moreover, according to the American Indian Population and Labor Force Report (U.S. Department of the Interior, 2014), approximately 50 percent of the AI/AN population 16 years and older living on or near federally recognized tribal areas are employed, but many of them only part-time. In addition, several states, including Alaska, Arizona, California, Main, Minnesota, Montana, New Mexico, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Utah, were estimated to have less than 50 percent employment among AI/AN individuals 16 years and older living on or near federally recognized tribal areas (U.S. Department of the Interior, 2014). These statistics correspond to sentiments made by Gaiko et al. (1999) who stated, “Many of our nation’s Native American communities know first-hand what it’s like to live with unemployment...[a] situation further compounded by the consequences of the unemployed condition: poverty, low self-esteem, health problems and other various consequences” (p. 161).

In concert with low levels of education and employment, according to the NSUDH, AI/ANs also had one of the highest percentages (15.3 percent) of adults aged 18 years and older with incomes less than the federal poverty level in comparison to whites (10.7 percent), blacks (14.4 percent) and Asian/Pacific Islander (10.7 percent) (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2014). The NSUDH 2011 identified that AI/AN adolescents were twice as likely to be living in poverty (37.2 vs. 18.1 percent) and more likely to live in non-metropolitan areas (50.1 vs. 16.5 percent) when compared with the national average (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2014). According to the 2013 AIPLFR (U.S. Department of the Interior, 2014), it was estimated that, in 2010, 23 percent of all Native American families living in the U.S.

earned incomes below the poverty line with the highest rates in South Dakota (43-47 percent) followed by Arizona (31-33 percent), Minnesota (30-33 percent), Montana (32-36 percent), and Nebraska (30-37 percent).

The low levels of education and high levels of poverty and unemployment experienced by many Native Americans suggests that AI/AN populations, like many racial/and ethnic minorities, tend to live in disadvantaged neighborhoods. The CHDIR 2013 (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2013) described disadvantaged neighborhoods as,

Residential areas with high levels of poverty, unemployment, and jobs with low wages [which] can increase risk of income-generating crimes such as burglary and robbery, stress and conflict, and substance abuse among residents, all factors that increase risk for homicide and violence (p. 168).

Such environmental conditions have a particularly negative impact on Native youth. As Penn, Doll, and Grandgenett, (2008) identified, “Youth violence is perpetuated by a wide variety of risk factors in American Indian communities. Research has demonstrated that the highest risk factors for American Indian youth include substance abuse and suicidal thought” (p. 44). Thus, not only do the environmental conditions perpetuate risk factors but risk factors perpetuate violence.

As a study by Nalls, R. Mullis, and A. Mullis (2009) found “[f]or American Indian adolescents, neighborhood characteristics were significantly related to depressive symptoms and alcohol-marijuana use” (p. 972). Specifically, youth who felt less safe in their neighborhoods and schools were more likely to have depressive symptoms and

actions (including suicide), increased marijuana use, and aggression towards peers. The perception of safety or lack thereof was linked to the amount of crime and drugs sales that occurred within a neighborhood (Nalls et al., 2009). The link between substance abuse, violence, and safety is consistent with data provided by the National Center for Education Statistics, School Crime and Safety 2012 report (NCES: SCS, 2012) (Robers, Kemp, & Truman, 2013).

According to the NCES: SCS, 2012 report, in 2011 Native Americans were among those groups who reported higher percentages of drug activity (sold, offered, or given to them) on school grounds and students using marijuana and consuming alcohol at, and a significantly higher percentage of alcohol consumption on, school grounds compared with students of any other race/ethnicity (Robers et al., 2013, p. 66). In addition to higher rates of substance abuse and drug activity within the school environment, the report also indicated that 28 percent of AI/AN students reported carrying a weapon anywhere during the previous 30 days, the highest reported percentage compared with any race/ethnicity. In addition, 42 percent of AI/AN students reported being in a physical fight at least once within the last 12 months which was greater than Black, Hispanic, White, and Asian populations (Robers et al., 2013, p. 56).

These instances of substance abuse and violence within the school context are reflections of the developmental challenges facing AI/AN youth, not just within their schools but their greater communities. As Nalls et al. (2009) argued, “[neighborhoods and] schools are an important location for key interactions that can be beneficial or detrimental for adolescent development. If normative neighborhood and school environments encourage peer aggression, American Indian adolescents’ opportunities for

positive developmental interactions are reduced” (p. 975-6). This corresponds with sentiments by Robers et al. (2013) who stated,

Our nation’s schools should be safe havens for teaching and learning, free of crime and violence. Any instance of crime or violence at school not only affects the individuals involved, but also may disrupt the educational process and affect bystanders, the school itself, and the surrounding community. (p. 2)

Thus, school and community environments are important factors contributing to the development of youth.

Finding Solutions: Culturally Relevant Development

Youth, community resources, and the cycle of poverty. As previously identified, youth from disadvantaged neighborhoods are those most likely to be exposed to and engaged in risk-taking behaviors among which Native American populations are included. As Matsuba, Elder, Petrucci and Marleau (2008) stated, “at-risk youth are more likely to come from low socioeconomic and ethnic minority backgrounds... have often dropped out of school, misused substances, experienced low self-esteem, lacked empathy and engaged in criminal activity, aggressive behavior and other unhealthy behaviors” (p. 16). Moreover, these factors associated with at-risk youth are related to employability as they “prevent youth from finding and maintaining employment” (Matsuba et al., 2008, p. 17).

This corresponds with Howard and Solberg (2006) who similarly described “low-income and diverse youth” as facing significant challenges to their quality-of-life outcomes such as employment, health and well-being, exposure to violence and criminal

activity, etc. Specifically, Howard and Solberg (2006) identified that quality-of-life outcomes are “poorest when combined with school failure. Not only are youth from low-income and diverse backgrounds three times more likely to leave high school prior to gaining a degree, but growing up in poverty is the strongest predictor of unemployment” (p. 278). Thus, environment becomes a significant factor related to youth education, employment, and ultimately the ability to exit the cycle of poverty.

The opportunities and resources available within a community are important for augmenting these risk factors. As Ameen and Lee (2012) argued, “poverty, racism, generational acceptance of crime, and neglect by civic and educational leaders” are “sociopolitical forces contributing to juvenile justice” and “most youth commit crimes because of a lack of opportunities and resources that their families, schools, and communities are unable or unwilling to provide” (p. 99). As such, educational resources and opportunities are particularly important. As the CHDIR 2013 report (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2013) stated, “[e]ducational attainment and income provide psychosocial and material resources that protect against exposure to health risks in early and adult life. Persons with low levels of education and income generally experience increased rates of mortality, morbidity, and risk-taking behaviors” (p. 15).

The statistics presented for AI/AN communities, and in particular AI/AN youth, appear to fit this narrative: disadvantaged communities characterized by low educational attainment, high rates of unemployment and poverty, and increased rates of risk-taking behavior such as substance abuse, suicide and violence, and criminal activity (Massey, 2004). As Massey (2004) identified, the overarching concerns and problems associated with the cycle of poverty experienced by many Native communities comes from both

structural and cultural factors. As such, both sets of factors must be addressed in order to find solutions to the multifaceted challenges facing Native youth.

Considerations for Development and Programming in Native Communities

Resilience, continued colonialism, and non-native recognition. Despite the many challenges that AI/AN individuals face, Native communities have adapted and created ways of surviving and maintaining their traditions and culture. As Champagne (1999) stated,

In a complex combination of colonial domination and cultural sharing, Native people have struggled with colonial impositions such as boarding schools, and the discouragement of tribal language, culture and religion while at the same time they have selectively and strategically borrowed ideas, technologies, and religious, political, and legal concepts.

Introducing these concepts into their own communities has become a means of preserving tribal sovereignty, identity and communities—

adaptation in order to survive in a Western political and social arena. (p. 8)

However, while tribal communities “have increasingly developed creative ways to express tribal issues and help preserve and extend tribal traditions by incorporating many U.S. cultural elements,” they continue to face Western colonial impositions (Champagne, 1999, p. 10). Moreover, as Gallagher and Selman (2015) explained, while overt colonialism still exists, “more nuanced pathways” of “covert colonialism” are being employed (p. 76). As Gaiko et al. (1999) stated, “Previous cultural interventions among the Native American populations have been thinly disguised attempts to change the customs, practices and beliefs of the population under the guise of educational or training

programs” (p. 162). As such, traditional programs related to career development have failed to incorporate culturally appropriate interventions (Gaiko et al., 1999).

Thus, despite the perseverance of Native peoples, it is important to recognize and be aware of the effects of nontribal social structures. As Ball (2004) stated,

Educators and curriculum writers, and those who fund and accredit them, need to recognize and accept responsibility for the potentially colonizing and acculturative effects of “mainstream” training curricula; that is, education that is conceptualized, vetted, and delivered predominantly by academics and professionals of European descent (p. 457).

According to Ball (2004), this mainstream approach has not worked well for indigenous peoples particularly those from rural and remote areas and reservations. As Ball (2004) explained,

Community development programs imported from white middle-class urban centers, even when these have been made accessible through community-based delivery, have been found to be unsatisfactory because they do not reflect or seem applicable to the culture, rural or isolated circumstances, strained socioeconomic conditions, and unique goals and resources of Indigenous communities. (p. 458)

This lack of cultural understanding is reiterated by Harding, Harper, Stone, O’Neill, Berger, Harris, and Donatuto (2012) who argued that few non-native scholars are aware of either Native American culture or the “continuing effect of American colonialism on the people they seek to study” (p. 6).

Community specific development and involvement. Moreover, each tribe has its own unique cultural traditions and colonial-history, and as such the solutions to the challenges they face will be community specific (Champagne, 1999). This is consistent with Hawkins et al. (2004) who identified that the cultural and geographic diversity among AI/AN populations might prevent programs that have been designed for one community from working in another. As Hawkins et al. (2004) argued, this “may be to actual geographical or cultural differences...or it may reflect longstanding desire on the part of some communities to assert and maintain a unique independent identity” (p. 314). Similarly Ball (2004), although referring to the First Nations (indigenous tribes) of Canada, also concluded that it was important to acknowledge and appreciate the heterogeneity of individual tribes.

Ball (2004) argued that in today’s efforts to create culturally sensitive curriculum, programs, and training, educators, scholars, and practitioners are looking for a set of ideal best practices “as if there might be models of training or services that can be transported to varying contexts with the expectation of ‘best’ outcomes regardless of the states of readiness, resources, values or goals of people in each new setting” (p. 458-59). According to Ball (2004), even pan-Aboriginal approaches to educational curriculum and training content fail to recognize the uniqueness of different tribes, as each tribe has its own history, language, culture and social order.

As such, Ball (2004) contended that scholars and practitioners must recognize and respect the variety of “effective or promising practices in human services and education that reflect the diversity of human experience, individual and collective goals, and social ecologies, rather than searching for ‘best practices’ with universal applicability” (p. 459).

Ball (2004) concluded that the best way to create culturally appropriate and community relevant programs and services is to train and engage the actual members of the community and “involve the whole community as much as possible in the conceptualization, delivery, application, and evaluation of training” (p. 456).

The emphasis on local involvement and extensive collaboration with community members is also supported by Hawkins et al. (2004) as one way of assuring culturally relevant programming. Indeed, the importance of community involvement for providing culturally relevant programming is widely acknowledged and is the key component of Community Development which, “...seeks to build the capacity of a diverse group of community members promoting active and representative participation for members to meaningfully influence the decisions that affect their lives (Quon Huber, Frommeyer, Weisenbach, and Sazama, 2003, p. 301).

While community involvement is generally acknowledged as important to developing culturally appropriate programming, there are differences in opinion as to whether or not culturally relevant programs must be entirely grass roots (community specific development) or if there may be potential for transferrable models (e.g. models that have pan-tribal commonalities) (Hawkins et al., 2004). Hawkins et al. (2004) described this as the dilemma between emic and etic approaches: emic being the cultural and context specific approach, and etic being the global or adaptable approach (Hawkins et al., 2004). According to Hawkins et al. (2004), it is actually possible to incorporate both the etic and emic approaches as the “etic approach can be incorporated into culturally appropriate emic programs...by drawing upon the rich resources of Native cultures in terms of myths, stories, legends, songs, and dances” (p. 317). In addition,

research conducted by Hawkins et al. (2004) on substance abuse prevention programs for Native American youth revealed that there is relevancy in etic approaches, as commonalities were found among the more successful programs. These “best practice approaches” included “conceptualizing prevention and behavior change as part of a continuum, using a stepped-care approach, utilizing a biculturally focused life skills curriculum, and establishing community involvement and collaboration throughout the development and implementation of prevention efforts” (Hawkins, 2004, p. 315). Thus, according to Hawkins et al. (2004), it is important to examine programs “to identify core components that may be adapted for use in other communities” (p. 317).

Even Ball (2004), who heavily argued the importance of community and cultural specific programming, identified that sometimes it is also useful to incorporate the knowledge and perspectives provided by other cultures. As Ball (2004) explained,

Culturally valued and useful knowledge ... is embedded within the community and this knowledge needs to be afforded a central place in the development of training curricula. At the same time, indigenous community partners have asserted that it is valuable for them to consider the perspectives and knowledge yielded by Eurowestern research, theory, and professional experience (p. 460).

Youth, life-skills and assessment. According to Hawkins et al. (2004), while considering the problems of substance abuse specifically, community-based programs, particularly those which emphasize empowerment, may be the most promising and successful ways of establishing culturally relevant programs for Native youth. Hawkins et al. (2004) identified that life-skills training programs are among the most widely used and

are therefore the most widely researched (Hawkins et al., 2004). According to Hawkins et al. (2004), skills-training programs often use peer-led interventions with the idea that youth will more likely be influenced by the attitudes and behaviors of other youth whom they see as similar to themselves as opposed to adults.

While Hawkins et al. (2004) pointed out that there were traditionally more life skills training programs, Long et al. (2006) argued that there have been few life-skills assessments. Research by Long et al. (2006) was conducted to identify culture-specific factors to create a more relevant life skills assessment model for Native American youth (a.k.a the Ansell Casey Life Skills Assessment-American Indian Supplement). Results of the study indicated key beliefs and values associated with necessary life skills as expressed by Native participants centered around the following themes: money, resources, spirituality, interdependence versus independence, intergenerational learning, tribal identity, and multiple lifeways (bicultural competence) (Long et al., 2006).

Long et al. (2006) identified that the concept of money, as perceived by those from reservation communities, was inconsistent with traditional forms of bartering commonly used on the reservation. However, respondents acknowledged that in order for youth and tribal communities to function in an ever-evolving economic climate, financial life-skills such as “banking, financial aid, savings, rental agreements, [credit card management] and credit ratings...are considered critical for young people” (Long et al., 2006, p. 298).

In addition, access and availability of resources is also of particular importance especially for reservations and rural remote communities (Long et al., 2006). In such communities access to “resources such as employment, education, housing, and hospital

care are limited and commonly located miles away in surrounding urban areas” (Long et al., 2006, p. 298). The provision of such resources to tribal peoples via federal programs also varies and may require specific knowledge in order to access them (Long et al., 2006). As such, Native youth need to develop skills in terms of accessing these resources as well as skills for identifying who they can turn to for help and advice (i.e. who is trustworthy and knowledgeable) (Long et al., 2006).

Respondents also indicated that “Spirituality is highly valued and essential to tribal belief systems...Knowledge about spirituality is commonly transmitted intergenerationally through elders, spiritual advisors, and medicine people as well as through the Native American Church and other ecumenical teachings” (Long et al., 2006, p. 298). However, concern was expressed that young people in Native communities are losing touch with their spirituality and that because youth are not learning from their elders the traditional knowledge and teachings are being lost (Long et al., 2006).

Additionally, respondents identified that the interdependence of the family and tribal community was also critical to developing youth into successful adults within both reservation and non-reservation communities (Long et al., 2006). Connected to this sense of interdependence is also the value of intergenerational learning. Through the passage of stories as communicated by family and community members, youth learn about traditional norms, values, and beliefs including respect, one’s roles and responsibilities within the community/family, ideas of humor, interdependence and relationships (Long et al., 2006).

Moreover, feelings of connectedness within the tribal community were also identified as important to nurturing a positive cultural identity. Connectedness is

facilitated through “tribal affiliation and expressed as knowledge and participation with tribal heritage, history, traditions, activities, and ceremonies” (Long et al., 2006, p. 300). Tribal Elders highlighted that the development of cultural identity was critical to building self-esteem. However, Elders also indicated concerns that young people were becoming less connected with Elders and as a result losing touch with their tribal specific traditions and culture (Long et al, 2006).

This sense of connectedness is further challenged by the need to interact within the context of the larger mainstream society periodically (Long et al., 2006). Therefore, respondents identified the need for youth to develop social skills to effectively navigate what Long et al. (2006) called “contradictory lifeways” such as leaving one’s home and community for the purposes of school and work (p. 300). The skills that respondents identified as being necessary for successful navigation were those that dealt with the ability to cope with the challenges of leaving home and re-entry into one’s community upon return. These challenges included feelings of loneliness and abandonment; difficulty dealing with contradictions to tribal beliefs and values; lack of social understanding and experiences of discrimination; and a lack of support and feelings of betrayal by family and peers (Long et al., 2006).

The contradictory lifeways and the coping skills needed to effectively traverse two worlds as identified by Long et al (2006) are consistent with Hawkins et al. (2004), who argued that programs that include bicultural-competence and skills-training components designed for AI/AN youth increase cultural relevancy and success. According to Hawkins et al. (2004), “A critical component of bicultural competence is learning important coping skills for negotiating both mainstream and Native cultures.

This experience can be more empowering, increasing a sense of self-efficacy and leading adolescents to be more functional navigators of their own often-complex environments” (p. 313).

Family networks and interconnectedness. According to Cheshire and Kawamoto (2003), in order “to understand positive youth development from an American Indian experience it is crucial to recognize the composition of family in that culture” (p. 79). American Indian family systems often involve close relations with extended kin or family networks which foster a strong sense of interdependence and shared mutual obligations and responsibilities (Cheshire and Kawamoto, 2003). In addition, members have their individual roles and responsibilities that contribute to the functionality of the larger family and community (Cheshire and Kawamoto, 2003). Native American communities, like many tribal and indigenous communities, tend to operate through the lens of a cyclical/relational worldview (Cheshire and Kawamoto, 2003). From this viewpoint it is understood that all events are related, and therefore it is crucial to maintain harmony and balance (Cheshire and Kawamoto, 2003). This sense of interconnectedness is reinforced in urban Indian communities, which value both “the interdependence of the family and the family’s interdependence with the community” (Cheshire and Kawamoto, 2003, p. 82).

According to Cheshire and Kawamoto, (2003), this worldview is in direct opposition to the linear and individualistic worldview associated with mainstream Euro-western society. As such, programs which isolate youth from their families and focus only on the individual “cause more harm than good in interdependent American Indian families” (p. 82). Thus, it is important and even expected that parents and/or family

members be involved and provide support in program activities (Cheshire and Kawamoto, 2003). In addition, education should also shift from an individual focus to one that promotes connection to the tribe or community by identifying how individual educational achievements can support the tribe in the future (Cheshire & Kawamoto, 2003). Moreover, the educational content should be tied to and supported by cultural values and traditions (Cheshire and Kawamoto, 2003).

Racism, self-fulfilling prophecies, loss of identity and importance of culture.

In addition, it is important to acknowledge that American Indian communities face systemic and institutionalized racism and oppression (Cheshire & Kawamoto, 2003). This can be demonstrated in both covert (subtle discrimination such as stereotypes) and overt (blatant such as physical violence) ways. According to Cheshire and Kawamoto (2003), Native American youth are often seen as troublemakers and delinquents. Negative expectations can lead to “internalized oppression [which] rests on doubts of self-worth that are instilled through the education system, the media, and society” (p. 83). Once these negative feelings have been internalized, youth may exhibit self-destructive behavior and engage in aggressive interactions with others as attempts to change these expectations are deemed futile. Consequently “policymakers and professionals may be promoting a self-fulfilling prophecy for Indian youth” if such harmful stereotypes and oppressive attitudes are not addressed (Cheshire & Kawamoto, 2003, p. 83).

Moreover, internalized oppression often creates feelings of loss—of their identity, self-respect, and self-worth—and feelings of increased isolation (Cheshire and Kawamoto, 2003). Feelings of isolation and loss of identity are often experienced by urban Indian youth who face the challenges of fitting into two worlds (Cheshire and

Kawamoto, 2003). As Cheshire and Kawamoto (2003) stated, “Urban American Indian youth may feel that they do not belong anywhere” as they are “too Indian” to be accepted by non-Indians or “not Indian enough” or “too assimilated” to belong and be accepted by the Native community (p. 83). Therefore, “because cultural identity is strongly linked to high self-esteem, Indian youth must have the connection to extended family who practice traditions and transfer cultural values from one generation to the next” (Cheshire and Kawamoto, 2003, p. 88).

Worldview theory. McCormick and Amundson (1997) proposed that a culturally relevant model would need to employ worldview theory: an individual’s perception of the world and “how things and people relate to one another” (p. 172). This is consistent with Ball (2004) who identified that for education to be transformative it “must be compatible with the shared worldview of the community...[and] must provide an environment in which community members can actively participate” in their own learning. Thus, counselors and service providers would need to have an understanding of the native or indigenous tribes’ worldview with which they are working (McCormick & Amundson, 1997). According to McCormick and Amundson (1997), “a person’s belief systems, decision-making strategies, models of problem solving, assumptions about how problems arise, and how change occurs are all connected to how he or she sees the world” (p. 172). Only by understanding these intricacies can culturally relevant solutions be adopted (McCormick & Amundson, 1997).

Youth Development

Positive youth development. Like Ball (2004), Villarruel, Perkins, Borden, and Keith (2003) argued that “Communities [in general] are attempting to redesign

themselves to be places that promote positive behavior in youth and the general well-being of all young people while simultaneously preventing negative behavior” (p. 1-2). However, Villarruel et al. (2003) noted that historically programs have used a deficit model approach where the focus is on the prevention and removal of problems associated with risk factors that are detrimental to positive youth development (i.e. drinking, drugs, academic failure, etc.) rather than providing opportunities and supports for healthy development (Villarruel et al., 2003).

Thus, according to Villarruel et al. (2003), a positive youth development approach means,

Effectively preparing young people to meet challenges [which] requires providing them with the foundation to make decisions that will promote their own positive development...by engaging young people in skill-enhancing opportunities: to develop positive relationships, skills, competencies, and attitudes that will assist them in making positive choices for their lives (p. 2-3).

In this framework, youth “are viewed as resources to be developed, and not as problems to be managed” (Silbereisen & Lerner, 2007, p. 7). As such, youths’ strengths and positive attributes are paired with developmental assets: “resources that constitute the social and ecological nutrients for the growth of healthy youth” (Silbereisen & Lerner, 2007, p. 7).

Developmental assets. Protective factors, or developmental assets, include the people and resources located within the family, school, and community systems that support the positive development of each individual youth (Silbereisen & Lerner, 2007).

The more developmental assets a youth has, the more opportunities they have for positive development into adulthood (Silbereisen & Lerner, 2007). This framework then requires the building of strong connections between youth and potential developmental assets (Silbereisen & Lerner, 2007). As Penn et al. (2008) described, protective factors are the components in a youth's life, which help youth thrive despite numerous risk factors that are present. As Penn et al. (2008) explained,

...youth's choice to partake in [risk-taking behavior] does not depend on resiliency of the individual but instead on relationships and providing youth with the following: a locus of control, a skill, a dependable adult, optimism, and altruism. [Calhoun] insists that violence can only be defeated through caring and that it takes an entire community sense of efficacy for youth violence to diminish (p.44-45).

According to Penn et al. (2008), "Being closely tied to American Indian culture has been demonstrated to be a resiliency factor for substance abuse" among Native youth (p. 44). In addition, Penn et al. (2008) identified that "in 2004 the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) reported that common protective factors among American Indian youth include religious beliefs and participation in youth activities, with American Indians identifying spiritual beliefs as more significant than other ethnic groups" (p. 45).

Culture as a protective factor is further acknowledged by Ball (2004) who identified that "First Nations leaders have linked improvement of developmental conditions for children to the reconstruction of their cultural identity, revitalization of intergenerational transmission of culture and traditional language, and reproduction of

culturally distinctive values and practices in programs for children and youth” (p. 455). However, as Ball (2004) also pointed out, the transmission of such cultural knowledge, values, and practices, requires the education of youth as provided through partnerships with knowledgeable adults and community members who are able to pass on their cultural heritage.

Youth/Adult partnerships. The emphasis on building adult and community partnerships is particularly important to positive youth development. It is often difficult for adults to relinquish their power, to trust the ability of youth to make decisions and come up with appropriate solutions (Quon Huber et al., 2003). However, Quon Huber et al. (2003) highlighted that research has found youth to have sound-decision making and comprehension skills by the age of 9, and these skills are equivalent to those of adults by the ages of 14-16. Despite youths’ capabilities to make decisions, problem solve, and think critically, many lack experience and knowledge that comes with time and age and require guidance (Quon Huber et al., 2003). Therefore, partnerships between adults and youth are important.

Moreover, as Quon Huber et al. (2003) argued, the future of communities are dependent upon youth to make successful transitions into adulthood and become productive citizens. In addition, Silbereisen and Lerner (2007) identified that the creativity and adaptability of youth provides societies with new perspectives and solutions to current problems, and as such, youth play a crucial role in societal change. Reflexively, communities also play an important role in shaping youth development (Quon Huber et al., 2003). As Quon Huber et al. (2003) stated, “communities are important settings that can help to determine how well youth succeed and fully develop

their social human and economic capital assets” (p. 298). For instance, the quality of local education and job opportunities can significantly shape and impact youths’ career aspirations and economic well-being (Quon Huber, 2003). In addition, the amount of adult involvement with youth can also have a significant impact on development of youths’ academic and social behaviors (Quon Huber, 2003).

Community youth development. In order to accomplish the positive development of youth, “communities must help to provide youth with education, skills and assets that will enable them to contribute to the local economy rather than draining it as unemployed or incarcerated citizens” (Quon Huber et al., 2003, p. 299). Thus, Quon Huber et al. (2003) proposed that communities should invest in youth programs. This is consistent with Perkins and Borden (2003) who argued that what youth do before and after school has a significant impact on their development. As such, communities should provide out-of-school programs for youth. As Perkins and Borden (2003) stated,

Out of school time can be either an opportunity for youth to engage in positive activities that enhance their development and foster their competency, or a time to participate in negative activities that increase their chances of yielding to social pressures to engage in drug use, sex, and antisocial activities (p.328).

Perkins and Borden (2003) proposed that community-based youth programs could provide a healthy and positive space to facilitate youth development.

According to Perkins and Borden (2003), youth organizations can provide a safe and supportive environment with opportunities for learning and development of life skills. Programs should actively engage youth in the development and implementation of

program activities (Quon Huber et al., 2003). By providing youth with opportunities for high levels of involvement, youth become stakeholders and are given a voice which increases their interests and participation while learning leadership and decision-making skills (Quon Huber et al., 2003). According to Quon Huber et al. (2003), community youth development initiatives increase youths' sense of empowerment and decrease alienation from the community.

In addition, community youth development organizations can facilitate socialization through the building of relationships between other youth and adults (Perkins & Borden, 2003). As Perkins and Borden (2003) stated, "Adult and peer relationships developed in conjunction with the structured activities provided by youth development programs increase the likelihood that youth will successfully navigate challenges as they move toward adulthood" (p. 329). Youth development programs then have a dual purpose: to address risk factors while simultaneously developing skills and providing positive opportunities for youth development (Perkins & Borden, 2003). As Perkins and Borden (2003) argued "if we as citizens want our children and youth to do more than avoid risky behaviors and to becoming contributing, engaged members of society then we must be intentional about creating places and opportunities that nurture their development" (p. 337).

Career Development

Education reform and school-to-work-transition. One component of the broader youth development spectrum is youth career development or workforce preparation, also known as school-to-work transition. According to Ferrari (2003), "moving from school to work is one of the most important transitions for young people"

(p. 201). During the 1980s, there was mounting national concern that the U.S. economy was not keeping a competitive pace with that of the global marketplace: there was a significant drop in U.S. production growth rates; a large wage gap between those with and those without a college degree; and an increase in family income inequality (Stull & Sanders, 2003, pp. 3-4). Such concerns were further compounded by the changing national demographics at the time with the increase of an elderly population coupled with a growing body of at-risk youth creating a larger proportion of the population in potential need of governmental dependency (Murphy, 1990).

The weaknesses exhibited by the economic sector were quickly linked to the U.S. government's failing education system (Murphy 1990; Stull & Sanders, 2003). In response, the government, media, and business community sought to bolster economic success through educational reforms (Stull and Sanders, 2003). Part of this educational reform included the school-to-work-transition movement (STW). According to Stull and Sanders (2003), although work-based education and training programs have existed in the United States since the manual training movement in the late 19th century and the establishment of vocational education in public schools since the Smith-Hugh's Act in 1917, STW is differentiated from these previous efforts in that it places a strong emphasis on connecting secondary education to the world of work.

According to Stull and Sanders (2003), "The [school-to-work movement] is best understood as the education systems response to reports and the economic problems they addressed." (p. 4). As such, many of the concerns that spurred the education reform movements were also responsible for the school-to-work movement: the low performance

and lack of preparedness of youth in the workforce; national economic growth; and U.S. competitiveness in the global marketplace (Smith & Rojewski, 1993).

However, the approaches utilized by these movements differed. According to Smith & Rojewski (1993), “Educational reform movements of the 1980s focused primarily on improving academic proficiencies of college-bound youth. Indeed, little attention was given to enhancing the school-to-work transition of non-college-bound youth” (p. 222). By the late 1980s and early 1990s, this changed with reports such as *The Forgotten Half* (William T. Grant Foundation, 1988) and *America’s Choice* (Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce, 1990) (Smith & Rojewski, 1993).

According to Smith and Rojewski (1993), these reports identified the gap between education and the preparedness, or lack thereof, of youth to enter the workforce. In addition, the reports indicated that while standard education is geared toward preparing college-bound youth, many students are non-college bound and are ill prepared to transition to the workforce (Smith & Rojewski, 1993). As Smith and Rojewski (1993) emphasized, non-college-bound youth receive little career or work related assistance. Smith and Rojewski (1993) argued,

It is somewhat surprising that we do not pay more attention to the school-to-work transition of non-college-bound youth, especially when one considers that over three-fourths of all jobs in this country do not require a college degree, but do demand specialized knowledge or skills (p. 224).

According to Smith and Rojewski (1993), this lack of preparedness left many young people unable to find employment and/or jobs with room for advancement. In response, the school-to-work transition movement proposed to design programs that would connect

student education with the “world of work” (p. 223). Thus, this new educational reform was based on “enhance[ing] the workplace as a learning site and to make school learning more relevant to problem solving and social skills that young adults will need on the job” (Smith & Rojewski, 1993, p. 223).

The Recovery Act and summer employment programs. The need for career development education and programming still remains, as acknowledged by the U.S. government in 2009 with the Congressional passage of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (Rosenberg, Hague Angus, Pickens, & Derr, 2011). According to Rosenberg et al. (2011), the Recovery Act was established in June 2009 to reverse the historically high unemployment rates of youth in the U.S.: “the employment rate for youth ages 16 to 19 was 32.9 percent in June 2009 and declined to 28.6 percent in June 2010, the lowest rate in the post-World War II era” (p. xiii). The high rates of unemployed youth were of considerable concern, as it indicated that youth lacked work experience and the skills necessary to enter the workforce and make a successfully transition to adulthood (Rosenberg et al. 2011). The Recovery Act provided funds for subsidized employment opportunities for youth and young adults from disadvantaged backgrounds.

In particular, funding provided to local workforce investment areas (LWIAs) were used to provide summer employment opportunities for youth. In 2010, when initial funding was spent, states were able to submit requests to the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Emergency Contingency Fund (the TANF Emergency Fund) to continue summer employment programs for youth. However, as Hutchinson, Versnel, Poth, Berg, deLugt, Dalton, Chin, and Munby (2011) noted, “Even before the recent economic

recession, youth worldwide were experiencing high levels of unemployment, up to three times as high as adults in many countries and twice as high as adults in Canada and the United States” (p. 196).

Workforce preparation and career development programming. As highlighted by the focus of the Recovery Act on providing services for disadvantaged youth, the likelihood of unemployment is significantly increased for youth from low socioeconomic backgrounds for whom school dropout rates are high (Howard and Solberg, 2006; Matsuba et al., 2008; Hutchinson et al., 2011). As Hutchinson et al. (2011) identified, educational attainment is particularly indicative of post-school employment for at-risk youth. Moreover, Hutchinson et al. (2011) argued that social supports such as parents, teachers, and schools help youth succeed in transitions to adulthood and in work-based education programs may help youth form support systems and remain engaged in school and eager to learn. This is consistent with Ferrari (2003) who identified workforce preparation as a major concern, particularly since “education systems do not adequately support this transition” (p. 201). According to Howard and Solberg (2006), “unless interventions are designed that create academic success pathways” intergenerational unemployment will persist and cycles of poverty will remain (p. 278).

According to Ferrari (2003), schools cannot fulfill the needs of youth preparation alone; it will require a coordinated effort between families, schools, and communities. As such, Ferrari (2003) argued that the framework for community youth development can be applied and is complimentary to youth career development (workforce preparation, school-to-work transition). Thus, principles of positive youth and community

development would be incorporated to enhance career development principles and activities of the program (Ferrari, 2003). This includes the cultivation of positive relationships with adults; using an experiential learning method where students are given a more active and hands-on role to develop leadership and decision-making skills while adults take on the role of facilitator; and life skills development (Ferrari, 2003).

Content and curriculum. Program models, however, also require some form of content and curriculum. According to Ord (2008), youth work should incorporate a curriculum with established values, general content areas, and desired outcomes. As Ord (2008) stated, without specified values “youth work is beholden to the mere whim of the individual practitioner” (p. 18). Likewise, he argued that “Youth work cannot avoid the agenda of curriculum – to oppose curricula is to say that, as an educator one has no agenda and takes no responsibility for the facilitation of young people’s learning” (p.18). However, as Bowie (2013) identified, “Some of the post-school training in youth work tends to err on the side of too much theory and others focus mainly on the practice without a thoughtful rationale for what they are doing” (p. 90). Ord (2008), who also acknowledged the gap between theory and practice, proposed that Dewey’s experiential-learning approach, which balances traditional academic curriculum with a more self-directed hands-on approach, was most suited to youth work education. This is consistent with Ferrari (2003) who identified experiential-learning as a key component for facilitating positive youth development principles.

In addition, program design and content should clearly identify the connection between the goals of career development and positive youth development. According to Ferrari (2003), “Learning experiences that are active, participatory, and reflective are

recommended elements of the positive youth development model” (p. 208). Thus, career development activities should involve hands-on experience enhanced by discussion and reflection. There are various career development models and activities, which are often altered to fit the needs of the community in which they are operating (Hutchinson et al., 2011; Rosenberg et al., 2011). Ferrari (2003), for example, identified job shadows, worksite excursions, and training sessions with professionals. Moreover, according to Hutchinson et al. (2011), “Models frequently described in the [Work-Based Education] literature in the U.S. include tech prep, career pathways, and youth apprenticeships; career academies and co-operative education are also described in reviews” (p. 197). This is similar to those identified by Smith and Rojewski (1993) who gave examples of several of the “proven pedagogical alternatives” used by STW programs.

Smith and Rojewski (1993) described paid program models as those that provide compensation to students in compliance with state, federal and local regulations. According to Smith and Rojewski (1993), paid programs ensure students are not exploited, as they are recognized employees of the organization for which they work. Examples of paid programs included: apprenticeships, cooperative education, and school-based enterprises and entrepreneurship. In addition to paid alternatives, Smith and Rojewski (1993) also identified nonpaid STW models, which included: internships, technical preparation (tech prep), community-based volunteering, mentoring, and simulations, shops and labs, which are usually used as activities within vocational education programs.

In a study designed to explore the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families funded summer employment programs through local workforce investment areas

(LWIAs), Rosenberg et al. (2011) described three types of models employed by programs: Basic; Enhanced; and Integrated. The Basic work model included an orientation and assessment of youths' career interests, and provided a youth with a work placement to gain experience (Rosenberg et al., 2011). In addition to the services received in the Basic work model, the Enhanced work model provided "work readiness training" and placed more emphasis on identifying youths' strengths, needs, and interests in order to match them with a worksite that would build on these areas. Programs also engaged potential employers prior to placement of youth at worksites to assist with youth assignments to work places. The Integrated service model built on the Enhanced work model: "In addition to the services provided to youth in the enhanced work model, youth were required to participate in academic support services and ongoing work readiness training" (Rosenberg et al., 2011, p. xix).

All of these models incorporated on-site supervisors to oversee youths' experiences throughout the course of the program. Supervisors were responsible for "making sure youth were engaged in productive tasks, signing their timesheets, and providing feedback to the service provider regarding youths' performance" (Rosenberg et al., 2011, p. xx). According to Rosenberg et al. (2011), the most positive supervisors were those who established close relationships with youth and took on a mentorship role, taking the time to teach both hard skills as well as soft skills such as, "listening to instructions, communicating with coworkers, and dressing appropriately" (p. xx).

Career counseling, self-worth, employment and empowerment. Career counseling and mentorship becomes an important component of the program model. Considering at-risk youth are particularly vulnerable to unemployment and dropping out

of school, Howard and Solberg (2006) argued that “counseling methods and practice must be designed to liberate disenfranchised members of our society from oppression”(p. 278). Howard and Solberg (2006) highlighted that youth from low-income and diverse backgrounds face a host of challenges to their self-worth often from prejudices and low expectations made by society. Based on Bronfenbrenner’s ecological cognitive developmental systems theory, Howard and Solberg (2006) explained that youth whose ecological framework (which includes macro-, micro- and exo-systemic contexts) is predominantly oppressive and negative “[create] life experiences that result in internalized dispositions that maintain this oppression” (p. 279). Thus, youths’ ideas and feelings about themselves become internalized and their actions mirror these attitudes in a self-fulfilling prophecy, which is why they tend to fail in school and society (Howard and Solberg, 2006). Likewise, Howard and Solberg (2006) argued that counselors should approach their work from a social justice perspective to “liberate low-income and diverse youth from generations of oppression” (p. 279).

Part of this “process of promoting social justice for low-income and disenfranchised youth” includes the promotion of self-advocacy and empowerment of students (Howard & Solberg, 2006, p. 279). Through an empowerment framework counselors challenge these negative beliefs and attitudes and reinforce the idea that regardless of students’ past or current dispositions, change and success is possible (Howard & Solberg, 2006). As Howard and Solberg (2006) argued, youth need to feel they have been heard and understood and that their difficulties have been acknowledged: “By creating educational experiences that communicate trust, support, safety, hope,

control, peace, wholeness, competence, and justice, we can assist youth to rewrite their core beliefs about themselves and the world in which they live” (p. 281).

Psychological well-being, personal plans, and skills-training. Similarly, Matsuba et al. (2008) pointed out that “in today’s world, many young adults find it difficult to secure employment” and contended that the situation is even more true “for youth who face additional challenges of being homeless, having dropped out of school, battling with substance addictions, and/or having a criminal record, thus putting them in the “at-risk” category” (p. 15). According to Matsuba et al. (2008), past research shows psychological well-being as a predictor of finding work and “an effective employment training program for at-risk youth needs to incorporate a curriculum addressing psychological issues, such as poor-self-esteem, loneliness and isolation, in addition to the traditional skills training protocol and work experience opportunities” (p. 15).

For example, Matsuba et al. (2008) conducted research to evaluate a seven-month training program for 59 at-risk youth living in a small urban area. The program was designed “to help youth develop employment skills and improve psychological well-being” (Matsuba et al., 2008, p. 15). The program model required youth to submit a resume and undergo an interview to establish interest and commitment to the program (Matsuba et al., 2008). Participating youth were then placed in part-time paid contract positions (Matsuba et al., 2008). If youth were successful in their part time positions, they had the opportunity to move into full time positions (Matsuba et al., 2008). Temporary positions offer a gradual approach, which helps youth transition “from unemployment to full-time paid employment, thereby minimizing program dropout” (Matsuba et al., 2008, p. 18). During working hours, time was taken to gain job skills and overcome barriers

“that prevent them from finding and maintaining employment” (Matsuba et al., 2008, p. 18).

Youth and staff work together to create individual plans to address problem areas and concerns that may affect their employability (Matsuba et al., 2008). According to Matsuba et al. (2008), “Personal plans can include youth enrolling in substance youth treatment groups, anger management, individual counseling for past abuse neglect, education programs to allow them to earn their high school diploma, etc.” (p. 18). In addition, youth are responsible for organizing and implementing projects that “serve the needs and interests of other youth in the larger community (i.e. cooking classes, youth housing registry, developing websites)” (Matsuba et al., 2008, p. 18). According to Matsuba et al. (2008), these projects developed skills and enhance self-esteem. As Matsuba et al (2008) stated, “in successfully implementing their projects, youth gain insight that their life experiences and skills can be assets used to help others...successful projects serve to empower youth and create a more positive self-concept” (p. 18).

According to the study by Matsuba et al. (2008), 85 percent of participants completed the program and, of the 85 percent, 88 percent found work or attended school 12 weeks after completion (p. 18). Moreover, according to measures of psychological well-being (life satisfaction, loneliness, and self-esteem), results identified that “youth show[ed] an improvement after being involved in the program...increasing their self-esteem, reducing their sense of loneliness, and improving their overall satisfaction with life” (Matsuba et al., 2008, p. 23). Moreover when comparing youth who did not find employment after the program with those who did, those who found employment also showed signs of psychological improvement (Matsuba, et al., 2008). As Matsuba et al.

(2008) argued,

Any at-risk youth career development program that hopes to attain any meaningful and long lasting effect needs to address the underlying psycho-socio-emotional struggles that at-risk youth face...the program provides youth with specific job skills training and concrete work experiences. Moreover, the program works with each youth to deal with many of the underlying issues that have prevented them from finding and keeping employment, including substance abuse treatment, anger management workshops, and individual psychological counseling. Together, all these group workshops, private counseling sessions, work experiences, etc., are designed to reframe youths' sense of self so they see themselves as productive members of society (p. 23-24).

However, as McCormick and Amundson (1997) discovered when working with Native youth it is also important to approach counseling methods from a culturally relevant framework.

Culturally sensitive career counseling. As McCormick and Amundson (1997) stated, "in the past, counseling services for First Nations people have been based on the wholesale adoption of Western approaches" which have proven largely ineffective due to the lack consideration for First Nations peoples' worldviews (p. 172). Thus, according to McCormack and Amundson (1997), it is important to consider the relational difference between the worldview of those providing the services and the worldview of those receiving the services and how they may negatively or ineffectually impact one another if not addressed.

For instance, as McCormick and Amundson (1997) emphasized that “Euro-American society is strongly based on a culture of individualism...Unlike Euro-American culture, First Nations culture...is instead collectively oriented around the family and community” (p. 173). Thus, according to McCormick and Amundson (1997), mainstream Euro-American approaches use a one-on-one interaction, which is an ineffective method for First Nations people where the development of the individual is intricately tied to family and community input.

Therefore, McCormick and Amundson (1997) identified key components important to understanding First Nations worldview that should be considered when creating a career-life counseling model. These components include: connectedness; balance; roles and responsibilities; gifts, aptitudes, and skills; and values and meaning (McCormick & Amundson, 1997). The career-life planning model proposed by McCormick and Amundson (1997) incorporates these culturally sensitive components with those of traditional career counseling. The intent of the model is to help individuals identify career and life goals, which are consistent with the values and beliefs identified by the key cultural components (McCormick & Amundson, 1997).

Given the communal nature and value of interconnectedness of First Nations peoples, McCormick and Amundson’s (1997) model was designed as a group process approach based on the First Nations talking/healing circle model, rather than a one-on-one interaction approach. In this model, family and community members chosen by the client would participate in the counseling sessions. Counselors would direct questions to the client concerning one of the eight components (i.e. connectedness, balance, roles and responsibilities, etc.). After clients gave their personal self-reflections, the family and

community representatives would then be asked a series of questions to identify their thoughts and feelings about the client's career choices in relation to the component in question. This process would be repeated for each of the eight components.

After reviewing notes of the comments made in relation to each of the components, counselors would work with all members involved to identify both short- and long-term goals in establishing a career-life plan that will work best for the client. McCormick and Amundson (1997) noted this process would most likely be conducted over a period of several sessions. In this model the career counselor acts primarily as a facilitator, teasing out client self-reflection and processing communication between those involved (McCormick and Amundson, 1997). McCormick and Amundson (1997) argued that this model could be developed to fit the framework of other cultural groups that demonstrate a more communal social structure.

Research Rationale

Given the cyclical patterns of poverty, low educational attainment, and unemployment, compounded by numerous risk factors, the literature seems to suggest that there is a need for programs which target the developmental assets and the positive development of Native youth (Hawkins et al, 2004; McMahan et al., 2012; Penn et al. 2008). In addition, such programs should be culturally sensitive implementations to best promote positive self-/cultural identity and combat the continuing impositions of colonialist practices (Ball, 2004; Penn et al. 2008). Moreover, programs that are specifically designed to provide knowledge, skills, and experience related to career and workforce development may be particularly beneficial to promoting successful transitions from adolescence to adulthood as they help bridge the gap between education and career

readiness (McCormick & Amundson, 1993; Gaiko et al. 1999; Herring, 1990; Martin, 1991). Such programs may help to combat unemployment and poverty.

Limited research. In general, however, research involving Native American populations is sparse. As Hawkins et al. (2004) stated in reference to their own research, "Because research focusing on Native Americans has had relatively little representation in mainstream psychological journals, the field as a whole is largely unaware of many salient issues...It may appear that some of the research focusing on Native populations presented in this review is outdated or lacks comprehensiveness...this reflects the current state of the published research literature, emphasizing the need for more attention and resources to be directed toward the Native community (p. 304)

Moreover, of the research that is available, much pertains to risk factors and the negative aspects associated with Native communities. As McMahon, Kenyon, and Carter (2013) stated, "the research literature on American Indian (AI) communities often focuses on vulnerabilities, problems, and needs rather than resilience, strengths, and assets" (p. 694). However, even statistics concerning problems and needs are limited, as Hawkins, et al. (2004) identified, although there are large national surveys (on substance use patterns) the small sample sizes of Native Americans often mean specific analyses for these communities are left out. In addition, while there may be surveys indicating national statistics, research on program evaluations are also difficult to find. As Hawkins et al. (2004) stated,

[Although various] substance abuse prevention programs are all commonly found in American Indian communities... the majority of

prevention efforts in Indian Country have not been rigorously evaluated for efficacy. In addition, specific details of these programs often are not published or available in a manner that allows them to be easily shared with other communities. (p. 311)

Research by Hawkins et al. (2004) revealed that while some substance abuse prevention programs have been successful, the number of known effective programs is not equal to the size and scope of the problems of substance abuse experienced by AI/AN youth. However, although literature on research and evaluation may be lacking, Hawkins et al. (2004) claimed that there are likely many successful programs across the United States. As such, Hawkins et al. (2004) argued, “It is vital that an evaluation component be established in the development and implementation of all prevention efforts” (p. 314).

While research by Hawkins et al. (2004) specifically refers to substance abuse programs and research, their sentiments seem to mirror the picture of literature and research on Native American populations and programs as a whole. For example, according to Penn et al. (2008), “in general, only minimal research has been conducted on the value of Native American protective factors regarding youth violence, and even less research focuses directly on American Indian culture as a specific pro-social protective factor” (p. 44). This is consistent with Hawkins et al. (2004) who stated, “little is known about factors that serve to protect Indian youth against the development of substance use problems... much is unknown about protective factors that are specific to the cultural and community context of Native Americans” (p. 310). According to Penn et al. (2008), understanding protective factors is particularly important to understanding the best ways to prevent youth from engaging in risk-taking behavior.

This is consistent with McMahon et al. (2012) who argued, “Recognizing and understanding community assets and mechanisms of resilience is arguably as important, if not more important, than identifying its shortcomings and defining its deficiencies (p. 694). According to Penn et al. (2008), while identified as a possible protective factor, little research has been conducted on Native American culture as a protective factor. Yet as Penn et al. (2008) argued, “In communities with rampant problems, understanding what prevents these undesirable behaviors in youth may provide solutions that are easier to tackle than addressing the large social, environmental, and family problems associated with risk factors that confront them on a daily basis” (p. 43).

In addition, research concerning Native populations, in particular Native youth, in conjunction with fields such as life-skills (Long et al., 2006); career development and employment (Gaiko et al., 1999; Herring, 1990; Martin, 1991; McCormick & Amundson, 1993; Reynolds, et al., 2000; Turner & Lapan, 2003); education (Ball, 2004; Bolls et al., 1997; Herring, 1990); and culturally-sensitive interventions (Ball, 2004; Bolls et al., 1997; Brave Heart and Debruyn, 1998; Duran, Duran & Brave Heart, 1998; Herring, 1990; Hawkins et al., 2004; Jackson & Hodge, 2010; Martin, 1991; Pavel et al., 1998); Penn et al, 2008; Unsworth, Riggs, & Chavez, 2012), seem to have largely been conducted in the 1990s and early 2000s.

Research question. Thus, the current literature does not address the size and scope of American Indian and Alaskan Native (AI/AN) community-based organizations providing career development services to AI/AN youth. If research is available, it is generally limited, outdated, and usually entails assessments on a program-by-program basis. Therefore, while programs may exist, their practices and outcomes may be

relatively unknown and the ability to share innovative approaches that work may be limited. There should be further research on career-development programs for Native youth to identify culturally sensitive interventions that may be adaptable to different community contexts. Therefore, the purpose of my research is to 1) identify Native American communities providing career development services to Native youth; 2) share how these programs are providing services in culturally relevant ways and 3) provide a platform for AI/AN communities to share with each other, as well as non-native youth career development organizations, culturally relevant practices and approaches that work to best serve Native youth.

It is important to note that the purpose of this research is not to evaluate the effectiveness of programs. Rather, the purpose is to gather information on culturally relevant practices and approaches being used by Native American community-based programs as identified by these community programs in their own voice.

Methods

With the use of a purposive sampling method, I conducted an Internet search to identify potential programs and organizations. From this list of organizations, knowledgeable employees were contacted in order to conduct semi-structured interviews for the purpose of gaining qualitative self-identified data on culturally relevant practices and approaches used within the framework of the program. This research project, and the methods as outlined below, were reviewed and approved by the Concordia University Institutional Review Board per the IRB submission requirements. All participants were required to give their informed consent to participate before beginning the semi-structured interview. Participants were informed that, should they feel uncomfortable or

find themselves unable to complete the interview, they should feel free to discontinue at any time throughout the process.

Participants

Participants were limited to knowledgeable persons such as program coordinators/ staff who were able to answer a series of semi-structured interview questions pertinent to the career development services (including but not limited to: youth employment programs, workforce preparation and job skills training, and school-to-work transition programs) offered by the organization/ program with whom they are employed. Organizations chosen are specifically designed to provide services to American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) youth.

Four programs participated in the interviews. Two of the four programs chose to disclose identifying information while the remaining two chose to stay anonymous (hereafter referred to as Program A and Program B). Three of the four programs were seasonal, operating only in the summer months, while the fourth provided services year round. The number of youth reached by each organization varied from 12 at the smallest to 45 or 55 to an unknown total. Youth served were between the ages of 14-24. In addition, three of the four programs were Tribal government-affiliated programs while the fourth was a community based non-profit organization. Each of the staff members responding to questions was the primary program coordinator/overseer of program activities. Three of the four respondents were female while the fourth was male.

Procedures

Research was conducted in two parts: First, I conducted Internet searches via Google to identify potential career development programs specifically designed for

Native American youth within the United States. Search terms included: “American Indian youth”; “Alaska Native youth”; “Native American Youth” and, “career development”; “employment programs”; “workforce preparation”; “job skills training”; “youth opportunity programs”; “youth development.” These programs were then entered into an excel spreadsheet, which included data (when available) such as: size and scope of the program; nature of the program (description/model); contact information; age range; and any other potentially useful information. Thirteen programs were identified and recorded.

During the second phase of research, I attempted to contact 11 of the 13 programs. I left messages with three of the 11 programs. One of the coordinators listed for the program responded back indicating that they were no longer with the program. I found a different contact number for the same program and left a phone message but did not receive a response. The other two programs whom I left messages also did not respond. For one of the programs, I was able to contact the tribal department via phone but no one was available who could answer questions regarding the program, as it is a seasonal position.

I was able to talk staff from an additional seven programs: one of the programs indicated that is no longer running but the coordinator involved was still an employee of the tribe and interested in participating but I never received confirmation; another program coordinator identified that they were interested in participating but had to get approval from upper management (I received a follow-up response that indicated they were still waiting for approval); for one program I was able to talk with the program coordinator who seemed interested in participating, but when I could back for a follow up

I was informed that the individual I spoke with was no longer with the organization; the remaining four programs followed through on participating in the interview.

I then administered a series of open-ended questions, three via phone, and one via e-mail in the format of a semi-structured interview or interview questions (dependent on the availability and preference of the participant). Interviews conducted via phone lasted an average of 45 minutes. Questions were related to the following areas: structure and organization; activities and practices; program policies and requirements. Appendix A contains the complete list of potential questions.

Results (Program Models)

Program A

While the program has been around for several years, the program underwent a remodel and new policies were implemented. Before the revisions in 2010, the youth employment program housed under the tribal education and training department but never had a specific policy; it was simply structured so that youth in the program would be assigned to work for different organizations and departments within the community during the summer. Since 2010, the program has been reworking its policies and working with the tribal council each year as new needs arise.

The program lasts eight weeks during the summer for youth ages 14-17, although starting this year the program will allow 18-year-olds who are seniors in high school or those who recently graduated to participate. This past season, 12 youth were enrolled in the program. In order to participate in the program, youth have to be enrolled tribal members with the tribe sponsoring the program. In addition, youth may only participate in the program two times. Before the policy changes in 2010, youth would enroll in the

program for up to three to four years looking for a job. According to the Program Coordinator, however, “the goal of the program is to help youth get the skills needed to get jobs on their own: interviewing, filling out an application, writing a letter to request time off, how to talk to their supervisors...” (Program coordinator, interview by Annie Crippen, phone, October 2015). After the first two years, the idea is that youth will have these skills and they won’t need to use the program anymore.

In addition, youth must fill out an application. Before completing the application, youth are prompted to answer a series of five questions to identify if they are eligible to participate: are they an enrolled member of the tribe, have they already participated in the program for two years, etc. If a youth has extenuating circumstances and concerns, they are always able to call and explain their situation. Once youth determine they are eligible, they complete the application and turn it in to the program office in person with all of their documents signed by applicant and their parents. After completing the application, youth then complete a survey to identify what type of job they are looking for, what their interests are, etc. Youth are then scheduled to a group interview process. Partner employment agencies for the program are invited to participate in the interview process. Based on the interviews, partners will choose their top three applicants based on youth interests and match youth with employment positions for the best fit.

In addition to working with partners, the program now includes workforce training. The need for workforce preparation arose out of concerns voiced by summer supervisors to youth in the program: youth are tardy, they don’t have basic skills (such as customer service), don't know how to do X, Y, and Z, etc. It was decided that youth

should have formal training before sending them out into the workforce. Since 2010, the program has incorporated an orientation and weekly trainings, lasting from 2-4 hours.

The orientation outlines program and partner expectations and provides customer service training. The customer service training is based on a state training, the certification of which is often a credential requested when applying to work in the tourism industry. The training covers effective communication mechanisms and how to work with dissatisfied and hostile customers. The weekly workforce development trainings include: an introduction to employability skills; what is expected of youth when participating in the program; dress codes; language and behaviors; what to expect on the first day of work; how to handle problems in the workplace such as the appropriate way to talk to supervisors, etc. In addition, before youth exit the program, coordinators work with them on developing a resume for future employment, conduct presentations on higher education and vocational training options, establish goals for future careers, and identify some of the different resources available within the tribe, state, and other agencies that can provide financial assistance for youth's further education.

Most of the employment positions offered rely on the community to provide opportunities for youth. Before the season starts, program coordinators assess the needs of the community to determine which businesses and organizations have need for a youth worker and if there will be enough work to sustain the youth throughout the program. Each partner must pay a fee of \$150 in order to participate. These funds are then invested back into the program operations (however, the bulk of the program, including youth wages, is tribally funded and supported). In addition, like youth, partners must also apply to the program and comply to program policies in order to become a partner.

Within the application packet, expectations and the role of partners are listed in a side-by-side table. Among these expectations, partners must: develop a meaningful work plan; assign a supervisor to oversee youth work assignments; and provide feedback on how youth are progressing. In addition partners must identify specific expectations and provide a job description for youth. They will also fill out an information form that identifies who youth and program coordinators should contact and who will be responsible for signing off on time cards and providing feedback to youth on how they are working each pay period. Program coordinators will then meet with youth each pay period to go over the feedback with them.

The program provides youth with a student handbook, which outlines program policies and procedures, which are presented during orientation. The handbook includes policies on: sexual harassment, use of drugs and alcohol, noncompliance (not listening to supervisors or following the work plan), and four non-negotiable rules which, if not followed, results in youth being immediately released from work: non-participation in activities (trainings); use of violence, threats, or weapons; criminal activity; and alcohol misuse or abuse. For the most part, program coordinators handle these situations; however, in some instances, the tribal Human Resources department will get involved. In the instance HR gets involved, there is process established to keep program coordinators up to date on the situation.

Some of the challenges identified included the newness of the program changes and not yet being able to identify how they are impacting youth. In addition, it was pointed out that it is difficult to have a follow-up with youth once they age out of the program so it is hard to know the long-term impact of the program. Program A also

identified its past collaboration with another tribal employment program and the challenges they faced when trying to coordinate programs together. The program continues to work on getting more youth and partners interested and would also like to focus on advertising in nontribal areas to identify more partners who want to work with youth.

Program B

Program B is a Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funded youth program which has been in operation for over six years and provides services to over 350 youth coming from various tribal backgrounds. The TANF youth program operates year round and provides a variety of services and programs: summer camps, motivational rewards, incentives for grades and attendance, bus passes, employability training workshops, life skills training, field trips, home visits, school visits, action plan development, referrals to tutoring, military referrals, college planning assistance, summer employment, yearly employment, assistance with sports costs, band cost, youth needs and mentorships. The program also partners with other youth programs in the community.

Within the TANF youth program is the seasonal youth summer employment program. To be eligible, the youth's parents must either A) be on the TANF program or B) the youth's parents must be living below the poverty line. In addition, youth must at least have a 2.5 GPA. There is also potential year-round employment available to those in the 11th grade. If youth work during the school year, they must maintain at least a 2.5 GPA and submit a copy of their grades each month. In addition, youth who participate in the employment program must be Alaska Native or American Indian and be enrolled with the tribal career development center. The career development center identifies the youth's

education, goals, and interests to better serve the youth and pair them with opportunities that are aligned with the youth interest and goals.

If a youth is placed at a job through the summer employment program, the program does not require them to conduct drug and alcohol tests. An exception is if youth are placed in employment at an outside agency and the agency requires testing as part of their Human Resources protocol. However, if the Youth Case Manager who placed the youth in an employment placement suspects that there may be drugs or alcohol issues, the program coordinator will partner with the TANF Case Manager to review whether a drug test may be necessary for the youth. This effort would require documentation as to why drugs and/or alcohol use is suspected. Management would be engaged to ensure the internal process is followed according to policies and procedures. The Youth Case Manager can make referrals for the youth and assist the parents with brainstorming best possible options for treatment for the youth. This may include a referral to Volunteers of America who provide substance abuse support for youth.

In addition, the Youth Case Manager will discuss negative behaviors with youth and will work with them to identify reasons for their behavior. As the program coordinator explained, “why would the youth skip school? Are they being bullied? Are they pregnant? Are there family issues? What would the intervention be in all three cases?” (Program coordinator, interview by Annie Crippen, email, October 2015). The Youth Case Manager would also brainstorm options to motivate the youth to stop the bad behaviors such as: take away their cell phone, video games, internet access, or social media or not allow any company until behaviors are corrected. If youth are working with

the Career Ready program, the consequences of continuing negative behaviors will result in termination of employment.

The youth must have at least 2.5 GPA, be a good responsible student, and must be up-to-date in course credits. As the program coordinator identified, “Youth must be held accountable for their actions. We want our youth to begin working on being self-sufficient” (Program coordinator, interview by Annie Crippen, email, October 2015). Part of holding them accountable is getting feedback from worksites and identifying unsatisfactory work traits and praising desirable traits displayed on the job site. As the program coordinator stated, “we provide the youth’s real world experience to gain valuable employability skills and to achieve greater self-confidence. They have to be able to understand what’s going to assist them in becoming successful and what would lead them in becoming the total opposite” (Program coordinator, interview by Annie Crippen, email, October 2015).

Some of the successes of the program include recognition from youth, parents, and the community that the program is making a difference; students improving their grades; teachers inviting program coordinators to speak to their classes to motivate youth; and parent phone calls identifying they have noticed a positive change in their child’s behavior. As the program coordinator expressed, “I work closely with [youth] by highlighting their skills and abilities so that their confidence grows because they are working and earning a check” (Program coordinator, interview by Annie Crippen, email, October 2015). In addition, youth are able to attend quarterly cultural gatherings which include: Potlucks, Native dancing, cultural camps, fish camps, Native beading, and drum making workshops. In this way “youth are able to connect with their history, culture and

traditions and are able to become proud of who they are. This motivates them in assisting them to strive to become successful. Youth don't know where they're going until they find out where they've come from" (Program coordinator, interview by Annie Crippen, email, October 2015). These events celebrate the many tribes represented within the community.

On the other hand, one of the biggest challenges identified was working with youth who have severe behavior issues: young people who are consistently in and out of jail, don't listen, talk back, etc. As the program coordinator explained,

"One of the youth got out of jail, and because of their behavior, is likely to return. The youth just got out of jail and is heading right back that way.

You know his father is in-and-out-of jail as well...I want so badly for the youth to understand where he or she is headed if they keep up with those negative behaviors" (Program coordinator, interview by Annie Crippen, email, October 2015).

In the future, the program would like to facilitate a monthly Life Skills class. In addition, the program would like to have a career day where young people are able to visit different departments and organizations and interview employees on how they got to where they are today and explain all the challenges that they have experienced. In addition, the youth coordinator explained that the tribal communications department provides marketing materials to the community on the youth program services and events that are offered and there is numerous community resource fairs held throughout the year. There is consistent marketing of the program throughout the state.

Sunrise EAST

Sunrise EAST is a youth workforce development program of the Native American Youth and Family Center (NAYA) located in Portland, OR. NAYA is a community based 501(c)3 non-profit serving Native American families and youth in the greater Portland area. According to program coordinator Brittney Corey, youth in the Sunrise EAST program are often referred from other NAYA programs working with youth. NAYA programs work together to connect youth to many other relevant opportunities. In January 2015, the program underwent a redesign and temporarily closed services. Sunrise EAST began enrolling students into the newly designed program and curriculum in April. According to Corey, while there is room for growth and increasing opportunities for youth, a structure has been set. Sunrise EAST, which has been around since at least 2009, is one of eleven different youth development workforce programs in the Portland area (identified as the Career Connect Network). However, according to Corey, while many of the programs in the Career Connect Network work with Native youth, Sunrise EAST is the only one providing culturally relevant programming specific to Native Americans.

The program offers both drop-in services as well as formal enrollment. According to Corey, at this time the program provides more informal services as they are continuing to ramp up enrollment numbers after a pause in services. There are currently 45 youth enrolled but the program is working to hit its capacity of 80 youth. While NAYA and its programs primarily serve and cater to the Native American population, Sunrise EAST program services are open to anyone; youth do not have to be identified as AI/AN in order to participate. According to Corey, however, most are. Youth must be residents of either Multnomah or Washington counties and between the ages of 16-24. In addition, they must meet low-income eligibility requirements as the funder's primary goal is to

work with youth who are homeless, not in school, those in foster programs and/or those who have other barriers to work such as coming from low-income homes. As such, trainings are typically held during the day.

For those formally enrolled, there are additional opportunities and benefits such as: provision of interview clothes; transportation services to interviews and trainings; funds for schoolbooks; paid internship and training opportunities; and long term case management support. Grant funders of the program dictate the enrollment process and requirements. There is an online application process which includes: provision of I-9 documents; identification of youth's challenges or barriers to employment; income qualifications; a math and reading assessment (to establish a baseline to see if skills improve); and completion of a three week work-prep training totaling 27 hours. The training covers topics such as resume and cover letter writing, creating a professional portfolio, interviewing/mock-interviews, how to find a job, how to spot scams, how to leave a voicemail, etc.

After completing the training, youth are officially enrolled. Once youth are officially enrolled, they cannot be kicked out of the program for behavioral issues or conduct. As Corey stated, "my role is more about supporting youth to help problem solve" (Mary Guenther (program coordinator), interview by Annie Crippen, phone, October 2015). If they have problems in other areas, program counselors/case managers work with youth to find a solution. They will meet one-on-one with career counselors to set a goal plan. It is a long-term commitment where youth will receive case management support for up to three years. The program's main requirement for them is keeping in contact with their program counselor/case manager, meeting a minimum of once per

month. In addition, the program provides a variety of in-house training (e.g. CPR certification and flagger training) for groups of youth to provide them with credentials they can put on their resumes and networking opportunities with community professionals. Sunrise EAST partners with service providers, who come to the center to host classes and provide certification in different areas based on individual goal plans and how coaches can help them.

Unlike the other programs discussed, Sunrise EAST is not a job placement program. Instead Sunrise EAST helps young people gain the work readiness skills and knowledge they need to get jobs on their own. The program does partner with other programs and agencies such as the NAYA college prep team to help connect career goals to higher education pathways. In addition, the program partners with other organizations in the Portland area that facilitate job shadow and internship placements. The program has also had individuals from partner organizations who came in to help with mock interviewing end up providing a summer internship to youth.

According to Corey, the mock interviews provide one of the program's best ways to engage youth with the community and professionals. The program brings in local professionals and program partners to interview youth and provide them with feedback and instructions. In addition, the program often invites Elders to come in to assist with mock interviews, tutoring of basic skills and cultural skills, and GED prep-work. Moreover, the trainings that the program offers are also opened up to other agency programs and community members to participate alongside youth, providing them with another way to engage and work with adults in the community.

NAYA uses the four quadrants of the medicine wheel, which Sunrise EAST has implemented in their program. For example, the goal plans that are designed with youth are based on engaging the four quadrants: spirit, mind, body, and emotion. In addition, during the three-week work readiness training, the program has a workshop identifying hard and soft skills. Within this workshop, the program staff talk about soft and hard skills and which of these are used in different cultural activities (e.g. hoop dancing and canoe building). In addition the program reaches out to the Native professionals and volunteers from the community to do mock interviews and provide a cultural perspective on the jobs and work that they do. Despite these inclusions and incorporations, Corey argued that integrating culturally specific practices has been a challenge in some ways and something the program is still improving on.

Additional challenges that are a carry-over from the redesign include getting the program information to the community and youth and getting buy-in on the changes that have been made. On a positive note, in the past, Sunrise EAST was not a resource that was utilized as much as it is now. The program has been receiving referrals from past participants, and numbers are increasing which is encouraging; however, the program is still building and working to reach its target volume. According to Corey, this may possibly be due to the location of facility as it is not the most easily accessible. Another challenge includes working with schools so youth can receive credit; because the training times offered do not provide enough hours as well as take place in the middle of the day (again, to cater to their target population of homeless and out of school youth), the program does not allow for youth who are in school to participate.

Southern Ute Youth Employment Program

Mary Guenther coordinates the Southern Ute Youth Employment Program, housed within the Southern Ute Indian Tribal Department of Education in Ignacio, Colorado. According to Guenther, the Youth Employment program has been in operation for several years. In its early stages, it was hosted by a partnering non-profit organization; then, a few years ago, it was brought under the Department of Education. Guenther is in her fourth year coordinating the program. The program offers workforce preparation and employment for Southern Ute Tribal youth between the ages of 14-18, beginning in June and ending in August. The goal of the program is to provide career exploration for tribal members. As such, the program provides a wide variety of positions and opportunities working with 28 different partner organizations and supervisors, including: archeological sites, tribal council, health center, food services, the academy, recreational center, Elders center, etc.

Youth apply through an online application process and are then scheduled to conduct an interview. During the interview, questions are asked to determine their interests and which position would be the best fit. Positions are matched on a first-come first-serve basis. According to Guenther, “if there is a specific employment opportunity a youth really wants, they will show initiative by signing up as early as possible, and the program honors that initiative by placing the youth in their preferred position” (Mary Guenther (program coordinator), interview by Annie Crippen, phone, October 2015). However, the program has a rolling application, and if any youth show initiative by applying they will be accepted to participate in the program: “There really isn’t a cap. If 55 youth apply 55 youth will be employed. One of the great things is we aren’t restrained

that way,” (Mary Guenther (program coordinator), interview by Annie Crippen, phone, October 2015).

Once youth have applied and conducted their interviews, they will all attend a two-day training/orientation. This training covers a host of different topics including: basic Tribal employment policies and procedures; program policies; appropriate worksite conduct (how to talk to your supervisor); budgeting and financial management (such as how to save, invest, and balance a checkbook, etc.); filling out a W-9; and basic interview questions. In addition, specific training depending on where individuals will be working might include technical training for those working in offices and with computers including appropriate computer use for work. Others may include CPR or food handler’s certification, etc. The training also covers cultural skills and values to be mindful of and embody while participating in the program. After the training, youth are introduced to their worksite supervisors.

Throughout the course of the program, youth can work up to a maximum of 200 hours. Program staff will conduct job site evaluations to check in with them every other week. During this time, youth and onsite supervisors will each fill out progress reports to identify how things are going, if there are any problem areas, or things a youth is struggling with and for which they may need help. According to Guenther, “We try to pull them out as little as possible as we believe the most learning and growth happens while actually engaged in their work on the job site” (Mary Guenther (program coordinator), interview by Annie Crippen, phone, October 2015).

The program operates on a basic “three strikes, you’re out” policy. For example, the first “no show, no call” is a warning. It would be documented and written up. If

necessary, a plan would be identified to prevent future incidents from occurring. The same procedure happens for the second incident. Once a youth has three incidents, they are let go: Staff meets with the youth one last time, they read the incidents out loud to acknowledge and recognize them and then they are no longer able to work for the remainder of the season. Anything of a more serious nature, such as breaking tribal policies, which includes issues related to drug/alcohol or substance abuse, is referred to the Human Resources department. The HR department, in accordance with the Tribal policies, will handle the issue accordingly and informs the youth employment program of their course of action/decision.

In addition, if a youth is having problems or behavioral issues, the program offers a wide range of support to try to fully incorporate them into the program; the program has an in-house counselor covering both work related issues and career counseling as well as social and emotional needs, works with probation officers to coordinate services for youth who may have court mandated jobs, and sometimes partners youth who are struggling with others to provide peer mentorship. As Guenther identified, “A lot of kids have a serious life event, but we don’t want it to affect them for the rest of their lives. We try to provide them the support and help they need to participate and succeed” (Mary Guenther (program coordinator), interview by Annie Crippen, phone, October 2015). If counseling is needed, parents will be informed and, if they want to be involved, they can be. However, according to Guenther, a lot of the time parents want youth to take their own initiative. The program provides one-on-one planning to work out problems.

Additional services and aspects of the program include a school credit option where youth can receive one high school credit for every 120 hours they work. The

program also helps those who are interested, typically those who are seniors, transition into other Department of Education programs such as the scholarship or internship programs. According to Guenther, because the program is housed within the Department of Education the program and staff have direct access to youth; “youth know all of us because we are in the schools,” and often the program staff will provide tutoring services to them as well (Mary Guenther (program coordinator), interview by Annie Crippen, phone, October 2015). According to Guenther, one of the most important aspects of the program is making sure the youth know who she is, as it is important to develop relationships with them and establish trust.

Another important aspect of the program is developing and promoting community involvement. As Guenther emphasized, community involvement is the number one goal of the program. The program’s commitment to community involvement is reflected in their partnerships with 28 job sites and 28 supervisors which have anywhere from one to five youth working with them. Moreover, with 55 youth participating out of an approximate 110 eligible in the service population, the program reaches a significant portion of tribal member youth. According to Guenther, youth want to be involved and are excited for the program each year. This awareness and anticipation of the program is a result of its being consistent and reliable.

In addition, the program strives to keep open lines of communication, encourages communication between youth and their Elders, and has established an open door for the Culture Department’s chairman which allows youth to leave their worksites and partake in cultural activities. As such, community involvement is also reflected by the program’s agreement to pay up to 32 hours to youth who participate in some kind of community

activity such as: Sundance; the Tri Ute Games, Tri Ute Leadership Training (hosted at a college or university where presentation and information is given on different professions), soccer camp, basketball camp, and other community programs. As Guenther stated, “We’ve found that when youth are more involved in the community, they care more about school and their grades”(Mary Guenther (program coordinator), interview by Annie Crippen, phone, October 2015). At the end of the program there is an employee appreciation day with 4-5 different activities to celebrate youth’s achievements.

According to Guenther, the program is not faced with too many challenges. Many of the policies and procedures for handling various situations have been written down and, for the most part, the program creates plans for each individual problem and is able to handle situations as they arise. The program continues to increase the total number of tribal member involvement and the number of job sites to offer more variety and opportunities to youth. The program is also working to increase the availability to youth living outside the reservation. However, the ability to share the program with others has been a challenge and limited to word-of-mouth. The program has not yet published anything. In addition, according to Guenther, she does not see a lot of other organizations “doing employment programs” (specifically with Native youth) and as such there really has not been an opportunity for sharing ideas or new insights (Mary Guenther (program coordinator), interview by Annie Crippen, phone, October 2015). What the program has accomplished has been a continuous building process from where it started.

Discussion

Major Findings

Program structure. Based on the four interviews, while there are variations in the program models, there seem to be three general structures: programs whose primary focus is employment placement with minimal hours spent on job skills/workforce preparation training (i.e. Southern Ute); programs whose main focus is educational trainings and certification to provide youth with the knowledge and skills to seek job opportunities on their own (i.e. Sunrise EAST); and lastly programs that offer a hybrid with employment placement and regularly scheduled career development and work-prep trainings (Programs A and B).

In addition, while all four of the programs identified that they had been in operation for several years, two of the four programs interviewed identified that they had recently restructured their programs. This potentially highlights the newness of youth career development services, or at least the resurgence of seeing the potential these kinds of programs offer with the investment of time and money to revamp them, make them more structured, and provide better opportunities for youth.

Culture. Three of the four programs were able to identify their incorporation of cultural practices, values, and traditions within their programs. However, within all four programs, the inclusion of culture directly related to career development and workforce preparation training seemed to be a challenge. While programs were often supportive and encouraging of community and cultural events, their own programs seemed to have minimal connection to culture. That being said, each of the programs found some way to incorporate cultural aspects that I think could be adapted to other programs: Sunrise

EAST's incorporation of the medicine wheel in the goal setting plan for youth and identification of hard and soft skills that might be used in traditional activities (canoeing, hoop dance; carving, etc.); Southern Ute's incorporation of traditional values as they relate to youth employment during orientation, and the commitment and encouragement to community involvement by honoring 32 paid hours for youth who participate; and, Program B's quarterly cultural gatherings, open to both youth and adults, which incorporate many traditions from the various tribes represented within the community.

Community involvement. Each of the four programs relied on community partners such as organizations and businesses to provide a) employment opportunities for youth (for the employment placement models) and b) support in the form of trainings (such as helping with mock interviews or certification courses) or offering additional partner services such as connections to job shadows and internship opportunities. Three of the four programs also seemed to encourage open lines of communication between programs and Elders, family members, and the community: Sunrise EAST invites Elders to help with mock interviews and invites community members to come to, and participate in, trainings; Southern Ute emphasizes keeping open lines of communication between Elders and youth and communicates activities to the community; and Program B indicated that it regularly converses with Elders, family, and community members on improvements and suggestions for the program, including providing encouragement and feedback.

Connection to other Native youth career development programs. Of the four programs, only two were able to identify one other program providing career development services to Native youth specifically. Moreover, there seemed to be general

sentiment from programs that what each program has become has been based on their own knowledge, growth and development via trial and error improvements. Their outreach and knowledge of other programs doing similar work has been limited or nonexistent. The main platform for sharing program ideas seems to be through word of mouth. One program was able to identify that they have extensive marketing and outreach of their program services. However, none of the programs had assessment and evaluation materials available.

Policies, procedures, and support services. The three programs providing employment placements each have policies and procedures that youth must adhere to while participating in the program. Program A provides youth with a handbook outlining program policies, expectations, and consequences and has four non-negotiable rules: drug and alcohol use, non-participation in program activities; threats and violence; and criminal activity. Program B requires youth to have at least a 2.5 GPA in order to participate in their programs and provides grade checks. In addition, if youth engage in behaviors while in the employment program such as drug and alcohol use or other recurring behavioral issues, they may be terminated from the program. Southern Ute, on the other hand, has a basic “three strikes, you’re out policy” for issues like not showing up to work without notifying supervisors, not following directions or completing job tasks, etc. For both Program A and Southern Ute, more serious issues related to violations of tribal policies will be handled through the Human Resources department.

Three of the four programs offer one-on-one case management and work with youth to develop plans to guide them in their career goals as well as plans to address behavior issues and problems they face. In addition, two of the programs provide

counseling services: Program B partners with an outside agency to provide youth with drug and alcohol counseling while Southern Ute provides extensive in house counseling services both for career or work related issues as well as for personal social and emotional problems youth may be going through. In contrast, the only requirement for youth who had become formally enrolled with the Sunrise EAST program was to have monthly check-ins with their case manager.

Challenges. Common challenges among programs include: outreach to youth and the community to increase enrollment numbers and community partners; incorporation of cultural practices into program content and training; and the limited ability to share, learn and collaborate program models and practices with others that provide career development and workforce preparation services to Native youth. Another difficulty faced by the programs was the challenges of working with youth who face common problems and barriers: youth in foster care; homeless youth; school dropouts; substance abuse and delinquency, etc.

Limitations

There were several limitations to this study. It was difficult to find potential programs and organizations to contact. Collectively, several programs ended up being inactive: no one was currently employed to run the program because it was a seasonal position, there was no one currently employed who was familiar with the program to answer questions, or they were no longer in operation. In addition, because many of the programs were specific to a tribal government rather than an independent community-based nonprofit, the ability to get quick turnaround consent and agreement to participate was also difficult for some programs. Many indicated they would have to get approval

from higher executives and supervisors or possibly even approval from their tribal councils— particularly in order to waive confidentiality. Time in this sense was a constraint.

I was also limited to those programs whose information was available online either through their own website or mentioned among the services and programs provided by individual tribal governments. Thus, tribal communities that have programs and services related to youth career development but do not have that information posted online I would not have known about unless informed via word-of-mouth from another program. In addition, navigating many of the tribal websites to determine if they might offer these services was also difficult as programs and services could potentially be housed within any of a number of different programs and departments, including tribal departments of education, economic development, TANF, human services departments, or the tribal housing authority. In addition, in many instances, while youth programs might be identified within these websites, the provision of career development services was not clarified. This was compounded by the fact that I am not a member of these tribal communities, so it is difficult to know exactly where to look or who to ask for this information.

Another limitation may be the format of presenting questions via semi-structured interviews. While interviews over the phone provided me with the ability to talk directly with participants and clarify questions and responses, there may have been areas that were not covered as in-depth as I would have preferred. If a participant were required to instead read and respond to questions in writing (as Program B chose to do), program coordinators might have had more time to think about the questions and provide fuller

and more detailed responses. In addition, interviews needed to be scheduled with time in advance, which can also make working around individual's schedules difficult.

Conclusion

Significance of Research

The historical legacy of U.S. policy toward Native Americans has had a devastating impact on Native American culture and society, the reverberations of which are still being felt today (Braveheart & DeBruyn, 1998). As a result, Native American communities throughout the U.S. face a host of challenges to their health and well-being and cultural survival (Long et al., 2006). Native American youth, which make up a significant proportion of the Native population, are particularly vulnerable and experience high rates of suicide, alcohol and substance abuse, unemployment, school dropout rates, living in poverty, etc. (Jackson & Hodge, 2010). As such, efforts should be made to increase the developmental assets, available to Native American youth (Ameen & Lee, 2012; Penn et al., 2008; Silbereisen & Learner, 2007).

In particular there seems to be a strong connection between factors of poverty, education, and unemployment, prominent in many Native communities, which make it difficult for youth to break free from the cycle of poverty (Massey, 2004). Therefore, resources and services that connect education and career development initiatives may be particularly useful in providing youth with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to successfully transition to adulthood, maintain stable employment and career aspirations, and become productive and contributing members in their communities and society (Ferrari, 2003; Hutchinson, 2011; Howard and Solberg, 2006; Martin, 1991). However, given past and continuing experiences of both overt and covert colonialism and

discrimination, it is important that programs and services for Native youth be approached from a culturally sensitive and community driven perspective (Ball, 2004; Champagne, 1999; Hawkins et al., 2004).

Given that there is relatively little published research in this area, the research I have conducted starts at the source by identifying current programs providing career development service to Native youth. The research provides in-depth overviews of program models and highlights current practices and challenges that programs face. This could help other programs identify potential challenges they may face and provides ideas and practices that may be beneficial to incorporate and adapt to their own programs. Moreover, my research seems to suggest that there is a potential need to provide a platform for organizations and programs working with Native youth and career development services to connect and share ideas. Given the presence of these types of programs, a need for career development programming and services has been identified. However, the scope and success these programs may be having on the positive development Native youth and their transition to adulthood has yet to be discovered.

Future Research

Given the limited number of program participants I was able to reach, it is difficult to identify if the challenges faced by the programs interviewed would carry over on a larger sample size. In addition, because of the limited online presence, it was difficult to gauge how many programs are actually in operation. However, the research did indicate that there may be common themes and similar model structures that are being used within career development programs providing services to Native youth. Moreover,

the need for a platform for programs to learn and share with each other was identified. As such, the current research needs to be continued on a more robust scale.

For future research, the use a survey method in combination with conducting interviews where available may help to maximize outreach, time/availability, and increase quality and quantity of responses. In addition, it would also be important to allow more time for conducting research so that tribal communities can present the project to tribal councils and upper management for approval.

In addition to identifying potential programs to compare models and practices and to create a baseline of the scope of these types of programs, research should also be conducted to identify if these programs have assessment and evaluation plans. It is important to identify if there is evidence to suggest that programs are working and compare which programs are making a positive impact: decreases in risk taking behaviors (such as, drug and alcohol use and delinquency); increases in educational attainment and employment.

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Appendix A

Semi-Structure Interview Questions

Native American Youth Career Development Programs
List of Potential Semi-structured Interview Questions

1. How long has your program been operating and how long has it offered career development services? What is its mission?
2. How many youth does your program serve? Do they come from various tribal backgrounds and traditions or does your program typically cater to a specific tribal community?
3. Is your program year-round, seasonal, or both?
4. How do you decide who is accepted to participate/what are the requirements for participation? (i.e. application, interview, cover letter/essay, school grades, behavior stipulations, etc.)
5. What activities/services/resources do you provide? (i.e. What sort of work experience/preparation trainings do you offer? For example, internship, school credit, job shadow, apprenticeships, summer employment/work placement, career counseling, skills training (life-skills/job-skills), resume and cover letter writing, mock-interviews/preparation, etc.)
6. How do you include traditional values and promote culturally relevant activities within the scope of career development services? (i.e. Talking Circles/Medicine Wheel/ extended family participation and involvement in career counseling activities/ Elder mentors/ etc.) How does it better help Native youth learn and succeed? When employing culturally relevant practices do you employ pan-tribal practices or those specific to an individual tribe/community?
7. How involved are youth in program development/decisions? How involved are parents/guardians/family/Elders /and other members of the community?
8. What are your basic program policies? What is your policy/procedure for handling issues related to drugs and alcohol use and delinquent behavior. Example: Many employment programs require Native American youth to be drug-and-alcohol-free and require them to undergo drug testing before they are eligible to be hired for work. Does your program have services or steps to provide support to those youth who have negative UAs?; What if youth are caught skipping school; Are there stipulations to help correct this behavior or hold youth accountable? E.g. youth aren't allowed to work that day or they must give a presentation to a panel of Elders and youth peers to balance the wrongfulness of their actions.

9. What do you see as your biggest success? What do you see as your biggest challenge? And what are your goals/vision for the future? Does your program have published data?
10. Is there currently a platform in which you can easily share your programs practices/models or is information typically delivered by word of mouth?
11. Can you recommend another career development program or program that provides career development services for Native American youth that you know of or work with?