

Pathways to Promote Academic Success for American Indian/Alaska Native Nursing Students: A Mentoring Curriculum for Nursing Faculty



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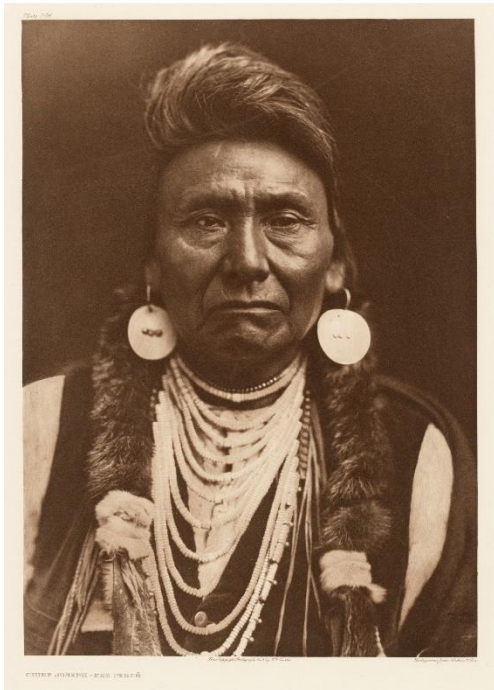
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Honoring Our Ancestors



“Let us put our minds together and see what life we can make for our children.” ~ Sitting Bull

Smithsonian Institution: https://www.si.edu/object/sitting-bull:npg_66.151



“Treat all men alike. Give them the same law. Give them an even chance to live and grow.” ~ Chief Joseph

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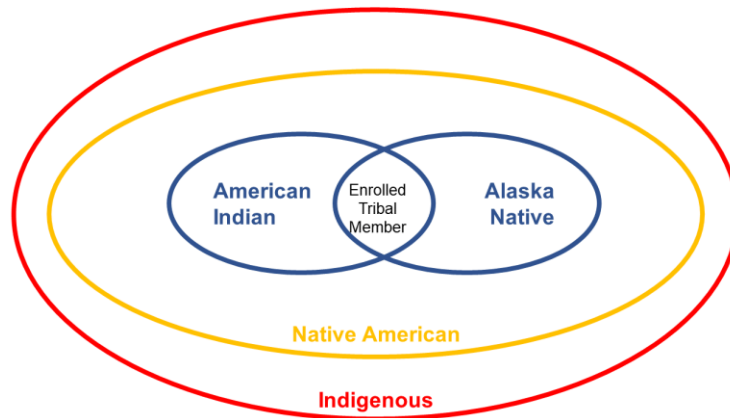
How To Use This Mentoring Curriculum

This curriculum is divided into five main sections preceded by a *Definition of Terms, Purpose and Introduction*. Section 1, *Understanding American Indian Historical, Political, and Social Inequities*, begins with a historical and contemporary overview of the adversities of American Indian people, and briefly highlights resiliency as a foundational tool that has been key to survival. Section 2 is a *Mentoring Plan for Faculty Development and American Indian Alaska Native (AI/AN) Student Success*. It contains a comprehensive mentoring plan that is divided into seven culturally relevant categories, and includes specific strategies for faculty development and steps for how faculty can support academic success for AI/AN students. Section 3, *Recruitment Strategies for Schools of Nursing*, offers specific recruitment strategies for schools of nursing to consider, including holistic admissions. Section 4 provides a *Glossary of Terms*, and Section 5 contains the *Mentoring Workshop Outline* agenda for the AI/AN Mentoring Workshop using this curriculum.

Definition of Terms

Terms to describe the first inhabitants of North America are *American Indian* and *Native American*, which are interchangeable; preferred usage of term varies across individuals and groups. Below is an illustration to explain the different terms used to describe Native people.

For this curriculum, American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) is the term mostly used throughout, with some uses of Native American and Native.



- **American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN)** is a term used by the federal government and policies to denote persons that belong to indigenous tribes of the continental United States and villages of Alaska, and generally are enrolled tribal members.
- **Enrolled Tribal Member** is a member of a federally recognized tribe where degree of Indian blood is computed from lineal ancestors that is set forth by tribes. Federally recognized tribes are recognized as possessing certain inherent rights of self-government (i.e., tribal sovereignty) and are entitled to receive certain federal benefits, services, and protections because of their special relationship with the United States.
- **Native American** is a term often used to describe *all* Native peoples of the United States and trust territories (i.e., American Indian, Alaska Natives, Native Hawaiians, and First Nations Canadians).
- **Indigenous** is a broad inclusive term that encompasses all Native people or groups living together on particular lands prior to contact with white settlers; it is a term mostly used in a global context.
- **Native** is a broad term that refers to a person or people who originate from a certain place or land; and commonly used in a context to generally refer to a variety or all Indigenous groups.

(First Nations & Indigenous Studies, n.d.; UCLA Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, 2020)

Purpose/Introduction

Increasing diversity in nursing is an essential step toward addressing persistent health disparities and improving health equity in AI/AN health. Nurses from diverse cultural backgrounds, including AI/AN nurses, are in a better position to provide and advocate for quality and culturally appropriate health care for populations and communities that mirror their own. Further, research shows minority health care professionals, including American Indian nurses, are more likely to return and serve their own communities (Eddie, 2018; O'Connell et al., 2018).

There is an urgent, well-documented need and rationale to educate and train more AI/AN students to become nurses. Yet, national data indicates the number of AI/AN new RN graduates remains the lowest and unchanged in comparison to all other US ethnic/racial groups (*Campaign for Action*, 2021). Producing fewer AI/AN nurses can account for national nursing workforce data that reflect only 0.4% of nurses are of Native American descent in comparison to 80% Caucasian, 6.2% African American and 5.3% Hispanic (Smiley et al., 2017).

A small body of literature suggests that to address the gaps in the underrepresentation of nurses from diverse groups, including AI/ANs, nursing education programs that implement various forms of support (academic, social, financial, mentoring, and cultural) report an increase in recruitment, academic success, retention, and graduation outcomes (Condon et al., 2013; Dapremont, 2013; Murray et al., 2016).

Studies also underscore that nursing faculty play an essential role in determining academic success among ethnically diverse nursing students, and yet, some evidence suggests faculty are not prepared to meet the needs of diverse students (Green, 2020).

This call for action to educate nursing faculty to become aware and better understand the worldviews, lifeways, and culture of AI/AN students on college campuses is important. This includes having some knowledge of historical, social and political inequities, and the persistent role they play in contributing to academic outcomes among students (Pool & Stauber, 2020).

The purpose of this curriculum is to provide such a resource to schools of nursing and to guide faculty on culturally responsive approaches for engaging and mentoring of AI/AN students, as well as to offer teaching and learning strategies for faculty to use with students.

Objectives

The objectives of the American Indian Alaska Native Mentoring Curriculum are:

- Provide an overview of AI/AN historical, social, and political context and its influence on higher education experiences
- Provide guidance on culturally sensitive and responsive mentoring approaches, and teaching and learning strategies for faculty
- Provide guidance on strategies to support AI/AN student retention and academic success
- Provide information and resources on approaches for recruitment of AI/AN students

Section 1: Understanding American Indian Historical, Political, And Social Inequities

To begin to understand American Indians, including the few who comprise only 1% of the U.S. higher education population (National Center for Education Statistics, 2018), it is important to acknowledge the historical background and contexts of Native people that continue to shape and impact Native communities in the present day.

As a people, the American Indian Alaska Native (AI/AN) population accounts for nearly 2% of the U.S. population, an increase from 5.2 million in 2010 to 5.7 million in 2018 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2018). Of the entire AI/AN population, there are 574 federally recognized tribes, over 100 state recognized tribes, and many other tribes not recognized by federal or state agencies. The majority of AIs (78%) live off tribal lands in urban areas (60%) and only 22% live on tribal lands (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010).

Since the arrival of European settlers, the American Indian way of life has been disrupted and destroyed. Many were driven from their lands, forbidden to speak their languages, or express their cultures. Means of subsistence such as hunting, farming, gathering and fishing nearly vanished. Men, women, and children were killed. Diseases like smallpox and tuberculosis annihilated some tribes and nearly annihilated many others.

Beginning in the late 1800s, during a period known as the “Boarding School Era,” many Native children were forced into off-reservation boarding schools, which were designed to assimilate them to the White man’s ways and rid them of their language and culture. While being taught to speak only English and abandon their Native culture, Native children suffered abuse of every kind. Worst of all, many were taught to be ashamed of being Native. These acts were executed by a federal directive to “Kill the Indian, Save the Man.” The schools left a devastating legacy, but they failed to eradicate American Indian culture as they had hoped (National Indian Education Association, n.d.). **Strength, courage, and resilience have always been and continue to be a part of who Native people are.**

In the 1920s, the federal government commissioned a groundbreaking investigation into the outcome of government policies toward American Indians, including boarding schools. The report that followed in 1928, called The Meriam Report found that children at federal boarding schools were malnourished, overworked, harshly punished, and poorly educated. More than 40 years after The Meriam Report criticized government boarding schools, a report known as Kennedy Report declared Indian education both a challenge and a tragedy (National Indian Law Library, n.d.). The government paid religious orders to provide basic education to Native American children on the reservations in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, with the last residential schools closing in 1973 (National Indian Education Association, n.d.).

Impact on American Indians and Youth

The cumulative efforts to uproot and destroy the Native way of existence linger and have been termed historical trauma. Coined by Yellow Horse Brave Heart (1998), historical trauma is described as the cumulative emotional and psychological wounding over one’s lifetime from generation to generation following loss of lives, land, and vital aspects of culture.

Today, tribes are enduring and living many inequities as a result of historical trauma. The struggles of living with high poverty, high unemployment, and low education attainment (Office of Minority Health, 2018) make it difficult to achieve optimal health outcomes. Higher rates of heart disease, cancer, diabetes, unintentional injuries (accidents) are among some of the leading health inequities that persist in AI communities. Together, these lead to an average life expectancy that is five years less than the general population. (Indian Health Service [IHS], 2019).

AI/AN Youth

For AI/AN youth, the effects of historical trauma have been and continue to be devastating. With the fading of AI/AN culture and traditions, many young people today never learn, know, or experience cultural teachings and practices of their ancestors. Consequently, youth face greater risk for adverse health outcomes (Kahn-John, 2010; Struthers & Lowe, 2003). Further, Native youth are afflicted with higher rates of suicide, substance abuse, obesity and diabetes than their U.S. peer counterparts (Bullock et al., 2017; Franks et al., 2010; McLaughlin, 2010; Wexler et al., 2015).

Educationally, AI/AN youth also face many challenges, such as high dropout rates from high school, low academic performance rates, and low college admission and retention rates, all of which stem from many of the same factors already discussed. In addition, another major issue that hinders academic persistence stems from the quality of education. Many AI/AN youth live in impoverished communities where schools are poorly funded. As a result, students are not adequately prepared academically for higher education opportunities (National Indian Education Association, n.d.).

Despite the many adversities that youth face, many AI/AN youth understand the challenges and are finding ways to be resilient. This includes taking steps to learn about their history, culture, and language (Freeman, 2017).

Section 2: Mentoring Plan for Faculty Development And American Indian Alaska Native Student Success

To guide in developing or strengthening an existing mentoring relationship or a mentoring program for AI/AN students, we combined concepts from a Native American nursing conceptual model and an existing mentoring process framework (Zachary, 2011; Robert Wood Johnson Foundation). The model contains seven cultural components that characterize the essence of Native American nursing, including *caring*, *traditions*, *respect*, *connection*, *holism/holistic*, *trust* and *spirituality* (Lowe & Struthers, 2001; Struthers & Littlejohn, 1999).

Below is a diagram of the *Nursing in Native American Culture* (2001) model; the circle depicts each dimension and begins with “*Caring*” at the top center. Following the diagram, each dimension is described in conjunction with mentoring concepts and the mentoring process.



CARING: Assess the extent to which a student’s learning environment is supportive and culturally safe.

CARING encompasses a holistic and genuine approach, where caring for individuals addresses the whole being of a person – mind, body, and spirit. From a holistic approach, caring is about knowing the individuals being cared for, where they are coming from, their cultural identity, and roots.

Gaining acceptance to your nursing school is a significant achievement for not only the AI/AN students, but also for their families and communities. As described in Section A, students will come from a myriad of backgrounds, histories, and experiences that include tribal and cultural, economic and social conditions, education preparation, and other family and home situations. Despite these realities, there is a deep commitment among students to be successful in their education journeys so they can return home to help their people and communities.

Given the body of evidence that suggests various forms of support structures, including faculty mentoring, contribute to academic success and retention of AI/AN students, you are encouraged to consider developing a student mentoring plan to support one-on-one faculty mentoring or for broader use in a mentoring program.

Before delving into the steps for a mentoring plan, it is important to begin with an assessment of all aspects of support at the faculty, nursing department/unit, and institutional levels. It is important to assess the degree to which the whole learning environment is supportive and culturally safe for AI/AN students.

Mentoring and Other Support Structures Assessment Questions

Mentoring and Other Support Structures Assessment Questions

With completion of this assessment, you will have a better understanding of the different levels of support that are currently offered, or identify gaps for you to consider in how you might strengthen an existing program or build a new mentoring program. “No” responses are areas to improve and can enhance a caring environment (e.g., faculty should first learn and become familiar with American Indian culture and histories before mentoring with an AI/AN nursing student).

A. University-wide support mechanism that greatly enhances a student’s success in a variety of learning environments	Yes	No
1. Does your university promote and create environments that engage students of diverse backgrounds?		
2. Does your university have a dedicated program and cultural space for AI/AN students?		
3. Is cultural awareness and sensitivity promoted across the university for AI/AN students?		

B. College/School of Nursing support program activities that enhance AI/AN student success in a variety of learning environments	Yes	No
4. Does your nursing program provide a supportive and culturally safe environment for AI/AN students?		
5. Do you have specific initiatives that focus on recruitment of AI/AN or other diverse students and faculty?		
6. Do you have American Indian faculty or staff on board?		
7. Do you have a faculty development program that provides training on diversity, cultural awareness, and sensitivity?		
8. Do you have an ongoing mentoring program for AI/AN students?		
9. Do you have other support programs for AI/AN students?		
10. Do you have a specific mentoring model that you follow?		
11. Do you have an individual or individuals designated as a mentor program director/ manager or lead person that mentors and mentees can go to with questions?		
C. Individual Faculty Self-Assessment	Yes	No
12. I reflect and examine my own cultural background, biases, and prejudices to race, culture, and sexual orientation that may influence my behaviors.		
13. I believe it is important for me to learn and understand about cultures other than my own, including their histories, values, beliefs and practices.		
14. I intervene in an appropriate manner when I observe others engaging in behaviors that appear culturally insensitive or reflect prejudice.		
15. When interacting with members of other cultures, I attempt to learn and use important words or expressions of the languages used.		
16. I do not impose my personal values and beliefs that may conflict with other cultures or ethnic groups.		
17. In my teaching, I use a variety of teaching methods to support different learning styles.		

Adapted from: Association of American Colleges & Universities, (2013); Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (2017); South Dakota State University, College of Nursing, Cultural Self-Assessment

What is Mentoring?

Mentoring is a positive and supportive relationship between a mentor and mentee where a mentee's growth, development and learning experiences are guided by the sharing of knowledge, skills, and experiences of a mentor. The goal of mentoring is for mentees to reach their fullest potential and mutually defined goals.



TRADITIONS: Learn about students' cultural traditions and explore use in the education process. Explore the role of mentoring to be part of a student's education experience.

TRADITIONS considers the four characteristics of relationship, respect, wisdom, and values. The concept of relationship acknowledges the interconnections between self, family, community, and lands/natural environment, and it is through these connections that balance and harmony is sought (Lowe & Struthers, 2001). Having respect, practicing cultural traditions, and seeking knowledge are important components of traditions. Below are examples of cultural traditions unique to tribes.



(Pow-wow dancers) Smithsonian Institution:
https://www.si.edu/object/native-american-dancers-performing-150th-birthday-party-mall:siris_sic_10475



(Ojibwe berry picking)

Depending on the location and region of your nursing school, you will find there are unique local traditional knowledge and practices. You are encouraged to learn and look for opportunities to

connect with local AI/AN communities and consider ways to incorporate local traditions and knowledge in program-level activities or one-on-one mentoring relationships.

Finding local AI/AN-owned organizations including Indigenous support programs at your institution is one way to begin forming connections (Antoine et al., 2018).

Strategies for Incorporating Local Land and Traditional Knowledge

- Participate in local *land acknowledgement(s)*. Land acknowledgment is a historical and contemporary protocol for AI/AN people that is generally done at the beginning of a meeting or event by an Indigenous person, elder, or by event facilitators local to the area. The purpose is to formally acknowledge, respect, and honor the original inhabitants of the land, and share the desire to move towards reconciliation. Below is an example of a land acknowledgement:

- On January 16, 2021, Rep. Deb Haaland (D-New Mexico) provided a land acknowledgement for an inauguration welcome event. Rep. Deb Haaland acknowledged Washington, D.C. as the homelands of the Nacotchtank or Anacostan people. She also paid tribute to the tribal nations that have served as stewards of America's land and resources for centuries.

"We acknowledge the legacy of this land's original inhabitants and find inspiration from the lands and the waters."

"We recognize that our country was built on indigenous land and we pay tribute to the indigenous nations who have stewarded these lands, these waters and animals for centuries and who have made great sacrifices in the building of our country".

<https://www.indianz.com/News/2021/02/17/deb-haaland-finally-lands-confirmation-hearing-to-be-secretary-of-the-interior/>

- Appreciate and honor use of tradition and ceremony among nursing students and faculty. See examples below.
- Navajo Blessingway ceremonies have been welcomed in higher education settings. A blessingway ceremony can be offered at the beginning of a school year to promote health, balance, well-being, and success among students. A blessingway is one of the oldest and most important ceremonies, which encompasses traditional songs, prayers, and chants and is performed by a traditional healer/medicine man.
- Use of traditional smudging can encourage and promote spiritual self-care. Smudging with sage is most commonly used to get rid of negative energy. It could be for yourself, another person, your home or any space. Smudging can be useful when you are feeling depressed, sad, resentful, angry, unwell, or if you have felt a negative presence in your home. Here is an example of a situation when smudging was used for a student:

"During a mentoring session with a senior nursing student, the student described a clinical experience that was emotionally difficult for her at the time and continued to cause sadness and distress. She did share that talking about it 'helped some' ... 'but' ...and couldn't finish her thought.

As the student's mentor, I have gotten to know her well. An excellent student and very caring, we had discussed the importance of self-care as a nurse and the reality of compassion fatigue during previous mentor sessions. I also knew she believed in the power of prayer and the healing that can take place during traditional ceremonies. I asked her if she wanted to smudge and she immediately said yes.

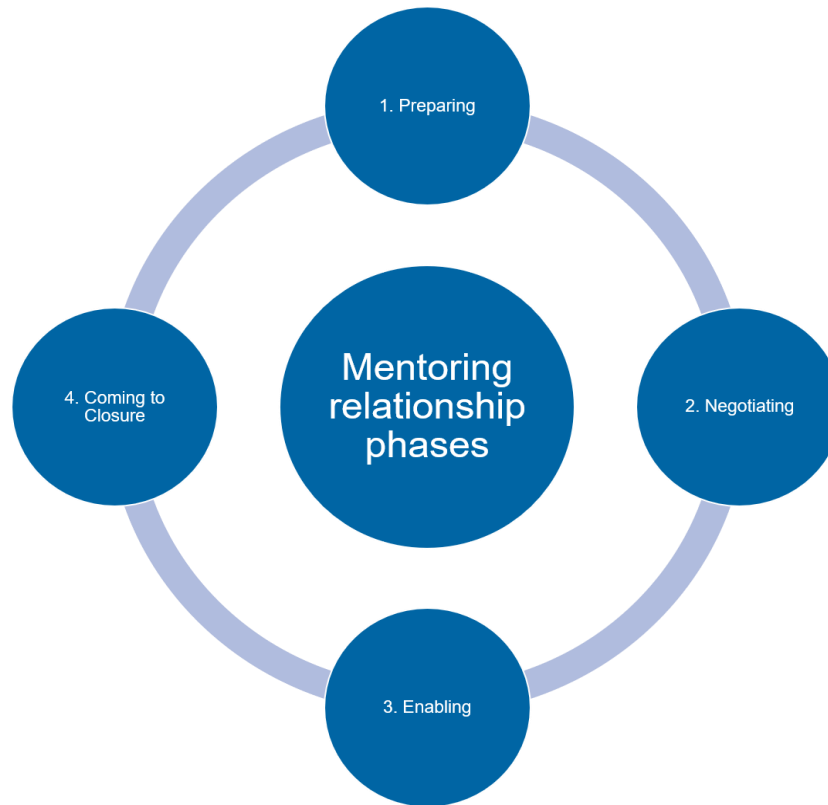
We have smudging materials in our offices at NANEC. We prepared the materials and stepped outdoors for the ceremony, stood in a circle with the student, myself and two NA colleagues. We lit the ball of sage in the smudging bowl, extinguished the small flame, just sage smoke to cleanse each of the 4 standing in a circle. We waved the sage smoke over each of us as each person prayed silently. The two oldest NANEC employees then spoke words of encouragement, asked Creator to bless and keep the student strong as well as all who had pain from the student's clinical experience. The student was visibly relaxing and offered her own words of healing. We held hands and shared the positive energy. She thanked us for helping her feel better."

- Invite cultural speakers or tribal elders. The AI/AN community considers Elders as knowledge keepers and have an important role in storytelling and keeping traditional teachings alive.

The MENTORING PROCESS

Mentoring is a major component of the success of AI/AN students and can become an important *tradition* for Schools of Nursing and nursing faculty to engage with AI/AN students.

To guide a mentoring relationship, it is imperative to learn the **four phases of mentoring**.



<p><i>Preparing: Getting Ready</i></p>	<p>The preparing phase is a discovery process where both mentor and mentee take the time to get to know each other. This is also a time for mentors to explore personal motivation and readiness to mentor, as well as to assess their own mentoring skills for learning and development.</p>
<p><i>Negotiating: Establishing Mutual Agreements</i></p>	<p>The negotiating phase of a mentoring relationship involves both partners coming to an agreement on the details of the relationship. Together, a shared understanding about assumptions, expectations, goals, and needs is created. This involves talking about topics like confidentiality, boundaries, role responsibilities, criteria for success, how to be accountable to each other, and how to bring closure to the relationship.</p>
<p><i>Enabling Growth: Facilitating Learning</i></p>	<p>The enabling growth phase is the learning phase of the relationship, where mentors nurture learning and development in mentees. It is key to facilitate learning in mentees that mentors establish and maintain an open and affirming learning climate by providing thoughtful, timely, candid, and constructive feedback. Mentors should also anticipate that obstacles can arise and understand each relationship must find its own path to get back on track and be maintained.</p>

<p>Closure: Looking Back, Moving Forward</p>	<p>This phase entails bringing closure to a mentoring relationship by evaluating, acknowledging, and celebrating achievement of learning outcomes. It is an opportunity to reflect on what has been learned and be ready to apply to other relationships and situations.</p>
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Adapted from The Mentor's Guide: Facilitating Effective Learning Relationships (Zachary, 2011).

RESPECT: Learn how the student learns best. Realize the pace of the program may be challenging and advocate for learning options for all students to succeed.

Respect for all creation and living beings is important. Offering respect is being present and compassionate to others by honoring and acknowledging individuals in who they are and where they are coming from.

Within the AI/AN community, showing respect to another is a valued trait. The ability to suspend judgement and approach an individual or situation with humility and openness is not easy. However, at the heart of this exchange is showing respect to the individual. An example of AI/AN respect is the place of honor that is given to tribal elders when they speak – they are not to be interrupted; their stories, experience, and wisdom are to be learned from.

PHASE 1: Preparing for the Mentoring Relationship

Respect is a cornerstone for this AI/AN mentorship model and is foundational to building trust. Identifying one's assumptions brings self-awareness and recognition of opportunities to promote a more positive and mutually satisfying relationship. Suspending bias is a helpful step to promote openness, demonstrate respect, and allow for genuine dialogue to occur. This takes self-reflection, learning about ourselves and our tendencies. It can also provide insight into our ability to listen and communicate clearly. Being open to another's opinion presents a rich opportunity to learn from another and to find a shared outcome to a given situation, which is vital to the success of the mentoring relationship.

Making a First Good Impression

- In preparing for the initial, introductory meeting between a mentor and mentee, think about your own mentoring experiences. Consider how your mentors were able to establish an open and trusting relationship with you.
- Planning for the first visit includes considering how to get to know each other. What questions might invite building a connection with the student? Within the Native community, we show respect for another when we warmly greet with a smile and handshake. The

handshake can be softer than what one might experience in Western society and this softer handshake shows respect for the individual.

- It is important when working with AI/AN mentees to introduce yourself to communicate respect of traditional ways of being. This resource explains more and gives an example through a TEDx talk by Bradley Dick, a Lekwungen First Nations tribal member.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s7ZQqIFeE7g>
- Since it is important to not make assumptions about your knowledge of the AI/AN culture, the “Mentor Awareness Continuum” provides a brief self-assessment of your awareness of the AI/AN culture and attitudes about diversity. There are no right or wrong answers when using this tool. It simply offers self-reflection for you as you prepare to engage in the mentoring relationship with an AI/AN student.

Mentor Awareness Continuum

Directions: Put an X that represents where you fit along the dotted line for each continuum below.

<p>I am not knowledgeable about the AI/AN culture.</p>	<p>.....</p>	<p>I am knowledgeable about the AI/AN culture.</p>
<p>I am perplexed by the culturally different behaviors I see among AI/AN people.</p>	<p>.....</p>	<p>I understand the cultural influences that are at the root of some of the behaviors I see in AI/AN people.</p>
<p>I am task-focused and don't like to waste time chatting.</p>	<p>.....</p>	<p>I find that more gets done when I spend time on relationships first.</p>
<p>I feel that the AI/AN people should adapt to our organizational rules.</p>	<p>.....</p>	<p>I feel that both the AI/AN people and our organization need to change to fit together.</p>
<p>I feel that everyone is the same, with similar values and preferences.</p>	<p>.....</p>	<p>I feel that everyone is unique, with differing values and preferences.</p>
<p>My department is a homogenous team.</p>	<p>.....</p>	<p>My department reflects a multicultural team.</p>

Draw your profile by connecting your X's. The closer your line is to the right-hand column, the greater your awareness regarding diversity and the **AI/AN** culture. The closer to the left-hand column, the less aware you may be about diversity-related issues.

Adapted from: The Managing Diversity Survival Guide, Gardenswartz & Rowe (1994)

Self-Reflection to Consider

- As you prepare yourself for the mentoring relationship, taking a moment to self-reflect on your own awareness and knowledge of the AI/AN culture is an important part of preparing. It is understandable to consider additional learning about general AI/AN cultural knowledge, but more importantly learning about specific tribal groups reflective of the AI/AN students you serve. As AI/AN nurses, we too would spend time to learn about different tribal communities that we may not be familiar with.
- Self-reflective questions to consider:
 - Where are you most/least aware and knowledgeable?
 - What do you need to learn more about?

Understanding of and Respect for Different Learning Styles

- Another aspect to consider as you prepare for the mentoring process is appreciating the different learning styles of AI/AN students. In general, AI/AN students learn best by doing through observation, action, and reflection (Antoine et al., 2018).

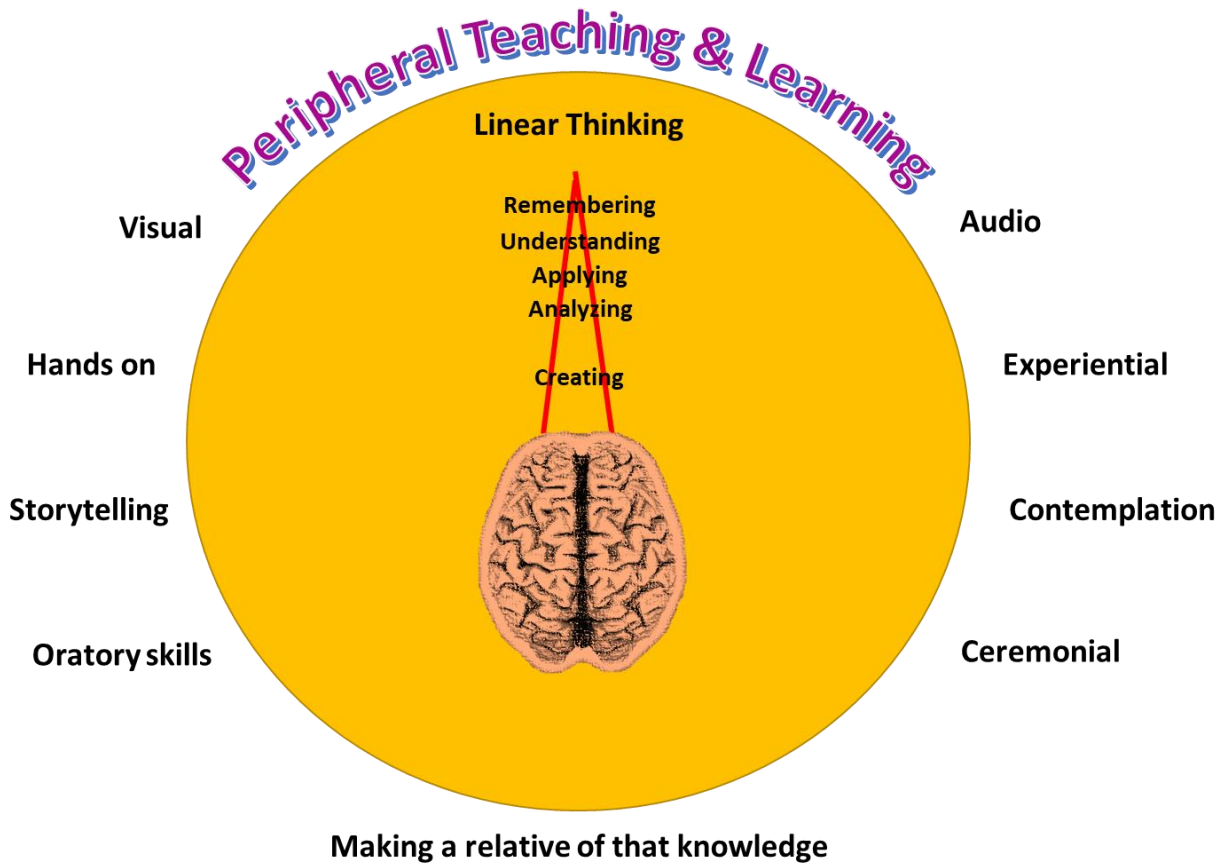
Indigenous Cognitive Teaching and Learning of Indigenous People ***By Wayne Weston, Oglala Lakota***

Indigenous ancestors had their own unique way of teaching the future generations. Because we did not have a written language, our ancestors developed ways of teaching by which the knowledge would solidify itself in the minds of the young, becoming immutable. Through this concept, our people developed approaches that made the student do critical thinking through story-telling, hands-on, experiential, visual, audio and the use of all senses.

The elders taught the student to think of a full circle and when they returned to the beginning and still could not comprehend they went through another full circle once again until they understood. Through the colonization process of boarding schools, our ancestors were forced into a foreign logic that was linear in nature. This logic challenged our ancestors to adopt a sequence of logic that which was more direct and to the point, without using the full circle. This logic did not allow us to think in a full circle, but to rush the logic in a time frame, straight to the point without giving it full thought.

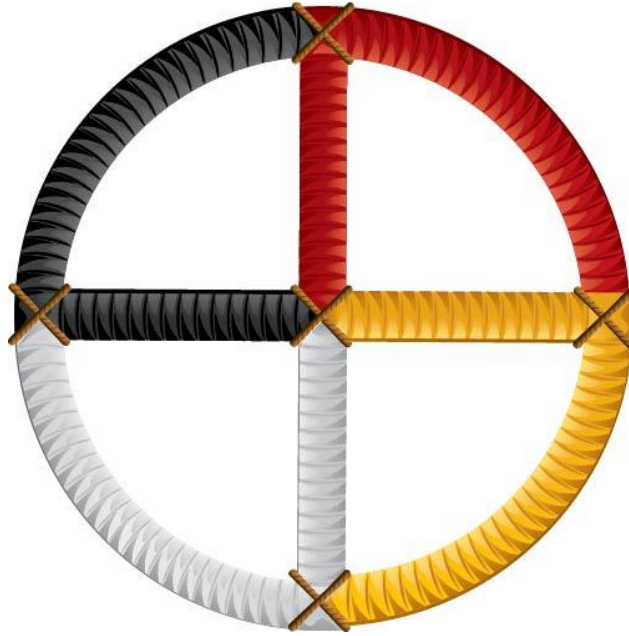
Many of our people even today continue to struggle with this sequence of logic that many times creates unresolved issues and conflict within our society. We now expect quick answers to our problems, and when we do seek problem-solving resolution, it does not happen.

The pedagogy varied from tribe to tribe, but one similarity was that most did not have a written language, so other methods were used, such as the below example.



CONNECTION: Recognize the importance and impact of relationships in the student's circle. Connect with student on presence of strengths and characteristics of resilience.

Connections as described by Lowe and Struthers (2001) are about honoring relationships with all things, and presents a profound connection and interaction with each other and our surroundings. This includes relationships with self, family, nature and the environment. Below is an image of a *medicine wheel*, which has been used for generations by various tribes for health and cycles of life. It embodies Mother Earth, the sun, and seasonal changes – all of which bring to life the circular nature of life and a common view of honoring the *four directions* (Native Voices, n.d.).



Building a *foundation* is important in order to create connection in the relationship. Respecting each other's areas of healing, taking risks, creating togetherness, cohesiveness, unfolding, inter-relating with all, weaving, transforming, being a bridge, putting puzzles back together, putting the pieces of the quilt together are all ways to describe building a relationship foundation towards connection (Struthers & Lowe, 2001).

Making Strong Connections

- As faculty mentors, you are encouraged to make strong connections by your continuing efforts in getting to know your AI/AN student(s).
 - Learning about the mentee's inner circle of support as it relates to family and other important relationships, as well as sources of strength and resilience, is an important part of connection and trust. These areas are more personal, confidential, and require time to discuss in a setting where the conversation can be respected and uninterrupted. Mentors may choose to wait until the mentor-mentee relationship has "settled in" to determine the best time and place to begin a sharing discussion on these areas.



Smithsonian Institution: https://www.si.edu/object/quilt:nmnhanthropology_12546049

PHASE 2: Negotiating & Establishing Mutual Agreements

Once relationship-building and connections have started, it will be helpful to discuss and build consensus on what the mentoring relationship will entail. A written mentoring agreement can be created that captures the shared understanding and agreement of the mentoring relationship. This table addresses key areas to negotiate.

Areas to Negotiate	Questions Answered
Goals	What specific learning outcomes do we want to achieve? (See goal-setting information on page 24)
Accountability	How often will meetings take place? How does mentee prefer to learn? What are preferred communication styles? How will feedback be provided and received?
Confidentiality	How will confidentiality be safeguarded? Is it okay to share information with others to enlist the support of others?
Boundaries	What limits or boundaries will be set in place for the mentoring relationship?
Bringing Closure	What would we like to see when the mentoring relationship comes to closure?

Adapted from The Mentor's Guide: Facilitating Effective Learning Relationships (Zachary, 2011); Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, New Careers in Nursing (2017)

Goal-Setting

Integral to a mentoring relationship is goal-setting. Goals set a clear direction and inspire action by mentees to work toward accomplishing. Goals can help remind you what is important and keeps you focused. This process reminds us the “why” behind a goal and “what” we want to achieve.

Goal-setting can be a process that moves from general to specific. It often begins with a discussion of fairly broad goals. With careful listening and asking clarifying questions, a mentor can help move the conversation to more clear, well-defined goals. One way to move toward specificity is to create SMART goal(s) (Zachary, 2011).



A SMART goal answers the following:

- Specific – What is the mentee trying to accomplish in this relationship? Are the goals specific, concrete and clear?
- Measurable – Are the goals measurable? In what ways can success be measured?
- Action-Oriented – What results do you expect to see when the goals are accomplished?
- Realistic – Are goals achievable? Are there other resources that need to be available in order to achieve the goals?
- Timely – Is the time allocated for accomplishing learning goals reasonable?

GOAL-SETTING FORM

GOAL: What do you want to achieve?

Objectives: Describe how to achieve goals. Ex.	Learning Tasks & Processes: Specific steps that will be taken to meet objectives.	Resources	Target Date

Adapted from The Mentor's Guide: Facilitating Effective Learning Relationships (Zachary, 2011).

HOLISM/HOLISTIC: Learn about the social and environmental influences (e.g., social determinants of health) in a student's life that impact learning.

HOLISM is a concept that recognizes that all things of creation, including people and their environment, are connected, and through these relationships, harmony and balance is sought (Lowe & Struthers, 2001; Struthers & Littlejohn, 1999; Kahn-John, 2010).

By now, the start of a mentoring relationship is in place and you are getting to know your student mentee better. This process of getting to know students requires capturing a holistic view and understanding of students. For many students, academic success and persistence depends on many factors. For instance, studies have documented that students who face financial challenges may not be comfortable asking for assistance for various reasons, including cultural reasons or a lack of trust. In addition, students may encounter certain situations where they may be "pulled" from school due to family and cultural responsibilities (Cech, Metz, Baccock & Smith, 2011; HeavyRunner & DeCelles, 2002).

A faculty mentor has a key responsibility to learn about the student's broader environment, connections, and social determinants that can greatly influence success and retention. You are encouraged to periodically assess with students their financial situation, family support, housing and living situation, family and childcare responsibilities, employment and employment hours, transportation (Jeffreys, 2020), and preference for participation in cultural events and activities.

Below is a Social Determinants of Health Assessment Tool that can be used to examine and understand students' needs. Upon completion of the assessment, be prepared to create a plan to address students' situational needs and challenges. This will require faculty to have some knowledge about various support services and resources within and outside the education setting for student referrals. This can be as simple as creating a pamphlet of resources or directory of resources.

Social Determinants of Health Assessment Tool for Mentees

Below is a list of events, which you may or may not have experienced in the past year. If you have not experienced an event, please circle 0. If you have experienced the event, please circle the appropriate number to indicate how stressful each event has been for you.

IN THE PAST YEAR HAS THE FOLLOWING HAPPENED TO YOU?	DID NOT HAPPEN	NOT AT ALL STRESSFUL	A LITTLE STRESSFUL	SOMEWHAT STRESSFUL	QUITE STRESSFUL	EXTREMELY STRESSFUL
Death of someone close to you.	0	1	2	3	4	5
Living in a neighborhood with high crime, drugs and fighting.	0	1	2	3	4	5
Not getting a work-related promotion due to race.	0	1	2	3	4	5
Friend or family member is seriously ill.	0	1	2	3	4	5
Unsure you can pay rent, utilities and buy food.	0	1	2	3	4	5
Unable to afford necessities for your children.	0	1	2	3	4	5
Being ill/having a health condition of your own.	0	1	2	3	4	5
Living in overcrowded housing.	0	1	2	3	4	5
Trying to make ends meet.	0	1	2	3	4	5
Family member(s) or friend(s) with personal/ financial problems.	0	1	2	3	4	5

Permission obtained from Duke University School of Nursing, Health Equity Academy (Carter, n.d.)

PHASE 3 Enabling Growth: Facilitating Learning

As the mentoring relationship develops, you as faculty mentors have a key role to enable growth and support your mentees’ learning. Providing useful feedback to mentees to help them achieve their desired learning goals is important during this phase. Timing of feedback is important. A good rule of thumb is to wait until establishing trust and rapport before giving feedback.

Tips for Giving Feedback

What to Do	How to Do It	Examples
Align your feedback with mentee’s stated needs and learning goals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide real-time feedback • Offer concrete, practical steps and options 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I have a few ideas that might help...” • “What works for me is..”
When you talk from your perspective, remember that your reality may not be the mentee’s reality.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When you talk about your own experience, set the context and be descriptive so the mentee can see the parallels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “In my experience which was...” • “I know that’s not your situation, but maybe there’s something to learn here.”
Check out your understanding of what is being said.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen actively. Clarify and summarize. • Avoid “Why” questions. “Why?” may instantly put a student on the defensive, making them feel judged and vulnerable when queried in this manner. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “If I understand what you are saying...” • “Help me understand what you mean by...”
Use a tone of respect, especially when you and your mentee see things differently.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take care not to undermine your mentee’s self-esteem. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I am curious about...” • “I wonder...” • “Have you ever considered...”
Avoid giving feedback when you lack adequate information.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask for time to get the information you need. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “To be honest with you, I need to think about that a little more.”

Encourage mentee to experience feedback as a movement forward rather than an interruption in the journey.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep linking progress and learning to the big picture, the journey, and the learning goals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “When we started out...And then....And now....”
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Adapted from: The Mentor’s Guide: Facilitating Effective Learning Relationships (Zachary, 2011)

- Provide ideas or information that the mentee can use to develop their own solution, when the mentee asks for your input.
- State advice and feedback in the first person singular. Giving advice using statements such as “You ought to...” “You should...” can raise defenses and cause resistance. Instead, using statements like “What I’ve found helpful...” and “What works for me...” may be better received by students.
- **Additional resource:** On December 4, 2019 Center to Champion Nursing in America (CCNA) partnered with National Alaska Native American Indian Nursing Association (NANAINA) to hold a webinar titled Creating Healthier Communities: Native American Nursing Students’ Experiences and the Role of Mentoring.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ml1qtTY9j0s>

RESOLVING DIFFERENCES CONSTRUCTIVELY

Conflict can arise in any relationship, including a mentoring relationship. When dealing with conflict, it is important to determine what the conflict is as well as the outcome you desire. Conflict between mentors and mentees often arise from miscommunication.

When conflict arises: a) Remember to focus on the issue, not the person; b) Maintain self-confidence and self-esteem of the mentee; c) Maintain a positive relationship.

To Successfully Manage Conflict You Need To Be Able To:

- Develop a supportive environment.
- Clearly understand what you want to happen.
- Explicitly express why you feel there is conflict.
- Listen openly and accurately to feedback.
- Discuss the issues (use facts rather than opinions).
- Stay solution-focused.

Steps for Managing Conflict:

- Take time to reflect before addressing conflict. Conflicts do not have to be resolved in the moment, especially if emotions are involved.
- Write down what you think area(s) of conflict are and why you think these are area(s) of conflict. Be clear and specific.
- Prepare for conversation. Set a supportive climate.
- Be prepared to listen. Use active listening techniques: paraphrasing, clarifying, questions, etc.
- Be prepared to move forward in a healthy, positive way.

TRUST: Maintaining a mentoring relationship built on trust. This could involve praise, sharing information, consistency, welcoming, confidentiality, paying attention to non-verbal cues.

Lowe & Struthers (2001) found that relationship, presence, and respect were characteristics of trust. *Relationship:* pertains to responsibility to self and others. *Presence:* described the characteristic of presence as sharing and breaking barriers. *Respect:* the characteristic of respect was described as similar to confidentiality and integrity, where integrity is, "...knowing the difference between doing things right and doing the right thing" (p. 282).



TRUST is the confidence in the honesty and reliability of another person. It is established and maintained in a relationship where ideas, feedback, and information are welcomed and openly shared. It is important to begin building trust during quiet times, when nothing much seems to be happening. To be responsive and consistent in a relationship is easier in these times. Then

when difficult times arrive, you will have a relationship already established through managing daily events, which will help see you through the more challenging times

Developing trust also is dependent on being able to recognize oppression or exploitation in the world around you. Learning more about how to approach power imbalance, denial, and systematic oppression is important learning content to consider through the mentoring relationship.

Building and Maintaining Harmonious Relationships

Mentorships are special kinds of relationships that must be nurtured. Respect, trust, and effective communication are important elements that are essential to maintaining and strengthening mentoring relationships. What can mentors do to maintain and strengthen relationships?

Often those in mentoring roles mistakenly rush to offer advice, provide suggestions and answers, or tell their own story without really listening to what their mentees' real concerns are. Here are a few tips to help build and maintain a harmonious mentoring relationship.

Tips on Active Listening and Building Rapport

- Be approachable — If you are sitting or standing, face the person with open and welcoming body language with arms uncrossed.
- A handshake is customary to many AI traditions, especially at first introductory meeting. Thereafter, do not hesitate to shake hands with your student/mentee at each meeting. Important to note: firmness of handshake varies among students.
- Mentors can use non-verbal responses such as nodding, maintaining eye contact, and smiling in conjunction with their verbal prompts to encourage the mentee to continue. Give plenty of eye contact and be careful not to make students uncomfortable. Occasionally looking away or looking downward can be used to communicate respect. Be mindful that eye contact varies.
- Silence is appropriate and shows respect.
- Initiate conversation — if a student has not initiated conversation, *you* can initiate conversation. Remember to maintain a pleasant tone and a moderate speaking speed.
- Don't interrupt until the mentee has finished their presentation of ideas.
- Be patient – you may encounter pauses in conversations, which are sometimes used for emphasis, rather than using word stress or intonation. These pauses do not mean that the person has finished speaking.
- Asking students about their family, home, and community would be appropriate. Students will appreciate you checking in with them about how their families are back home. Adapted from: (Heit, 1987; Zachary, 2011).

Evaluating the Mentoring Relationship

Nakoma Volkman (Anishinabe-Lakota) is an artist and founding member of the Native American Center of Southeast Minnesota. His drawings emphasize Native American themes and many of his works express ancient and spiritual values.

Below is a mentor-mentee evaluation tool inspired by Nakoma's drawing, "Pathway to wisdom - Achieving a balanced life in the sacred circle." The tool can be used to help prepare the mentor and mentee's personal reflections for discussions on how they best work together and achieve the mentoring goals.

The goal in the mentoring evaluation is to strengthen the relationship in order for the mentee to receive the support they need and desire.

Mentoring Relationship Evaluation Tool

	Always	Most of the time	Sometimes	Not present	Thoughts/Comments
Respect, treats others with dignity and honor					
Inspires with courage or confidence					
Listens, pays attention to the messages sent, verbal and non-verbal					
Conveys appreciation or expresses gratitude					
Shows integrity, where thoughts, words, and actions agree					
Nurtures compassion, makes choices for the welfare of others					
Shares and works together					
Conveys leadership, holds reverence for values and models of excellence					
Conveys kindness, and ability to reconcile and forgive past wrongs					

PHASE 4 Coming to Closure

Bringing closure to a mentoring relationship should provide an opportunity to reflect on lessons learned and take what has been learned to the next steps. As part of closure, celebrating the successes and learning that has taken place is encouraged.

SPIRITUALITY: Connect student with their desired level of spiritual support. It is important not to ignore this area.

Spirituality is a fundamental element in Native American culture and in nursing practice. It encompasses the characteristics of relationships, unity, honor, balance, and healing (Lowe & Struthers, 2001; Struthers & Littlejohn, 1999). Spirituality emphasizes the wholeness of individuals and their connections with everything that exists. Balance is sought through traditional ceremonies and other faith practices, living a good life, walking in balance, honoring ancestors, being a good relative, healing purposes, as well as giving thanks for well-being.

In a mentoring relationship, it is important to acknowledge, have respect for, and perhaps, encourage your mentee to stay connected or gain awareness of their spirituality.

FORMING PARTNERSHIPS

Forming partnerships with an AI/AN community is an important part of developing relationships with the people. Community elders, also known as culture bearers or wisdom keepers, are respected and trusted among community members. Elders are aware of and understand the necessity of attaining an education as well as the importance of maintaining the cultural ways and identity of AI/AN youth. They desire to help the youth keep balanced with the best of two worlds. An elder may also be a younger person from a community with a unique sense of responsibility for the good of the community.

BECOMING AN ALLY

As nursing faculty with an interest in mentoring AI/AN student nurses, you are becoming allies. An ally is an individual who has knowledge and understands that AI/AN students do have unique challenges and barriers based on the history of oppression. An ally is willing to encourage, support, and advocate for the student nurses on their journey to earn nursing degrees at all levels. An ally develops a trusting relationship with student nurses so that the process of open and honest dialogue can take place during mentorship activities.

CREATING AN ADVISORY BOARD

Formation of an advisory board is recommended for nursing programs to keep connected with community stakeholders, AI/AN board members, and allies. Keeping in mind the value of diversity, be inclusive by recruiting nurses, educators, and community leaders. Maintain inclusive support and foster innovative possibilities for growth and development of colleges of nursing that are diversifying the nursing workforce of our country.

Section 3: Recruitment Strategies for Schools of Nursing

RECRUITMENT STRATEGIES

In order to bridge the gap between accessing quality, culturally competent health care, and a more diverse nursing workforce, recruiting and graduating more nurses from diverse backgrounds is needed.

Diversifying the nursing workforce will provide compelling benefits for healthcare systems – especially in medically underserved communities. Specifically, diversity within the workforce will help address health inequities in historically underserved communities and promote greater access to care (Smedley, Stith, & Nelson, 2003; Williams, Walker, & Egede, 2016; Glazer, Tobias, & Mentzel, 2018; Thomas & Booth-McCoy, 2020).

Holistic Admissions

In order to create a more diverse nursing workforce, nursing programs have begun to adopt a “diverse-friendly” holistic admission process. The holistic admissions review process is most commonly defined as “a flexible, individualized way of assessing an applicant’s capabilities by which balanced consideration is given to experiences, attributes, and academic metrics” (Addams, Bletzinger, Sondheimer, White, & Johnson, 2010, p.10).

Holistic admissions focus more on understanding the whole student, as opposed to ranking students by their academic credentials. Holistic review presents an opportunity for institutions to move away from trying to simply attract large numbers of students with high grade point averages, high standardized test scores, many advanced placement courses, and other traditional academic trophies (AACN, 2020).

The American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) is now offering Holistic Review Workshops for colleges and universities interested in Holistic Admissions.

<https://www.aacnnursing.org/Diversity-Inclusion/Holistic-Admissions>

Pipeline Programs

Pipeline programs that target AI/AN youth (K-12th grades) to raise awareness and knowledge of the nursing profession and science are important recruitment strategies. As part of this effort, educating academic counselors on career opportunities in nursing and how to best prepare students for college courses (DeLapp, Hautman & Anderson, 2008; Ume-Nwagbo, 2012).

EXAMPLE: South Dakota State University’s Associates to BSN Pipeline Program

Historically, the Oglala Lakota College (OLC) on the Pine Ridge Reservation and South Dakota State University (SDSU) Rapid City Nursing Programs have established a collaborative relationship to support OLC nursing graduates who are interested in earning a BSN degree.

The SDSU Native American Nursing Education Center (NANEC) was founded to support Native American (NA) nursing students through licensure. Typically, NA students face unique

challenges related to poverty, families to care for, first-generation status, racism, and cultural differences such as learning style and feelings of not belonging and being disconnected from cultural values.

To address financial hardships, NANEC offers financial assistance through stipends and emergency funds. In addition, NANEC partners with the Great Plains NA Nurses Association (GPNANA) to mitigate issues with food insecurity and transportation problems by providing donated gift cards to meet the basic needs of students.

Academic and social support are provided through intentional mentoring with two NA nurse mentors and a NA academic advisor. Typically, the academic advisor is the first contact of incoming students. The NA advisor establishes the feeling of *tiospaye* (extended family) which helps to lessen the feelings of not belonging and disconnection to cultural values and life ways.

The two NA master's-prepared nurse mentors have many years of nursing experience including nursing faculty, public health, school health, home health, public, private, and military hospitals in the United States and internationally. Mentoring includes monthly scheduled in-person meetings, as well as meetings that occur when needed by the students. Mentors create and facilitate an environment of relationship, trust, and connectedness. In the beginning, students are oriented to the "process" of the mentor-mentee meetings by providing an update for each nursing course. Students are encouraged to share academic progress as well as challenges and successes in school and with their personal lives.

To offer cultural support for NA nursing students, NANEC offers monthly *Wohanpi na Wounspe* (soup and learn) events by serving soup for lunch and discussing a culturally relevant topic by a NA speaker from the community. Such events serve to promote cultural identity development for NA students as well as providing NA cultural knowledge and understanding for faculty, staff, and community. Grounded in Lakota values, NANEC also honors students through a traditional honoring ceremony to acknowledge and celebrate their accomplishment of graduation.

The NANEC Model promotes student retention and persistence. Financial, academic, social and cultural needs are met through programming and holistic support for all NA students including pre-nursing, nursing major, RN to BSN, accelerated, and graduate students.

Examples of *Wohanpi na Wounspe* (soup and learn) topics presented are: Indigenous Plants, edible and medicinal; Lakota Rites of Passage; Food Sovereignty in the Great Plains; Self Care: Lakota Perspectives; Historical Trauma: History and Description; Lakota Language.

Section 4: Glossary

Assimilate/assimilation - the policy of assimilation was an attempt to destroy traditional Indian cultural identities through forcing American Indians to immerse in the White man's culture via education in the boarding schools and other initiatives (The US-Dakota War of 1862, n.d.).

Balance - living a good life free from sickness and conflict. In traditional Native American cultures, harmony and balance exist on four different levels: internal, social, natural, and spiritual. (Native American Net Roots {NANR}, 2010). "*Koyaanisquatsi*"—life is out of balance (Metropolitan Chicago Healthcare Council {MCHC}, 2004).

Boarding School Era – began on the Yakima Indian Reservation in the state of Washington in 1860 through the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA). The first priority of the boarding schools was to provide rudimentary academic education. The end goal was eradication of Indian culture. It was not until 1978 with the passing of the Indian Child Welfare Act that Native American parents gained back the right to deny placement of their children in off-reservation schools (American Indian Relief Council {AIRC}, n.d.).

Ceremony/ceremonies – traditional healing ceremonies promote wellness by reflecting native conceptions of Spirit, Creator and the Universe. Ceremonies may include prayer, chants, drumming, songs, stories and the use of a variety of sacred objects. Traditional healing ceremonies are considered sacred and are only conducted by Native healers. Non-natives may participate by invitation only. (National Library of Medicine {NLM}, n.d.).

The Four Directions - each of the four directions (north, south, east and west) is typically represented by different colors, which for some, represent the different races. The directions can also represent:

- * stages of life – birth, youth, adult or elder and death
 - * seasons – spring, summer, winter and fall
 - * aspects of life – spiritual, emotional, intellectual and physical
 - * animals – eagle, bear, wolf, buffalo and many others
 - * ceremonial plants – tobacco, sweet grass, sage and cedar
- (NLM, n.d.)

Harmony - natural harmony and balance is necessary between human beings and the natural world: all of the natural features which surround us. Spiritual harmony and balance need to be maintained between human beings and the spiritual world. Social harmony and balance are necessary among the people. This allows them to work and live together. Internal harmony and balance allow individuals to be at peace with their bodies, their thoughts, and their emotions (NANR, 2010).

Health - health depends on proper actions and interactions with the spirit world. Well-being or wholeness comes through walking in harmony with the forces of nature and the universe. Illness is a sign of having fallen out of step with those forces, thus causing disharmony in spirit, mind, and body. Many Native Americans today will call upon both modern medicine and traditional healing ceremonies to achieve wellness. (MCHC, 2004).

"Kill the Indian, Save the Man" – motto of Col. Richard Henry Pratt, Army Captain and Headmaster of an off-reservation boarding school, the Carlisle Indian School in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. The goal was to use education as a tool to assimilate Indian tribes into the

mainstream of the American way of life, a Protestant ideology of the mid-19th century. Indian people would be taught the importance of private property, material wealth and monogamous nuclear families. The reformers assumed that it was necessary to “civilize” Indian people by making them accept White men’s beliefs and value systems. (AIRC, n.d.).

Trust/distrust – trust is a foundational concept in Native American culture; many AI/ANs and tribal nations have long-standing mistrust of research and research policies shaped by interactions with opportunistic academic researchers doing federally funded work without tribal input or benefit-sharing. Due to a history of negative experiences with and suspicion of population research, tribal nations see citizen protection as a primary function (Lucero and Roubideaux, 2020 and Mashford-Pringle and Pavagadhi, 2020).

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