



Cultural Perspective:

Working with Native American Elders in Michigan



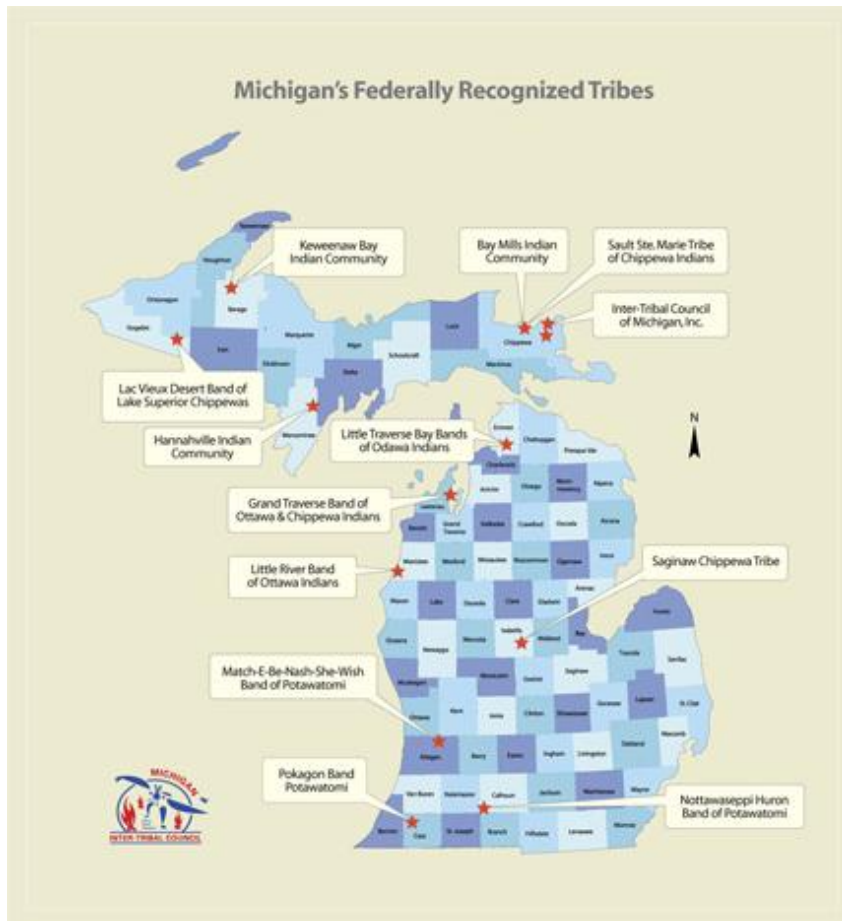
Biography

- Member of the Saginaw Chippewa Tribe
- Mother is full blood of Nottawaseppii, Ojibwe, Ottawa
- Father is Caucasian of German lineage
- Work experience with Substance Abuse, Adolescence, Mental Health and Aging
- Currently Administrator for Assisted Living Facility for the Saginaw Chippewa Tribe, Adjunct Professor and Substance Abuse Counselor

Learning Objectives

- Brief overview of demographics and data on Native American Tribes of Michigan
- Current issues facing Native American elder and caregivers
- Learn culturally appropriate approaches in care for Michigan Native American populations
- Understand the importance of family and socialization for Native American elders
- Identify resources specific to Native American Elders

Michigan Tribal Map



12 Federally recognized Tribes in Michigan

Map obtained by Intertribal Council of Michigan

<http://www.itcmi.org/information/tribal-map>

Population

- The most populous Michigan Counties are in the Upper Peninsula, near Traverse City, Petoskey, Mt Pleasant, Grand Rapids, and Lansing
- Percent of Population 8.0 or greater in most of the areas listed above
- Saginaw Chippewa Tribe of Michigan
 - District I 336 elders
 - District II 14 elders
 - District III in Michigan 480

Tribal Constitutions

- Membership are decided by each Tribes Constitution
- Can vary based on
 - Blood Quantum
 - Lineage
- IMPORTANT – this is a topic not easily discussed with most Native American's
- Why?

Current Issues

- Membership
- Housing
- Victimization
- Poverty
- Health Care
- Mobility
- Isolation
- Many of the issues facing Native American are similar to the general population

Membership

- Members
 - Have access to certain tribal resources and Indian Health Services providers
 - Some deal with discrimination within their own tribe
 - Subtle and not often discussed
- Non-members
 - Less access to resources afforded Tribal members
 - Also deal with discrimination as non-members
 - More overt forms found and easier to self-identify

Housing

- Tribal Housing is Limited
- Urban areas have less affordable housing
- Senior Housing is less available – Traverse City, Sault Ste. Marie and Saginaw Chippewa Tribe
- Assisted Living – Saginaw Chippewa Tribe
- Skilled Care – None
- Housing often shared with family members or other extended family members

Victimization

- Abuse
 - Subtle – financial, childcare, housing, use of assets, medication theft
 - Rare – physical abuse but it does occur
 - Emotional – verbal, withhold grandchild visitation
- Culture value of respect for elders – wise, knowledgeable, and cherished
 - Maybe less than general population due to value but statistics are flawed
 - Abuse can be under reported

Victimization

- Elder Protection Codes
 - Reservations are Nations within the U.S.
 - State Laws may not apply within reservation boundaries
 - Most Tribes do not have Elder Protection Codes in place
 - If they are in place they only apply within the reservation boundaries
 - No elder wants to see family, and friends prosecuted
- Several Codes I have read promote prevention and education long before prosecution

Poverty

- Many of the issues are similar to general population
- Difference
 - Pride and Independence – prevent some from discussing situation while others are okay with seeking assistance
 - Poverty is still prevalent – stable income may not be present
 - Casinos do not always mean income for membership

Health Care

- I.H.S. serves health care needs of Native Americans
- 43% live outside I.H.S. care boundaries (1)
- “No one needs to fuss over me”
- “Providers should know what’s wrong with me”
- Elder’s comfort with health care providers
 - Can be mistrusting
 - Communication barriers
 - Traditional medicines

Mobility and Isolation

- Again similar with Native American populations
- Rural areas make travel more problematic
- Native people are use to multigenerational families – this is changing
 - Loneliness can occur

Cultural Approaches

- Areas of Interest
 - Where do we start
 - Values
 - Language
 - Religion
 - Family

- How would you want to be approached?

Cultural Approaches

- Getting Started
- Respectful
 - Not with many papers to fill out
 - Seating considerations
 - Slow to warm
 - Eye contact
 - Interest in their case
- Interest in their history and culture but caution against being the “expert”

Culture Approaches

- Values
- 7 Grandfather Teachings
 - Nbwaakaawin Wisdom
 - Zaagidwin Love
 - Mnaadenidimowin Respect
 - Aakwade'ewin Bravery
 - Gwekwaadiziwin Honesty
 - Dbaadendiziwin Humility
 - Dewewin Truth

Cultural Approaches

- Language
 - Ojibwe speak Anishinaabee Mowin
 - Bodawatomii speak similar but different
 - Ottawa again speak similar but Odawa
- Its hard for me
 - Each culture, family and “group” has language variations
 - Dialect is different in areas
 - The way we put words together are interchange

Cultural Approaches

- Religion
- Many different religious practices and faiths
- Tradition
- Christianity
- Inter-unity

Cultural Approaches

- Family is very important
- Grandchildren and Children are very adored
- Can be source of stress but keep remarks positive
- Getting them to voice how they want the relationship to be?
- Many share extensive families – related in many different ways

Resources

- Website resources
- <http://cas.umkc.edu/casww/natamers.htm>
- <http://www.olderindians.org/aginglinks.cfm>
- <http://www.itcmi.org/>
- http://www.census.gov/geo/www/maps/aian2010_wall_map/aian_wall_map.html
- <http://www.michiganindianelders.org/>
- <http://www.ihs.gov/>
- <http://www.nicoa.org/>

References

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- How identity and cultural plays a part in what we do?
- Find how care is culturally sensitive and different from dominate society?
- Talk about what we do and how we do it.