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ASSISTANCE CENTER**



**CENTER FOR NATIVE
AMERICAN YOUTH**
AT THE ASPEN INSTITUTE



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Human Trafficking Leadership Academy Class 5 Recommendations

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ABOUT THIS DOCUMENT

This document was developed by fellows of the 2019–2020 Human Trafficking Leadership Academy (HTLA) Class 5 organized through the National Human Trafficking Training and Technical Assistance Center (NHTTAC), Center for Native American Youth (CNAY), and Coro Northern California. Fellows were recruited nationally (exclusive to those with an Indigenous background) with diverse professional backgrounds, cultures, traditions, and expertise, including survivor leaders, and worked together to develop recommendations on how culture could serve as a protective factor in preventing trafficking among Native youth. The fellowship is funded by the Office on Trafficking in Persons (OTIP) and the Administration for Native Americans (ANA) at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). The recommendations and content of this document are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of OTIP, ANA, or HHS.

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PROJECT QUESTION

Worldwide, Indigenous people are at a higher risk of human trafficking—including both sex trafficking and labor trafficking—than other diverse populations (Administration for Children and Families, 2018). Indigenous groups in the United States, including American Indian/Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander populations, are especially at risk. The Human Trafficking Leadership Academy (HTLA) Class 5 fellows were asked to address the following project question:

“How can culture be a protective factor in preventing trafficking among Native youth?”

To answer this question and promote inclusivity, Class 5 fellows reframed it as follows:

“How can culture be a protective factor in preventing trafficking among all Indigenous youth?”

It is important to acknowledge the inclusivity of *all* Indigenous youth in this report, including Two-Spirit, Third-Gender, LGBTQIA+, girls, boys, Native Americans, Alaska Natives, Native Hawaiians, American Samoans, and so on.

It is also important to acknowledge that this report (1) provides foundational knowledge of historical context and the continued impact on Indigenous communities today and (2) identifies unique vulnerabilities, assets, and strengths found in Indigenous communities and cultures as a means of supporting the recommendations. While one report cannot capture all of the inherently unique histories and characteristics of all Indigenous people in the United States, the HTLA Class 5 fellows hope this report and its recommendations will provide a beginning to continued change, healing, and safety for *all* Indigenous youth—now and for future generations.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Historical trauma impacted Indigenous communities in many ways across the United States and created vulnerabilities in these populations that led to staggering rates of trafficking and exploitation of Indigenous people. These vulnerabilities are a direct result of systematic oppression and impact Indigenous people across multiple levels today.

Rooted in the risk of trafficking that Indigenous people carry are the systems that oppressed them for hundreds of years and the continued ramifications for each successive generation. Historical trauma refers to the “cumulative emotional and psychological wounding over the lifespan and across generations, emanating from massive group trauma” (Brave Heart, 2003, 1998). Within the overarching concept of historical trauma is the sub-theory of intergenerational trauma, which examines the effects of trauma across generations in one family (Coyle, 2014). These intergenerational models explain the issues and struggles, such as trafficking and physical and sexual violence, which continue to affect Indigenous people, stemming from the violent and oppressive efforts of Western European colonization for generations.

Historical Legislation

Many U.S. federal policies have had a major impact on Indigenous communities over the past several hundred years. These policies were often created with the intention of disrupting natural lifeways and values of self-governance, thus breaking down traditional Indigenous culture. The

Indian Removal Act of 1830, for instance, resulted in numerous treaties made between tribal nations and the federal government that stole tribal landholdings and resources and limited access to cultural sites. Tribes were moved to less desirable lands and forced to participate in Western subsistence farming, often leaving them unable to provide sustenance to their families and communities. Under the Mining Act of 1872, missionaries and miners claimed large portions of land in Alaska, while Alaska Natives were barred from such opportunity due to a lack of U.S. citizenship (Ongtooguk, 2013). As a result, Alaska Natives were unable to achieve economic stability, and their lifeways were targeted for assimilation.

The Dawes Act of 1887 and the Alaska Native Allotment Act of 1906 furthered the physical breakdown of traditional, communal ways of living and forced Native families to accept individual landholdings. A registration system to track “blood quantum” further divided Indigenous people and assimilated Native Americans and Alaska Natives within their own groups: Native Americans who “registered” as “mixed-blood” were granted U.S. citizenship, while those who were assigned “full-blood” status were deemed less assimilated. Alaska Natives faced voting and citizenship eligibility requirements relying on their “abandonment of tribal customs” and the “complete adoption of a civilized way of life” often measured through means such as the ability to pass an English literacy test (Drucker, 1958). This intentional breakdown in individual and tribal identities, using “blood quantum” and other tools of colonization, enabled the U.S. government to sell stolen reservation land to white settlers and address their “Indian problem” by enslaving and killing Indians, stripping tribes of their status, and effectively disregarding tribal sovereignty and cultural systems.

The claim to the U.S. federal government’s “years of official depredations and ill-conceived policies” was affirmed by President Obama’s 2009 apology to Native people of the United States and earlier in President Clinton’s 1993 apology to the Hawaiian people. Obama’s apology also acknowledged the “breaking of covenants by the Federal Government” (US SJ Res. 14, 2009). The resolution further expresses regret for the long-term implications of these atrocities, highlighting the government’s intention to reconcile relationships with Native tribes in the United States, with the disclaimer that the resolution did not stand as a settlement of any claims.

While Native American and Alaska Native tribes function through the political legalities of treaties and a government-to-government relationship with the U.S. government, it is important to note that these systems do not always extend to Native Hawaiians and American Samoan Indigenous people. In fact, Alaska and Hawaii have only held statehood for 60+ years, while American Samoa became an unincorporated U.S. territory in 1900 and was largely ignored as a region until the 1960s. Even today, American Samoans are considered “noncitizen nationals” and are required to complete a naturalization process to become U.S. citizens (Poblete-Cross, 2010). This leads to complications in relationships, resources, and political status of the Indigenous people of those lands. Nevertheless, all of these Indigenous groups have experienced systematic oppression and targeted attacks on their societal and cultural lifeways—in the name of manifest destiny, assimilation, and colonialism through federal policy.

Assimilation Practices

Indigenous communities were in precarious situations due to ongoing treaty violations, forced annexations, and U.S. government assimilation processes when the U.S. government implemented forced attendance for Indigenous children at government-sanctioned and church-run boarding schools (Native American Rights Fund, 2019). The impact of these institutions is seen in many families and communities today—woven into the many layers of trauma, including abuse, addiction, poverty, and poor health outcomes—risks that this report will address in more detail. Children taken from their homes and forced to attend these institutions were often subjected to extreme abuse and

neglect at the hands of school officials. Students were beaten, starved, and subjected to physical, sexual, and other forms of abuse for speaking their Native languages. They were also forced to abandon their Indigenous spiritual practices for Western European-based Christianity. Many who attended these boarding schools were left with long-lasting wounds that ultimately impacted families, language, and personal connections to their tribal nations and practices. These wounds continue today in many communities as large numbers of Indigenous children attended boarding schools into the 1960s.

Ongoing assimilation created a chasm in which many individuals and families no longer had access to or interest in participating in traditional healing activities due to shame and guilt. Those who returned to their communities found themselves divided about their personal identities, families, and tribal nations. Some fought to hold on to the traditional teachings and lessons of community Elders to preserve the strong connection to their language, culture, and traditions. Others refused to speak or teach their language and traditions due to the trauma. Today, many Indigenous groups and tribes struggle to find the means to support and revive their languages, cultural practices, identity, and traditional teachings—which are added vulnerabilities.

Protective Legislation

A vital part of this preservation of Indigenous cultural practices is the protection of Indigenous families and efforts to keep the connection between children and their Indigenous communities. Following decades of removal, the Association of American Indian Affairs began researching national rates of removal and adoption rates of Native American children in the late 1960s. They found that between 25 percent and 35 percent of Native American children were removed from their homes, and nearly 90 percent were placed in white homes by state welfare and private adoption agencies (H. Rep. No. 95-1386, 1978). In response to this, the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) was enacted as a federal law in 1978 (National Indian Child Welfare Association [NICWA], 2019). The intent of ICWA is to “protect the best interests of Indian children and to promote the stability and security of Indian tribes and families”. While ICWA has been hailed as the “gold standard” in child welfare, Native American children continue to be placed out of the home at disproportionate rates in noncompliant ICWA placements, and efforts to dismantle this law in the name of assimilation still persist today (NICWA, 2019).

Inclusivity for Vulnerable Populations

In recognizing the importance of this historical context and the acknowledgment of all Indigenous youth, it is also important to give context to those who identify as Two-Spirit, Third-Gender, and LGBTQIA+, who are at an even greater risk of exploitation. Two-Spirit is generally used as a term to refer to “a gender role believed to be common among most American Indian/Alaska Native communities and nations, one that had a proper and accepted place within societies” (Western States Center, 2019). In modern settings, Two-Spirit is understood to refer to gender, rather than sexual orientation, and was established as a formal term in 1990. Historically, the term for a Two-Spirit individual varied in definition, specificity, and terminology across tribes. For most tribes, Two-Spirit people were male, female, and/or intersexed individuals who took on opposite gender roles. Prior to Western European contact, Two-Spirit people were also considered sacred and holy and were treated with the utmost respect and honor in most tribal communities. Some Indigenous communities recognize nonbinary or Third-Gender identities, which have both historically held, and currently hold, spiritually significant roles within Indigenous communities as individuals blessed with both masculine and feminine qualities. Many Indigenous Pacific Island regions recognize third genders, for example, *Fa’afafine* in Samoan culture and *Māhū* in Hawaiian culture.

While these identities are often embraced within their cultures, they may still experience heightened risk, especially when living out of their homelands. Unfortunately, forced assimilation policies and the boarding school era resulted in the stigmatization of Two-Spirit and Third-Gender people who were then forced into a single-gender identity. While there have been efforts to reclaim the traditional importance of Two-Spirit, Third-Gender, and nonbinary identities, the legacy of shame and stigma, coinciding with a lack of protection by federal and state policies, has left these individuals vulnerable to trafficking due to continued invisibility and discrimination. Individuals of the Indigenous Two-Spirit, Third-Gender, and LGBTQIA+ community have also not been immune to the continued impact of colonialism and targeted violence due to the lack of protections and access to justice, education, health and safety. With Western European colonization came a shift in the way tribal communities viewed and, in some cases, continue to treat Two-Spirit, Third-Gender, and LGBTQIA+ individuals today. As a result of this continued historical and intergenerational trauma, Two-Spirit and Third-Gender people are often a forgotten and underserved population in all areas, including child welfare, violence of all forms, and human trafficking.

While there is limited data addressing Two-Spirit, Third-Gender, and Indigenous LGBTQIA+ youth in the foster care system, information about the treatment of any youth in the system who identify as LGBTQIA+ is both inhumane and unjust. LGBTQIA+ youth are at an increased risk of experiencing childhood sexual abuse and physical abuse by a caretaker and entering the foster care system at one to nearly four times the likelihood of their heterosexual peers (Fish, Baams, Wojciak, & Russell, 2019; the Office of Planning, Research & Evaluation, 2015). Additional studies have also highlighted the overrepresentation of LGBTQIA+ youth in the child welfare system at a rate of 15 percent to 30 percent, compared to the rate of the general population of youth at only 3 percent to 11 percent representation (Baams, Wilson, & Russell, 2019; Scannapieco, Painter, & Blau, 2018). With the disproportionate rates of Indigenous youth overall represented in the child welfare system, Two-Spirit, Third-Gender, and Indigenous LGBTQIA+ youth are expected to be at an even higher risk. This lack of data is attributed to nonlife-affirming policy and the inability to recognize the importance in capturing data to justify the need for services and research specific to Two-Spirit, Third-Gender, and LGBTQIA+ individuals. Without data, the specific struggles and unique needs of this group continue to be unaddressed, unfunded, and unmet—thereby further marginalizing them from their communities and services while further enabling exploitation.

VULNERABILITIES

Historical and current risk factors make all Indigenous people prime targets for many forms of violence, including human trafficking (Office on Trafficking in Persons, 2017). Generational trauma manifests in many ways and culminates in a heightened risk of experiencing both labor and sex trafficking. Factors such as poverty and high rates of family involvement with the child welfare system are a direct result of colonization and the deep wounds that run through Indigenous communities. The inability to heal from this trauma increases the likelihood that these cycles of trauma will continue for each successive generation, through direct and indirect interactions, particularly in children and youth experiencing trauma at a young age (Weston, 2018). In order to combat human trafficking, we must address the layers of generational trauma, reduce risk factors, educate communities and youth, and strive to prevent the next generation from knowing this suffering. In addition, it is imperative that the U.S. government provide more resources for tribal governments to create the policies, laws, and programs to hold perpetrators accountable and support survivors.

When looking at risk factors and vulnerabilities, it is imperative to look deeper at different external and internal influences and traits that can increase vulnerability to human trafficking (see Figure 1).

The following sections examine five areas of vulnerabilities for Indigenous people—individual, relationship, community, societal, and historical—adapted from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s (CDC) social-ecological model as a framework for prevention of trafficking (CDC, 2020).

Figure 1. Risk Factors



Individual Vulnerability

Due to colonialism, the life-affirming ways of self-identity and tribal/Indigenous identity have been disrupted. Indigenous children are more likely to be system-involved, including foster care placement. One study found that where abuse has been reported, Indigenous children are 2 times more likely to be investigated, 2 times more likely to have allegations of abuse substantiated, and 4 times more likely to be placed in foster care than white children (Hill, 2017). This is largely due to systemic bias. Different contributing factors heighten individual risk factors, including poverty; mental health stigma; homelessness; inadequate stable support systems; Two-Spirit, Third-Gender, and Indigenous LGBTQIA+ identity; and overall lack of belonging or community (Countryman-Roswurm & Bolin, 2014). We know that dissociation can also worsen the feeling of not belonging.

Relationship Vulnerability

Risk associated with inter- and intrapersonal relationships of Indigenous youth and survivors of trafficking is a direct consequence of colonization, continued abuse, and systematic attacks on Indigenous culture. Assimilation practices have contributed to feelings of disconnect from cultural ceremonies and traditions, the persistence of childhood sexual abuse, and a lack of willingness and ability to address these issues. Tribal communities and Indigenous people living away from tribal lands and reservations have insufficient services and available support. These lack of resources, along with the lack of adequate and timely law enforcement response, make it difficult for individuals, families, and communities to heal and address these crimes while further deepening distrust and resistance to change. This lack of willingness to address these issues can also lead to further problems in families and communities, including substance use and continued cycles of trauma and abuse (Countryman-Roswurm & Bolin, 2014). Challenges to find positive, healthy role models in families and communities—due to inefficient data, advocacy, educational resources, law enforcement responses, etc.—further enables these relationship patterns to persist through the normalization of abusive behaviors.

“We must model to our children what we want their future relationships to look like. Nobody showed me what a ‘healthy relationship’ was. It took me over 15 years to know I deserved better than being hurt and exploited.”

—Anonymous trafficking survivor, Arizona

Community Vulnerability

It is important to look at the systematic oppression and influences that make a community susceptible to trafficking. A weak economy and lack of employment and higher educational opportunities cause job insecurity, creating a breeding ground for these crimes to take place and leaving Indigenous youth open to exploitation. Many young people come to the cities from their tribal communities for many reasons, including promises of love, opportunity, education, safety, and even adventure, and often find themselves in extremely vulnerable positions for exploitation (Countryman-Roswurm, 2015). Communities, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, often do not recognize or accept trafficking and exploitation as issues to address, making it harder for survivors to come forward. In many communities, a lack of secure opportunity for victims and survivors creates a thriving environment of opportunity for gang activity and local trafficking.

Societal Vulnerability

A demand for buying sex and cheap labor drives human trafficking. Without demand, there would be no need for a supply. An example of the increased demand for Indigenous people, specifically Indigenous women, and girls, is linked to natural resource extraction. “Man camps”—the fracking industry’s housing locations that often hold thousands of transient workers—increase demand in those areas for trafficking, especially sex trafficking. Rural reservations, typically isolated from accessible support resources, located near these “man camps” provide an ideal setting for traffickers to take advantage of their victims (Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, 2016). Other societal issues include the sexualization and commodification of women and girls and racial oppression. Trafficking victims, especially sex trafficking victims, often are

“We CAN, we MUST, and we WILL do a better job of protecting our children. Join me.”

—Dr. Verna M. Bartlett, Puyallup Tribal Elder

criminalized, increasing the risk for re-exploitation of these survivors exiting the criminal justice systems. Girls who experience criminal legal placement often are criminalized for common coping responses to trauma, such as substance use and running away, and girls of color are more likely to be criminalized than white girls (Saada Saar, Epstein, Rosenthal, & Vafa, 2015).

It is also important to note that boys and LGBTQIA+ youth are also at risk, despite the narrative of the majority that tends to focus only on women and girls. In a federal report studying youth involvement in the sex trade, of the interviewed youth who had experienced trafficking, 36 percent identified as cis males and 1 percent identified as trans male (Swaner, Labriola, Rempel, Walker, & Spadafore, 2016). In that same study, 47 percent of the interviewed youth trafficking victims identified as bisexual, gay, or a sexual orientation other than heterosexual. Additionally, a lack of long-term support and access to resources often leads to the re-exploitation of trafficking victims. Studies show that for human trafficking victims, both labor and sex trafficking, the need for culturally relevant, long-term, and community-based solutions are essential to long-term independent living (Busch-Armendariz, Nsonwu, & Heffron, 2011).

Historical Vulnerability

Indigenous people, in what is currently known as the continental United States, Hawaii, and Alaska, have been exploited since the very first point of contact with European colonizers. The original mentality of these colonizers that Indigenous people were “savages” to be “tamed” continues to influence the views and treatment of Indigenous people, especially the hyper-sexualization of Indigenous women and girls (Logan, 2015). The methods for trafficking Indigenous women and children, specifically, has remained consistent across time through the “commoditization and exploitation of the bodies of Native women and girls” and has only remained due to a lack of meaningful intervention from the U.S. government (Deer, 2015). Our communities have often denied that human trafficking is happening to Indigenous people at a disproportionately higher rate (Brave Heart Society and Sovereign Bodies Institute, 2019). Many of the documented missing and murdered Indigenous people were engaged in the sex trade and may have been victimized through trafficking. Many tribes do not have penal codes to respond to trafficking, and many tribes do not have jurisdiction over sex crimes on tribal land. This, coupled with the low rate of investigated and prosecuted cases involving Indigenous victims, fuels the long-standing distrust of government systems.

ILLUSTRATIONS OF CULTURE

When addressing vulnerabilities, it is important to note the features and traits that continue to support

“100 years ago, the Ancestors would not recognize the language or practices of our Elders/people today, but we are still the same people speaking and practicing the same life-affirming intentions of our values that were once the law of our lands that influenced our actions that was taught to us through our Native languages, ceremony and customs that teach “What it means to be a Good relative to one another.”

—Wendy Schlater, Vice Chairwoman, La Jolla Band of Luiseno Indians

Indigenous cultural resiliency, led by traditional knowledge and worldview about self, relationship, community, societal, and historical factors. Culture is not just a figurative concept—culture is alive and evolving. It is a living and breathing natural process for Indigenous people. Despite efforts to stifle or destroy it by those who do not understand it, Indigenous culture continues to live on through the resiliency and determination of the people.

It is important to understand Indigenous cultures when advocating for culturally specific resources to prevent, intervene, and respond to crisis. The following anecdotal illustrations represent the culture preserved by Indigenous people from Native American tribes, Alaska Native villages, Native Hawaiian regions, and American Samoan communities. Through these illustrations, we can develop a further understanding of how culture can serve as a protective factor.

The Three Sisters Story as told by Tillie Black Bear (Sicangu Lakota)

One day, three sisters were walking through the forest when they heard babies crying. They walked toward the direction they of the cries and came to a river of crying babies floating down the river. One sister jumps in the river and starts pulling all the babies she can out of the river. The second sister jumps in and starts teaching the babies how to swim. The third sister starts walking upstream and, as she is walking upstream, the other two sisters yell out to her asking where she is going. The third sister yells back to the sisters in the river: "I am going to find out why the babies are falling in the river in the first place."

The first sister represents crisis work, the second sister represents intervention, and the third sister represents prevention.

Traditional Hawaiian Healing and Western Influence

The three primary categories of the 14 healing practices among Hawaiians are *ho'olomilomi*, the practice of massage, *la'au lapa'au*, an herbalist healing practice, and *ho'oponopono*, the practice of counseling and mediation to resolve conflicts and balance relationships. The Hawaiian people should be able to nurture their culture and have an active role in planning their roadmap to treatment and prevention programs.

The Hawaiian word for health is ola (life). Without health, there is no life. Hawaiians view the body, mind, and spirit as one. The body cannot be healed without healing the spirit. Hawaiian culture considers nature and health to be entwined. "When the environment is affected in a positive or negative way, everything is affected."

Ka maui o k'aina a he maui kanasa is a Hawaiian expression defining the belief that maintaining the aina (land) promotes the health of the people. Native Hawaiians believe that the land, trees, ocean, and winds all impact their body, mind, and spirit through mana, the healing energy felt by the soul from the Islands.

Traditional Hawaiian healing practices are important to the health of Hawaiians. It is estimated that there are 14 healing practices among Hawaiians.

Sources: Excerpted from K. Hilgenkamp & C. Pescala. (2003). Traditional Hawaiian healing and Western influence. *Californian Journal of Health Promotion*, 1, 34–39; MF Oneha, (2001), Ka maui o ka aina a he maui kanaka: an ethnographic study from a Hawaiian sense of place.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to make recommendations to answer the project question, "**How can culture be a protective factor in preventing trafficking among all Indigenous youth?**" this report examined the historical context and continued impact of trafficking on Indigenous communities as well as their

unique risk and resilience factors. (Figure 2 summarizes anti-trafficking strength and protective factors.)

Figure 2. Indigenous Strength and Protective Factors



The HTLA Class 5 fellows hope the following recommendations will provide a beginning to continued change, healing, and safety for *all* Indigenous youth. The recommendations are grouped into three categories: macro (historical and societal), mezzo (community), and micro (relationship and individual). The infographic in Appendix A provides an illustrative summary of the recommendations.

Macro (Historical and Societal) Recommendations

1. Renew emphasis and adherence to ICWA.
 - a. Increased data collection and monitoring at both the state and federal level is an important first step in understanding how well the requirements of the ICWA are being met.
 - b. State data must drive state and federal strategic planning to address disparities for Native children and inconsistencies in the application of ICWA.
 - c. Partnerships between state agencies and tribal nations will assist in making decisions about placement of Native children (NICWA, 2019).
2. Promote programs and resources with appropriations that financially invest in and promote cultural healing for all Indigenous people through national campaigns, policies, programs, and practices. Cultural healing consists of “reconnecting people to the vibrant strengths of their ancestry and culture, helping people process the grief of past traumas, and creating new

historical narratives” (University of Minnesota Extension, 2020). This may include reconnecting with their Native community through traditions, stories, and ceremonies (Stringer, 2018).

- a. Increase funding for the Indian Health Service (IHS) Program; specifically, increase funding for behavioral health intervention and prevention initiatives that incorporate cultural healing.
 - b. Increase funding to evaluate prevention and intervention programs for Indigenous youth to establish best practices for cultural healing. This should not be intended to create a “one size fits all approach” as there are hundreds of unique tribal nations. Rather, this data should illuminate effective practices to assist professionals and providers outside of IHS. Ideally, programs would be easily replicated, broadly disseminated, and individually adjusted and applied.
3. Mandate trauma-informed cultural humility training for all child welfare and juvenile justice programs across the nation. This includes acknowledgment of all youth (i.e., Native Hawaiian, Alaska Native, Two-Spirit, Third-Gender, and LGBTQIA+, etc.) and differs from cultural competency in that cultural humility is based on a foundation of not seeing any particular culture as “the norm.” Cultural humility requires a recognition of historical traumas and persistent self-reflection to understand the context of the individual (Sufrin, 2019). When child welfare and juvenile justice professionals operate with cultural humility, the youth they serve feel “seen” and their experiences of historical trauma are recognized. This is a critical component to cultural healing. Services not rooted in cultural humility cause further harm, particularly for Native youth who experience intergenerational and historical trauma (University of Minnesota Extension, 2020).
4. Increase funding allocations to all communities to improve access to culturally specific support systems that develop individuals holistically in efforts to prevent human trafficking (e.g., housing, education, employment, psychological healing, and identity restoration, etc.).
- a. Increase funding for re-entry and prosperity-promoting services (e.g., housing, survivor-leadership development, community economic development, etc.). Some examples, may include, but not limited to:
 - i. A separate funding stream for grants administered by the HHS Family and Youth Services Bureau (FYSB), including funding specifically to the Runaway and Homeless Youth Training and Technical Assistance Center, would provide training, technical assistance, and resources to grantees who interact with the most vulnerable youth in any community to ensure they are equipped to identify and serve Native youth.
 - ii. A separate funding stream for grants administered by the U.S. Department of Justice’s Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) and/or the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) would provide training, technical assistance, and resources to grantees providing re-entry and holistic prosperity-promoting services for Native youth. Prosperity-promoting services increase self-sufficiency by offering opportunities for development, empowerment, and leadership while assisting with meeting basic needs.
5. Invest in communicative data systems and informative research to illuminate the extent of and need for prevention/intervention of human trafficking of all Indigenous young people (e.g., Two-

Spirit, Third-Gender, and LGBTQIA+, girls, boys, Native American, Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian, American Samoa, etc.).

- a. With special focus on National efforts to understand the scope of human trafficking is diluted by systematic misunderstandings and inconsistencies in the definition of trafficking, force, fraud, and coercion. This is mirrored in the identification of Indigenous youth, particularly Two-Spirit, Third-Gender, and LGBTQIA+ youth, where definitions and understandings vary across professions or communities.
- b. Additionally, a special focus and intentional effort to identify the scope of missing and murdered Indigenous people is lacking, particularly for Native and Indigenous individuals living in urban communities. According to the Urban Indian Health Institute (UIHI) (2018), 71 percent of American Indian/Alaska Native individuals live in urban communities.
 - i. Collection of data from Native communities, particularly in urban settings, should be prioritized by local, state, and federal governments. Federal funding should be made available through IHS to prioritize and standardize collection of this data—specifically, data concerning missing and murdered Native people, system involvement of Native youth (child welfare and juvenile justice systems), reasons for system involvement, assessment of identified risk factors for human trafficking and system involvement, assessment of research-identified resilience and protective factors, and availability and accessibility of prevention and intervention services for Native youth, and program evaluation data for such services.
- c. The federal government must pass legislation allowing tribal nations to advocate for members who go missing or are murdered while living in urban communities. This is a right of sovereign nations not currently extended to tribal nations (UIHI, 2018).

Mezzo (Community) Recommendations

1. Local governments and agencies should seek, access, and allocate funding (including funding recommended in the previous section from FYSB, OVC,OJJDP, ANA, OTIP, etc.) to provide resources and support networks that assist in cultural healing for all Indigenous youth (e.g., on reservations and in urban communities, Two-Spirit, Third-Gender, and LGBTQIA+, girls, boys, Native American, Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian, American Samoa, etc.), including:
 - a. Historical and cultural education programs
 - b. Opportunities for cultural engagement and development of cultural practices
 - c. Sharing Elder wisdom
 - d. Positive youth development opportunities, including economic empowerment opportunities
 - i. Allocate resources and funding for blending Indigenous cultural practices with evidence-based interventions. This has shown positive results in reducing mental health and drug disparities (Stringer, 2018). Positive Youth Development is a framework of practice shown to “reduce risky behaviors, improve social and emotional outcomes and lead to a successful transition to adulthood” (Woodard,

2019). Indigenous youth should be given opportunities to lead and connect with their culture in order to promote their resiliency.

1. As an example of this type of programming, members of the Yupi'ik Alaska Native community have partnered with local researchers to develop and administer a program known as *Qungasvik*. This program partners youth and Elders in shared activities and lessons aimed at reconnecting youth to their cultural values and ancestral traditions (Stringer, 2018).
 2. First Nations Development Institute invests in Indigenous youth by funding youth projects and provides financial education programs for Indigenous youth. Its models of programming and investment may be a helpful example to communities seeking to support the development and empowerment of Native youth.
2. Local governments and agencies should seek, access, and allocate funding (such as from funding opportunities recommended in the previous section from FYSB, OVC, OJJDP, ANA, OTIP, etc.) to provide risk reduction and prosperity promoting programs that specifically address community-specific factors, including:
- a. Community and family engagement programs
 - i. UIHI (2018) identifies several reasons for the gaps in data on missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls. Local governments and communities should work to correct:
 1. Underreporting
 - a. Standardize processes, ensuring they are culturally and trauma-informed.
 2. Racial misclassification, that is, not correctly identifying someone as American Indian/Alaska Native
 - a. Develop training and standard processes for agencies who interact with the public, particularly individuals who are vulnerable to and/or survivors of interpersonal violence.
 3. Poor relationships between law enforcement and American Indian/Alaska Native communities
 - a. Law enforcement entities should make efforts to learn more about the tribal nations represented in their community and develop relationships.
 4. Poor recordkeeping protocols
 - a. After implementing the changes above, agencies and local government entities should standardize their recordkeeping protocols specific to information collected on Native individuals.

- b. Mandatory hiring of Indigenous people in child welfare and juvenile justice systems
- c. Hiring and promoting Indigenous court advocates in the criminal justice system

Micro (Relationship and Individual) Recommendations

1. Implement mechanisms that increase and improve processes for all Indigenous youth to access prevention and intervention resources.
 - a. Training and identification of local peer educators, advocates, or counselors
 - b. Indigenous representation guiding all steps (prevention, identification, assessment, intervention, evaluation, and prosperity promoting practices)
2. Invest in measures of quality and accountability.
 - a. Standards for education, licensure, and training of multidisciplinary professionals, particularly those in the helping and criminal/legal professions
 - b. Indigenous Elder and youth oversight of juvenile justice and social welfare
 - c. Training to professionals in Indigenous family networks and how to connect Indigenous youth, particularly in urban settings to Indigenous culture. Definitions of family used in legal settings or for government data do not reflect Indigenous family accurately. Indigenous family is greatly connected to culture and social relationships and may be ambiguous to non-Indigenous individuals (Tam, Findlay, & Kohen 2017). Boundaries can be blurred, and caregiving roles expanded and provided by multiple generations to the extent that some Indigenous languages do not have a clear translation of “family” (Tam et al., 2017). This fluidity and broad understanding of family provides young people with a cultural strength and opportunity to find connections with other Indigenous youth and Elders.

APPENDIX A: SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Human Trafficking Prevention Among All Indigenous Youth

Recommendations

Macro

1. Renew emphasis and adherence to ICWA
2. Promote programs and resources with appropriations that financially invest in and promote cultural healing for all indigenous people through national campaigns, policies, programs, and practices.
3. Mandate trauma-informed cultural humility training for all child welfare and juvenile justice programs across the nation.
4. Increase funding allocations to improve access to culturally-specific support systems that develop individuals holistically in efforts to prevent human trafficking.
5. Invest in communicative data systems and informative research to illuminate the extent and need for prevention/intervention of human trafficking of all Indigenous young people.

Mezzo

1. Local governments and agencies seek, access, and allocate funding to provide resources and support networks that assist in cultural healing for all Indigenous youth.
2. Local governments and agencies seek, access, and allocate funding to offer risk reduction and prosperity promoting programs that specifically address community-specific factors.

Micro

1. Implement mechanisms that increase and improve processes for all Indigenous youth to access prevention and intervention resources
2. Invest in measures of quality and accountability.

APPENDIX B: OUR STORIES OF LIVED EXPERIENCE

In humble transparency and vulnerability, and keeping true to our Indigenous cultural practices, several members of the HTLA Class 5 offer personal stories and poems. This is done in an effort to illuminate how culture has impacted individual experiences of abuse, exploitation, trafficking—and healing.

“Cultural Home” by Karen Countryman-Roswurm, Ph.D., L.M.S.W.

As I considered how I might share a bit of my life story for the purpose of our report, I became overwhelmed with gratitude. It has been an honor to walk alongside my Indigenous siblings over the last several months while we have explored how culture can serve as a protective factor in preventing trafficking. After all, the journey has not only been professional, but personal. We have shared in spiritual practices and ceremony, reconnected to cultural pains, and reclaimed our cultural pride. Thus, by accepting the invitation to join the Human Trafficking Leadership Academy Class 5, it feels as though I have come full circle. I feel as though I was welcomed into a bigger...cultural “home.”

The truth is that, for some of us, assessing how culture can serve as a protective factor meant that we had to remember how our culture and communities had let us down. As a Blackfoot woman, I am a descendant of generational demoralization. Building upon this, I was conceived, born, and bred in a life of trauma worsened by poverty, addiction, neglect, domestic violence, divorce, abandonment, and various forms of abuse. As an adolescent, at the age of 13, I came home to find that the only active adult in my life, my mother, had died by suicide. Alone, and without the cultural support, I became a ward of the courts. Vulnerable, I faced exploitation as I was exposed to social services, criminal-legal systems, and the streets. With this in mind, I closely know and understand what it means to live life from a place of loss, disconnection, isolation, hopelessness, and desperation.

Yet, just as my holistic body remembers its pains, so too do I embrace cultural pride, possibility, and prosperity. At the age of 16, I fought for—and won—early independence through legal emancipation. With community support, I was able to access the resources that allowed me to become sustainably self-reliant: housing, employment, and college education. Most importantly, through engaging relationships and strengthened by spiritual practices, I was able to step into the lifelong journey of awareness, healing, and self-actualization. I am proud to call myself a survivor. I closely know and understand what it means to live life from a place of holistic peace, hope, significance, completeness, and abundance. I am a thriver. I am an overcomer. I am a wife. I am a mother of the two most beautiful children in the world. I am a friend. I am a sister. I am a dancer, gardener, chief, and a roller-skating warrior. I am the founder and executive director of the Center for Combating Human Trafficking.

*As a wounded healer, I have a deep understanding of my own loss and trauma as well as my resilience and ability to overcome. Because of this, I am committed to serving as a transformational leader in this movement toward mercy, equity, justice, and prosperity. I believe that all individuals are created with immeasurable value and purpose and deserve to be treated with respect and dignity. I believe that, with the appropriate support—with connection to culture and community—all individuals have the capacity to become the person they are created to be. As our Indigenous siblings step into their true identity, may we welcome them home. *Nitsiniiyi'taki.**

“The Little Boy Who Sits in the Corner” by Lenny Hayes

Growing up on the reservation in the 80s was a very difficult time for me as a young gay boy. I was ridiculed, bullied, and shamed for my identity. I did not understand my identity. I did not grow up in culture or given the opportunity to learn about Native spirituality. Historically, Two-Spirit children and adults were treated with the utmost respect and honor. Colonization changed our way of thinking. I did not begin my healing journey until I was 29 years old [and] discovered what it meant to be Two-Spirit. I have made it my lifelong journey to educate and bring awareness of this beautiful identity within tribal communities. To protect our children who identify by teaching them what their role could be within tribal communities. This population is often a forgotten and underserved population. If we do not educate about this identity, the children who are in foster care who do not feel safe are going to run to the streets and become a bigger target for victimization. It is happening already. We have the ability to change that outcome.

It was a Dakota Two-Spirit woman who took me into my first sweat lodge and taught me my Dakota values, taught me my cultural role as a Two-Spirit male, and how to walk in this world and teach others. Even though the western way of healing has its purpose, I am connected to culture and spirituality to continue my healing. I will often go and sit with my Elders who I respect and feel safe with. They continue to teach me about my connection to culture, spirituality, and ceremony. I am a survivor of child sexual, physical, mental, and emotional abuse—and the foster care system. This is my story; this is my truth...

The little boy sits in the corner with his head between his legs.
He looks up with no face, messed up hair, and tattered clothes.
The little boy is scared and feeling hopeless and helpless.
He asks why? He wants to scream, yell, and be heard,
to be listened to, to have someone witness.

The ones who are to be his protectors are the one who are hurting him.
How does he tell them to stop? How can he yell for help when he is being told to keep quiet?
Instead they yell at him, “Shut up or I will hurt you even more!”

*I am a boy who wants and needs to play, with no worries.
I am a boy who is supposed to ride a bike.
I am a boy who is supposed to laugh and giggle.
I am a boy who is supposed to enjoy the sun beating down on my face.
I am a boy who is supposed to play in the mud.
I am a boy who is supposed to dream.*

But instead, I am a boy who is scared even to go to sleep because I am afraid.
I might wet the bed and if I wet the bed, I will be beat, again and again.
The little boy is victimized almost daily with physical, mental, emotional, and sexual abuse.
He is in a corner being touched and groped.
How does he say “stop?” He closes his eyes, and tears begin to flow.

*I go to a faraway place in my mind...
a safe place, a happy place,
a place where I do not have to feel what my body is experiencing.*

Many times, when he is being victimized over and over,
He looks down from the ceiling, and sees his body being taken advantage of.
I say to myself, "Poor little boy, it will soon be over."

After it is over, he is lifeless, and begins to come back to his body once again.
One day, I saw the little boy that suffered and still suffers.
I stretched out my hand and reached out to that little boy.
He looked up at me, sideways at first,
as if seeing a bright light that was too much to take in.
He reaches back to me; I give him my healing hand.
He gives me his pained heart.
Together we walked, talked, healed—well, healing...
On our path toward being a whole person.

The journey of healing is not all happy excitement and joy.
The path of healing was, is, painful, very painful,
But with help I made it through.
I am no longer a victim; I am a survivor!
I am a survivor of physical, emotional, mental, and sexual abuse.
Surviving does not just mean that I am acknowledging it,
It also means I am choosing to grow, learn, and move forward.
Surviving means I know my triggers.
Surviving means asking for help when I need it.
Surviving does not take away what has happened to me,
but it does mean when I am ready, I learn to forgive my perpetrators.
Most of all, surviving means joyfully acknowledging my little boy when he comes out to play.
Surviving means talking to my little boy and saying,
"I am here, and I see you! You will be OK, little boy, and it's my turn to take care of you!"

"Survivor to Overcomer" by Kalei Grant

I was 25, newly divorced, back in the social scene when I met a man in a nightclub. He was persistent in getting to know everything about me. He took me out for coffee, breakfast, lunch, dinner. Any and every excuse to see me, he insisted that he just wanted to get to know me.

After 2 weeks had passed, he drove me to the track and told me he was a pimp, owned an escort agency, and told me what I will do for him. After I refused, he got out of his vehicle and began to violently beat the girls who were on the track to demonstrate his ill nature. I remember sitting in the vehicle thinking how I will ever get away from this man. Thereafter, he threatened all that he learned about me. Threatened to kill my daughter, grandmother, mother, and all who were dear to me if I did not do as he said. Those 2 weeks turned into 2 years of my life.

Every day plotting my escape, thinking of every scenario how to get away from this man. I was often violently abused so much so at one point I was in the hospital in critical condition for 2 months. Being raped and abused began to be common in my life. My organs, my body started to shut down naturally on

its own. My heart slowed down, kidneys were failing, all organs naturally shut down due to the physical abuse that took a toll on my being.

Mahalo Ke Akua (thanks be to God) I am alive today to share what could have been tragic. I am a living testament of the resilience that was within me all along. All that I wish I had to help me transition out of that nightmare is what I continue to aspire for the next person. *Akua* turned my pain into purpose, compelling me to do this work to help change the trajectory for future generations to come!

“Personal Journey with Holistic Healing” by Jeri Jimenez

My own story is that after leaving an extremely abusive marriage, I moved to the Warm Springs Reservation where I met a guy from Portland when he was there playing hoops. He was half Black and half Warm Springs. A few months later, he moved me to Portland.

Not long after that, he introduced me to his cousin, a young woman expecting twins who thought if she moved in with me, she could help me by watching my kids so I could find work. The guy who brought me from Warm Springs was arrested for parole violations, which left her and I living together.

Weeks after that, my new roommate told me her brother, who just got out of jail, was coming over. He came with his gang of 10 guys. That afternoon, I was jumped into the gang by being raped by all of them as well as slapped around.

A lock was placed on the outside of my bedroom door, and I was locked in there only until I was let out, slapped around, and told I needed to go out on the streets with his sister to show me what to do. The first night, she told me what to do and took my money from the john and said she would be back. At the end of the night, when I asked how much I made, she said she had smoked it all up and I was in big trouble with her brother.

When I got home, I did get a beating. I got cavity checked and locked back into the room. The gang would take my babies downtown in a stroller to Pioneer Square and flirt with girls, identifying the victims and grooming them. I was required to make \$300/night, which was 15 "dates" a night with strange, gross people. I got away when I was stabbed and left for dead.

What I did not realize at the time was that it was all a setup from the beginning. These guys knew all the Native girls in Portland because they were bringing them here.

- We had many vulnerabilities in common.
- We were sexually abused as children.
- We grew up with substance abuse in our families.
- We lived in poverty.
- There were no opportunities to get ahead in our communities.
- We lived in judgmental communities that devalue women.
- We have ancestors who were taken and sent to boarding schools.
- We were relocated and terminated, and we were placed in situations to fight against each other for crumbs from the government.

This is what has made us so vulnerable in our communities.

I have had over 30 years in recovery, both through western medicine and also Native spiritual recovery. The practices are the difference between night and day. My experience and observations are that:

Western Medicine—

- Addresses a very temporal experience, not the lifelong journey that healing, growing, and recovery require

I did 6 months in a women's recovery group, got my certificate, and was done. While the program used the word "aftercare," it really did not exist. Their answer to everyone was Alcoholics Anonymous, whether we were sexually abused, exploited, or on another drug. AA can be a powerful program for many; in order to live a full life beyond the 12 steps requires many more tools. There are many AA members who are dry drunks who still exploit others and abuse people because as long as they have so many days clean and sober, their other issues do not matter to AA.

- Relies on the patient's mind fears criminality to maintain the desired results set by the courts regardless of the deeper issues of the person, that if not addressed lead to recidivism in both substance abuse and recurring abuse and re-exploitation

Individuals who have been given jail time, removal of their children from the home, and other punishment can create a situation that does not improve the patient's toolkit to better achievement but only addresses the bare minimum of the requirements—NOT holistic healing for the family unit.

- Is not concerned with connecting the patient into understanding who they are in the world and in their community

While I learned how to stay clean and sober, I did not learn how not to be with abusers. Abusers had been a part of the women in my family for generations—from my grandmother and great aunt who had their experiences with missionaries with their tongues burned on radiators to stop speaking their languages to substance abuse and physical and sexual abuse throughout the family. Because my first experience with childhood sexual abuse was at the age of 4, I was cutting on myself at 11, being fondled and raped through junior high. I grew up with my father's understanding on what a good, assimilated American should be. He grew up in the agency. Our tribe was terminated along with 200 others in the 1950s. Both our land and our identity were gone. We grew up with a parent who walked in two worlds—both in a deep depression.

Native American Rehabilitation Association— "Spirit Driven, Spirit Led"—

The program here addresses the holistic healing necessary to become a whole human being, to reconnect with your identity, and join with a huge family of others like you who share the issues that arise when a person grows up not knowing their true history and traditions that have been used for healing for generations. These include purification of spirit through sweat lodge practices, dancing, drumming, and communing with nature and others who are also seeking identities the were taken and replaced with things that did not work for us.

The key is the feeling of truly belonging. Knowing who you are is strength-building and holistically healing the soul—the part of the person that Western medicine neglects. It is a life and death issue. When we have no identity, no feeling of where we fit in, no worth—it is easy to perish.

It is not a choice—it is a lack of choice.

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