



National American Indian & Alaska Native

**ATTC**

Addiction Technology Transfer Center Network  
Funded by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration



**Native Center for  
Behavioral Health**



**SAMHSA**  
Substance Abuse and Mental Health  
Services Administration

# Addressing Trauma with Tradition and Humor – Tribal Veteran Perspectives

*Sean A Bear I, BA, US Army*

*Ray Daw, MA, US Army*

*David Natseway, MA, US Navy*

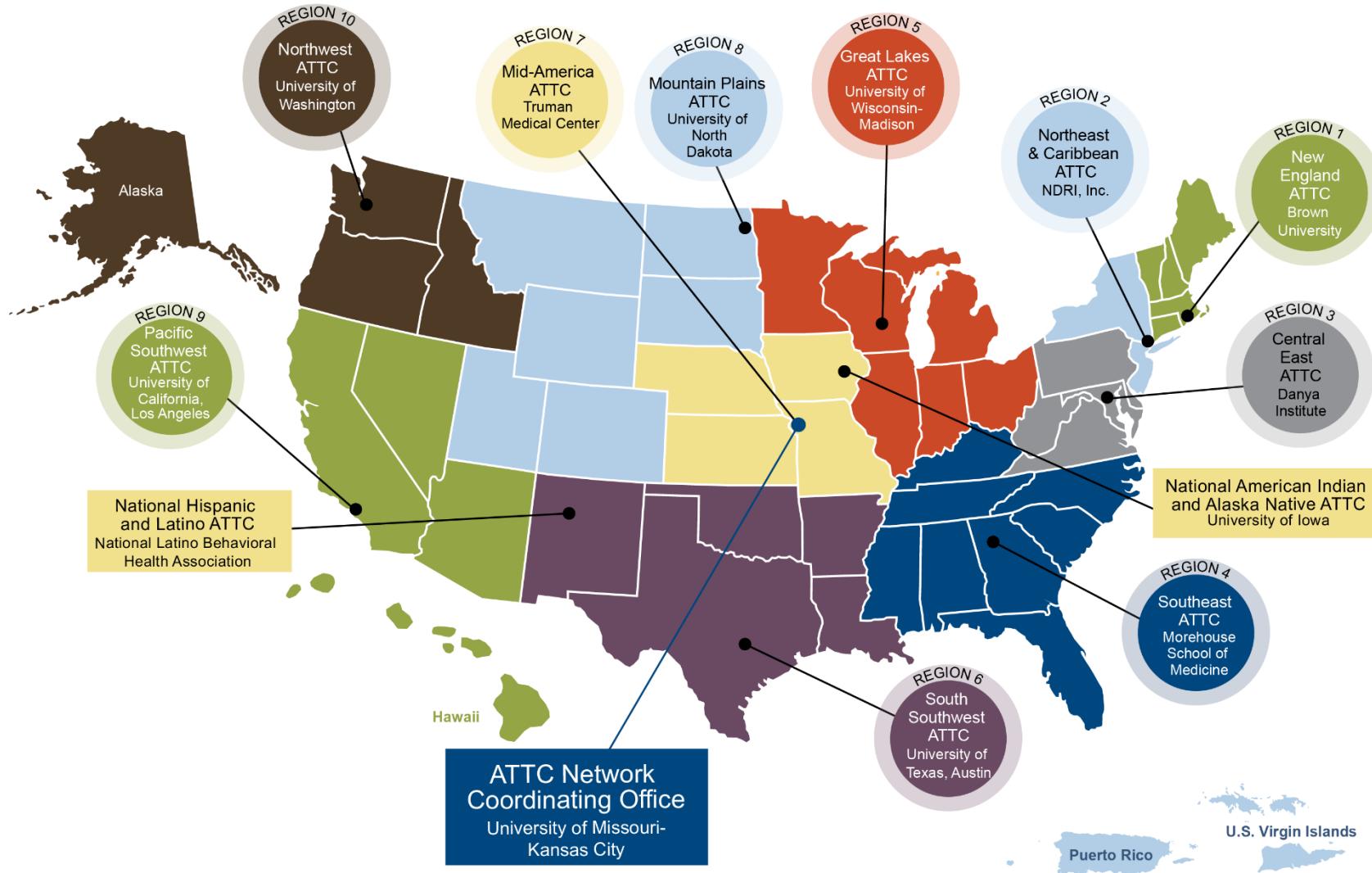


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## U.S.-based ATTC Network

# Addiction Technology Transfer Center Network



This webinar is provided by the National American Indian & Alaska Native MHTTC, a program funded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).



Substance Abuse and Mental Health  
Services Administration

- The National American Indian and Alaska Addiction Technology Transfer Center is supported by a grant from CSAT/SAMHSA.
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# Webinar follow-up

## Evaluation: SAMHSA's GPRA

- This webinar is provided by the National American Indian & Alaska Native ATTC, a program funded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).
- Participation in our evaluation lets SAMHSA know:
  - How many people attended our webinar
  - How satisfied you are with our webinar
  - How useful our webinars are to you
- You will find a link to the GPRA survey in the chat box. If you are not able to complete the GPRA directly following the webinar, we will send an email to you with the survey link. Please take a few minutes to give us your feedback on this webinar. You can skip any questions that you do not want to answer, and your participation in this survey is voluntary. Through the use of a coding system, your responses will be kept confidential and it will not be possible to link your responses to you.
- We appreciate your response and look forward to hearing from you.



**SEAN A. BEAR, BA, CADC**

Co-Director. National American Indian and Alaska Native Addiction Technology Transfer Center,  
University of Iowa College of Public Health

Email: [sean-bear@uiowa.edu](mailto:sean-bear@uiowa.edu)



Sean A. Bear earned his B.A. from Buena Vista University in 2002, majoring in psychology/human services. He also studied mental health counseling at Drake University for 2 years. He is a member of the Meskwaki Tribe, in Tama, Iowa, and has worked with Native Americans with Substance Use disorders for many years. He is an Army Veteran of 9 years, honorary discharged from the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne. He has worked as an Administrator/Counselor in EAP, a counselor in adolescent behavioral programs, substance abuse, and in-home family therapy. He has experience in building holistic; Native American based curriculum, and implementation with substance abuse clientele. He was the training coordinator for the National AI/AN ATTC from 2013.

His passion is to assist people in overcoming their substance use issues as well as other issues, and to return to the spiritual ways of their ancestors. It is his hope that one day, people of all nations will co-exist and live in peace and harmony, not just with each other, but within themselves, as well as to come to the realization of what our ancestor of long ago already knew, “that we are all brothers and sisters under one Creator.” My passion is the life-long education of Spirituality, particularly in Native American Spirituality.

## Today's Guest Speaker: David A. Natseway, BA, LSAA, Pueblo of Laguna Tribal Member, USN(ret),

A native of Arizona, David Natseway, LSAA, holds a B.A. in Psychology with a concentration in Basics in Addiction Counseling (BAC) from the University of New Mexico, and A.A. in Communications from Central New Mexico College. David has worked as a Substance Abuse Counselor, and Addiction Support Group Facilitator with the Pueblo of Laguna Behavioral Health and Social Services. He is trained in Moral Reconciliation Therapy (MRT) and MRT-Trauma, and is a current member of the Laguna Healing to Wellness Court Team. David works as a Tribal Healing to Wellness Court Consultant for Tribal Law and Policy Institute (TLPI), and the National AI/AN. David served in the U.S. Navy as a Musicians Mate retiring in 2011 after more than 20 years of Honorable Service, and remains active as a musician. With his music experience, and great appreciation for the therapeutic power of music, he has been a Music is Healing Presenter for the Pueblo of Laguna Prevention Program. David also enjoys umpiring baseball for New Mexico Activities Association, New Mexico Officials Association, and holds a Professional Certificate as a Baseball Umpire from the Minor League Baseball Umpire Training Academy, Vero Beach, FL. David is an enrolled member of the Pueblo of Laguna and resides in Albuquerque, NM.



## Ray Daw, MA, is Diné (Navajo), MA

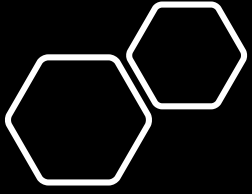
Ray is originally from Houck, Arizona and an Army veteran, field artillery. Graduated from boarding school and UNM. He has been in the behavioral health field for about 35 years working with the Navajo Nation, non-profits and most recently in Alaska. His work in behavioral health has been heavily towards developing Native trauma-appropriate approaches that are healing and effective in tribal behavioral health prevention, Intervention, and treatment services. He also trains in Motivational Interviewing and Historical Trauma.



# Session Description

- Tribal veterans participating in wellness court programs often carry unique cultural identities that should be individually addressed by Tribal Wellness Court team members. This workshop will explore the therapeutic value of tradition and humor in tribal veterans court context. Facilitators will discuss Tribal warrior tradition, including the role traditional activities play in treatment. Additional topics of discussion will include a discussion of humor, unique to tribal veterans, and its therapeutic value.
- Learning Objectives:
  - Attendees will learn about the unique type of humor shared among tribal veterans
  - Attendees will learn about the therapeutic role humor plays in treatment
  - Attendees will learn about the value of cultural inclusion in wellness courts





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# What Happens When You Laugh

- Laughing triggers a number of positive physiological responses:
- Relaxation of the entire body, relieving muscle tension and stress
- Levels of cortisol, the stress hormone, drop and minimize pain and inflammation throughout the body
- The release of endorphins, natural feel-good substances that make you feel happy and content and have been proven to reduce the perception of physical pain
- Reduction in blood pressure combined with a moderate increase in the heart rate and improved blood circulation and oxygen intake
- The stimulation of the immune system thanks to the release of T-cells and salivary immunoglobulin A which is triggered by laughter.
- Researchers at the College of William and Mary have found that “a wave of electricity sweeps through” the entire cerebral cortex (the whole brain) just before we laugh - this supports the theory that humor can actually help



## Learning Objective 1:

Attendees will learn about the unique type of humor shared among tribal veterans





# Inter-service Humor

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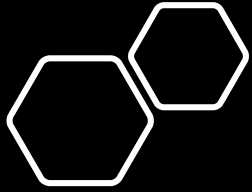












# Learning Objective 2:

- Attendees will learn about the therapeutic role humor plays in treatment



# Humor- Therapy- Recovery

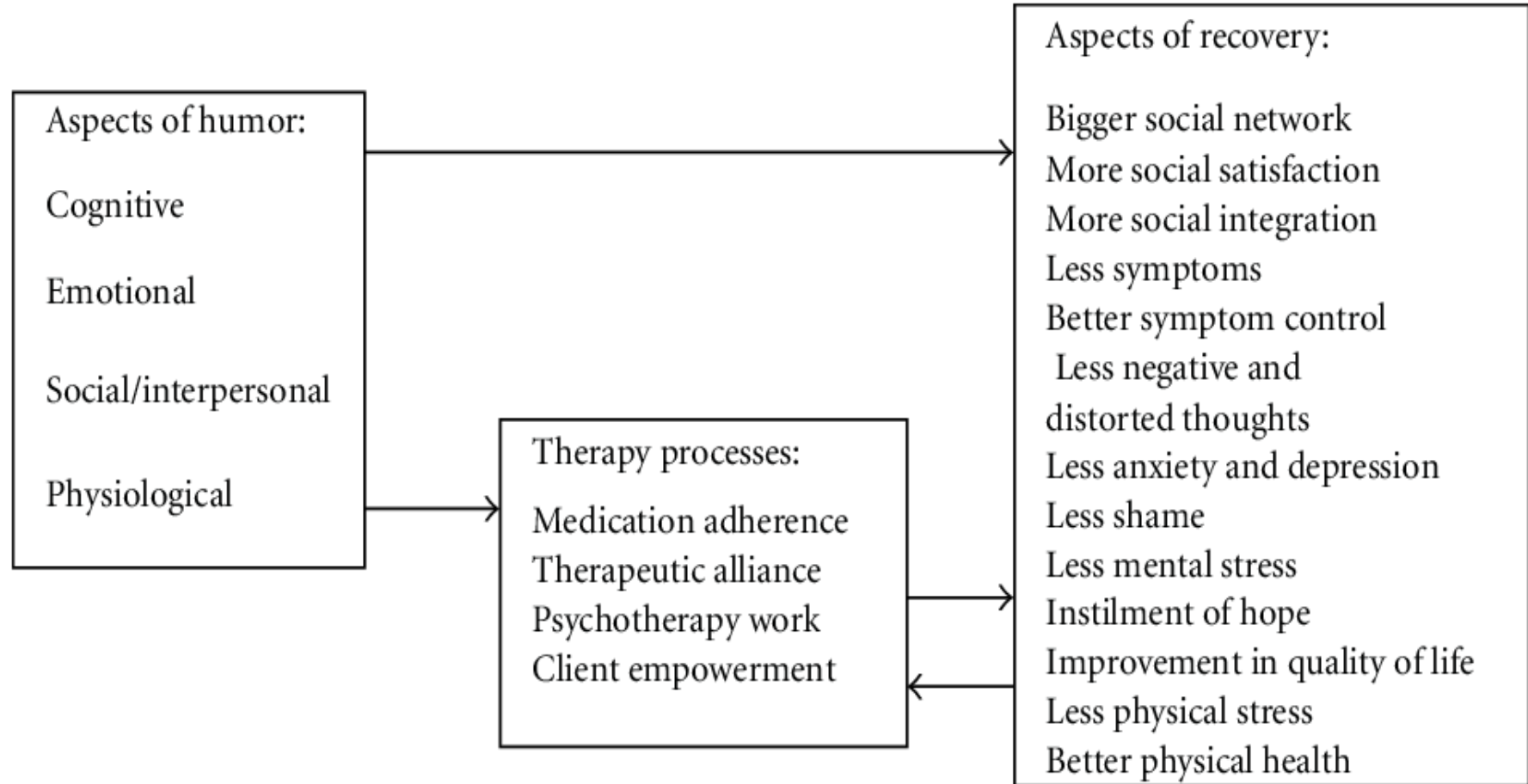
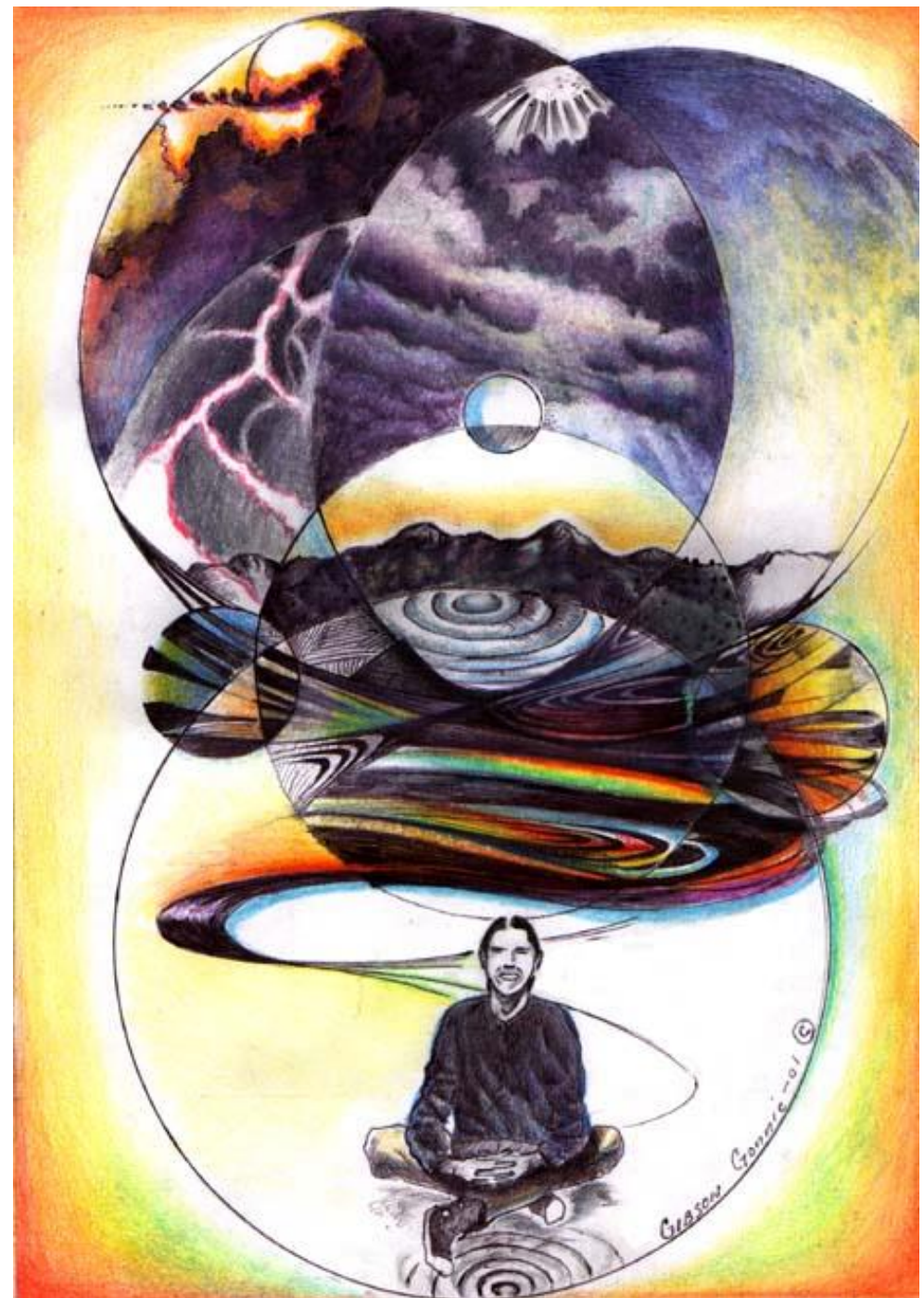


FIGURE 1: Potential ways in which humor can contribute to recovery

# Releasing our pain





# Acculturation Assessments

- Acculturation Assessments allow for providers to assess the cultural identity of a patient, which can help the provider to gain a better understanding of the cultural context in which symptoms are rooted.
- Additionally, whether a patient identifies as traditional, bi-cultural, or acculturated may have an impact on their treatment preference.
- Rosebud Personal Opinion Survey ([Hoffmann, Dana, & Bolton, 1985](#)):
  - Was developed in response to a hypothesis that level of acculturation was influencing how Native American performed on the MMPI.





# Cultural Assessment

- Each person has a different understanding of their culture. One way to measure this is through an acculturation assessment of the patient. This will aid to determine where he or she falls of the spectrum of acculturation from traditional to assimilated.
- In its most basic form, this would include identifying the patient's tribe and affiliations:
  - *What does this affiliation mean to the patient?*
  - *What does it look and feel like?*
- There are formal Acculturation Assessment that can be used to accomplish this, two examples are discussed next.



# Cultural Context of Symptoms

- It is important to be mindful that when asking screening questions or administering a self-report questionnaire to Native American/Alaska Native, the assessment instrument may not be culturally appropriate.
- Approach answers with care and reflect on any potential cultural implications or considerations that may need to be made.
- There are instances of normal aspects of the American Indian/Alaska Native culture being interpreted incorrectly and labeling individuals as having a mental illness when this is not the case. For example:
  - *The belief that the spirit of a past loved one is helping them and their family may be labeled as magical thinking and a delusion, when it is a normal part of their culture.*
  - *Other instances have involved individuals communicating with animals or hearing the voices of loved ones who have died. In the Western medical model, this may be interpreted as hallucinations and incorrectly label someone as schizophrenic.*



# Laughter Therapy

- Our ancestors have often told us that laughter is good medicine. Laughter is Healing.
- Traditional Teaching have said that evil hates us laughing, so we were to laugh more. That laughter can push the energies of hate, anger, sadness, grief, etc. away and help us feel better, just as love can.
- Well, the Mayo Clinic now suggests laughing for stress relief and may help reduce other complaints with both short-term benefits and long-term benefits.





# Treatment Approach

- Patient as an Individual
  - *It is important to approach each patient as a unique individual, do not make assumptions.*
  - *Stereotyping a patient based on their race or ethnicity is inappropriate and has the potential to both harm the therapeutic relationship and the patient's recovery.*
  - *View the patient in their contemporary, not just from their historical context. Although they may have experienced historical trauma, it is important to see them in the present.*
  - *Do not fall into the view of "Pan-Indian" that all American Indian/Alaska Natives are the same. They are a very diverse group that come from varied backgrounds, tribes, beliefs, and practices.*



# Development of PTSD

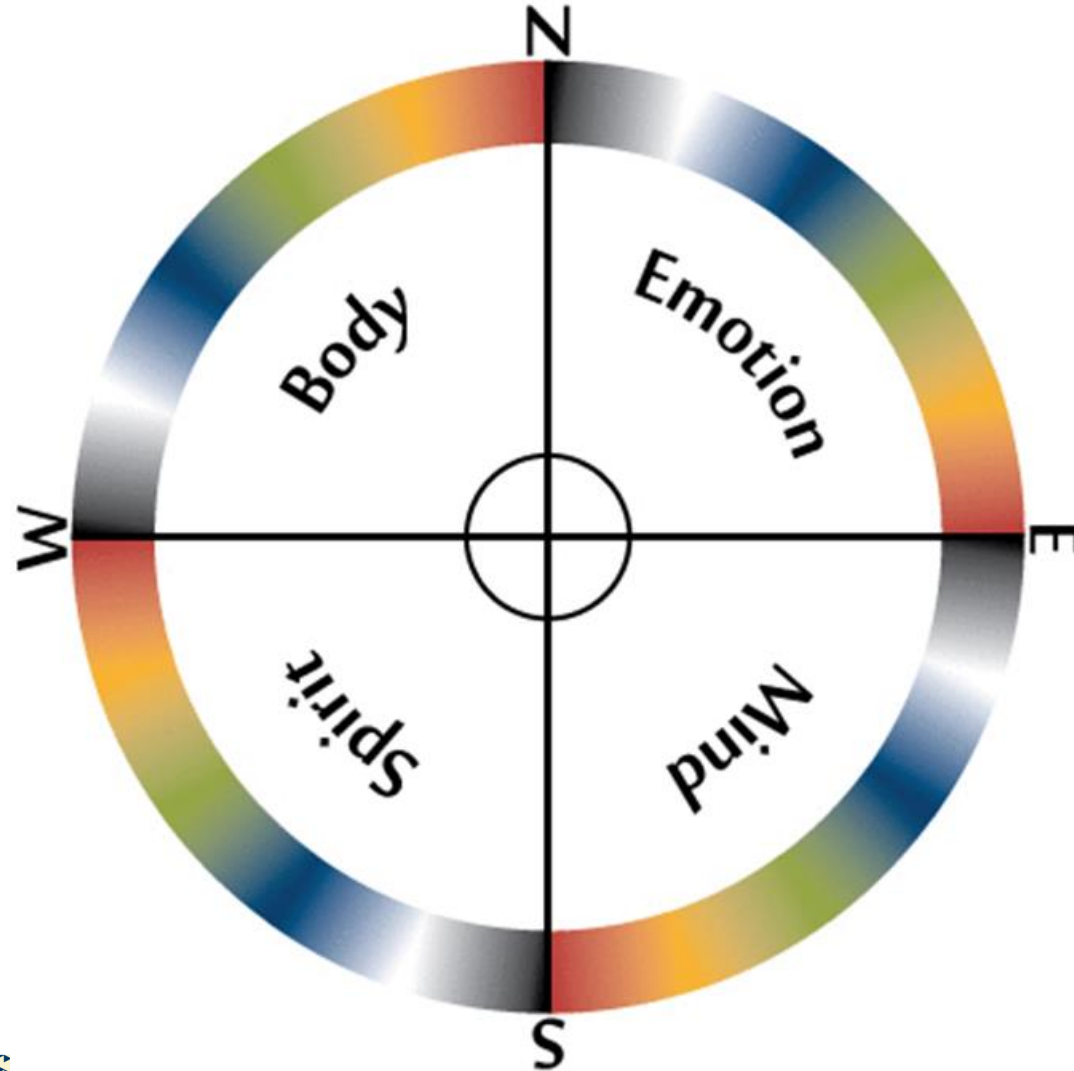
- Post-traumatic-Stress-Disorder (PTSD) occurs after exposure to a traumatic event; however, not everyone exposed to trauma develop PTSD.
- Several factors have been identified through research that increases the likelihood that one will develop PTSD (Ozer, Best, Lipsey, & Weiss, 2003).
- These factors are broken down into three categories: pretrauma, peritrauma, and posttrauma.



# Exposure-based treatments

- Exposure treatments essentially involves repeatedly exposing individuals to the experiences (thoughts, feelings, situations) related to their trauma that are causing distress. ([Hamblen et al., 2014](#); [U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, 2015](#)).
- Most frequently used approach is Prolonged Exposure (PE), which consists of four main strategies ([U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, 2015](#)).
- EMDR combines the use of exposure techniques (talking or thinking about the trauma), cognitive restructuring, and relaxation or self-monitoring techniques with the repeated “saccadic eye movements” ([Hamblen et al., 2014](#)).

# Transcending the trauma



# Improve your sense of humor

- **Put humor on your horizon.** Find a few simple items, such as photos, greeting cards or comic strips, that make you chuckle. Then hang them up at home or in your office. Keep funny movies, books, magazines or comedy videos on hand for when you need an added humor boost. Look online at joke websites. Go to a comedy club.
- **Laugh and the world laughs with you.** Find a way to laugh about your own situations and watch your stress begin to fade away. Even if it feels forced at first, practice laughing. It does your body good.
- Consider trying laughter yoga. In laughter yoga, people practice laughter as a group. Laughter is forced at first, but it can soon turn into spontaneous laughter.
- **Share a laugh.** Make it a habit to spend time with friends who make you laugh. And then return the favor by sharing funny stories or jokes with those around you.
- **Knock, knock.** Browse through your local bookstore or library's selection of joke books and add a few jokes to your list that you can share with friends.
- **Know what isn't funny.** Don't laugh at the expense of others. Some forms of humor aren't appropriate. Use your best judgment to discern a good joke from a bad or hurtful one.





# Learning Objective 3:

- Attendees will learn about the value of cultural inclusion in wellness courts



# Contrasting Values

- Native American
  - Harmony-live in harmony with all things
  - Balance
  - Great Mystery/Intuitive
  - Humility
  - Spirituality (a way of life)
- Non-Native
  - Conquer: nature
  - Skeptical/Logical
  - Self: ego/attention/success
  - Religion (daily/a part of life)

Source; *Donna Humetewa Kaye, TLPI Consultant*



# What type of Wellness Court are you currently planning?

- Adult

- Juvenile

- Family

- Veterans

Source: "Planning a Healing to Wellness Court: Inspiration and Vision to Get Started", Lauren van Schilfgaarde (Cochiti Pueblo), Hon. Carrie Garrow (Akwesasne Mohawk), Hon. Jay Pedro (Gila River Indian Community)



Create a culture  
of wellness

- Photo source: [Tulalipnews.com](http://Tulalipnews.com)

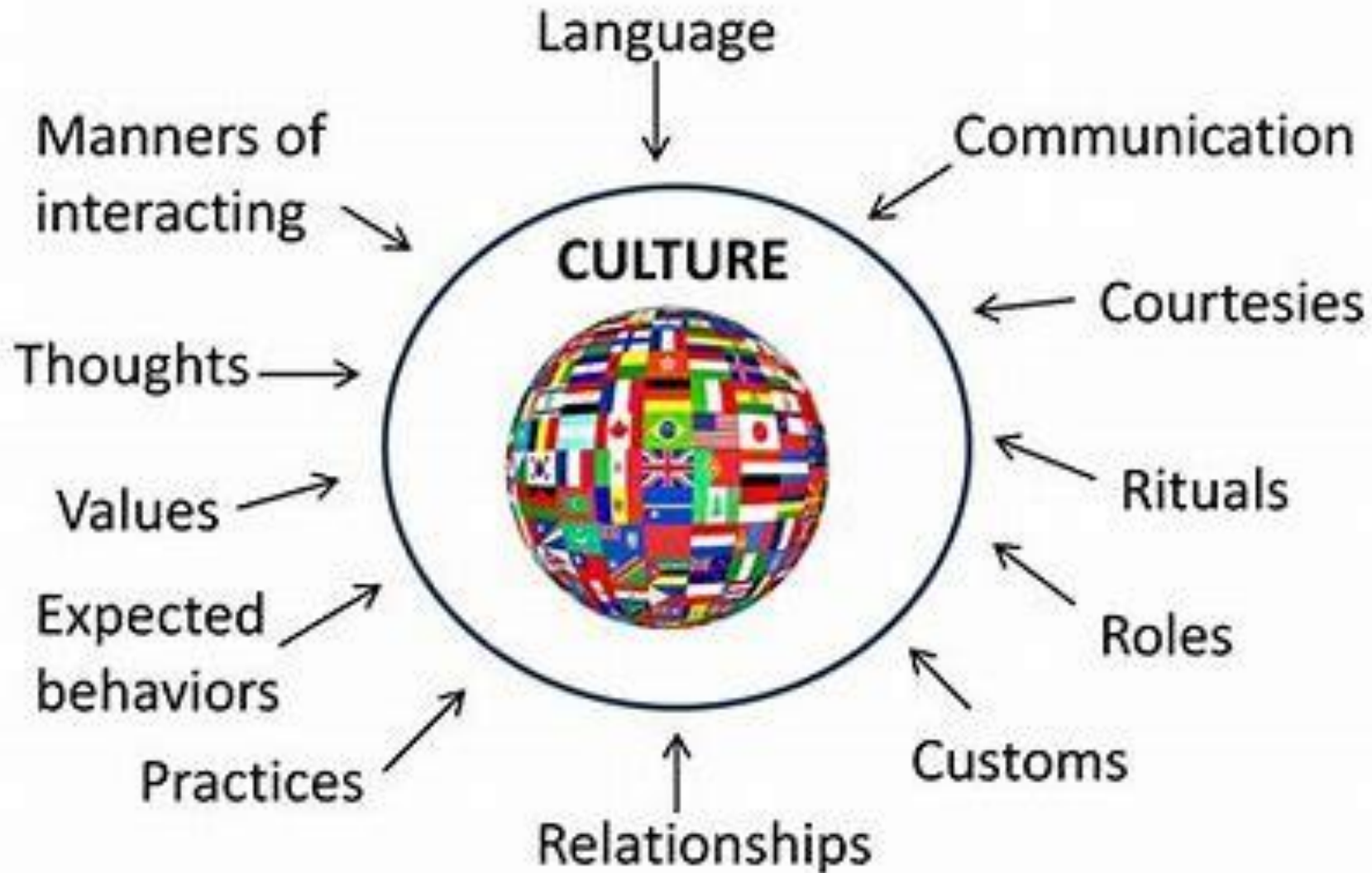
# Wellness has areas for consideration







# Inclusion of Cultural Gatekeepers



# Native Veteran's Resilience and Wellness Series a 2020 Review.

- Ongoing Discussions with Ray Daw, Sean Bear, and David Natseway on Native Veteran Issues bi-weekly June-August 2020
- Equine Therapy August 28 and September 11
- Use of Sweat Lodge in Therapy w/ Dr. Eynon September 25
- Therapeutic and Healing Experiences with Native Veterans with Dr. Foster October 9
- Desperation, Trauma, and Success: A Personal Story November 6
- An Approach for Working with Cultural and Experiential Diversity within the VA system November 20
- Interacting with Family Members During a Pandemic: Helping Families Support Their Veterans December 4
- Link to the ATTC YouTube video Archive: [https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCgoI2Ma-kcD9caCrXISHQ4Q?view\\_as=subscriber](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCgoI2Ma-kcD9caCrXISHQ4Q?view_as=subscriber)



# How to contact us

- ▶ Sean A. Bear 1<sup>st</sup>. BA, CADC
- ▶ Email: [sean-bear@uiowa.edu](mailto:sean-bear@uiowa.edu)
  
- ▶ Ray Daw, MA
- ▶ Email: [raydaw@aol.com](mailto:raydaw@aol.com)
  
- ▶ David Natseway, BA
- ▶ Email: [natseway8vb@yahoo.com](mailto:natseway8vb@yahoo.com)