




Cross-Cultural Communication & Engaging Native Students & Families

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Agenda & Format


- Personal introductions
- Culture and worldview
- Linear and relational worldviews
- Indigenous learning styles
- Applying these teachings to foster greater communication and engagement with Native students and families
- Highlight of a tribal program
- Group discussion



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Personal Introductions

- The foundation for getting to know one another
 - Who are you?
 - Why are you here?
- Looking for relationship, a point of connection



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What comes to mind when we think of "culture"?

- Spirituality, Religion, Beliefs, Values
- Ceremonies, Customs, Rituals
- Art, Music, Dance
- Language, Stories, Traditions, Literature
- **Worldview**, Identity, Shared History
- Social Activities, Affinity Groups
- Family, Kinship, Marriage, Parenting
- Institutions, Laws, Governance
- Social Rules/Manners, Norms, Help Seeking
- Clothing, Shelter, Food



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What is "culture"?

- The integrated pattern of human knowledge, belief, and behavior.
- The customary beliefs, social norms, and material traits of a racial, religious, or social group.



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The Cultural Iceberg

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Worldview

Collective thought process of a group of people

- "Linear Worldview"
- "Relational Worldview"

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Linear Worldview

Western European/American Thought

Cause → Effect → New Cause → New Effect

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Linear Worldview Social Work/Medical Model

Cause → Effect → New Cause → New Effect

Social History → Presenting Problem → Assessment → Treatment → Outcome

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Linear Theory of Change

Given this

If we do this

This will happen

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Linear Model Values

Facts	Individuality
Measuring	Direct Communication
Knowledge (New)	Written Language
Timelines	Steps and Stages
Scientific Method	Work to Make a Living
Materialism, Wealth	Compartmentalizing,
Authority, Hierarchy	Reductionist
Independence	Credentials

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Relational Worldview Native and Tribal Thought

Context Mind
Spirit Body
BALANCE

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Culture Matters

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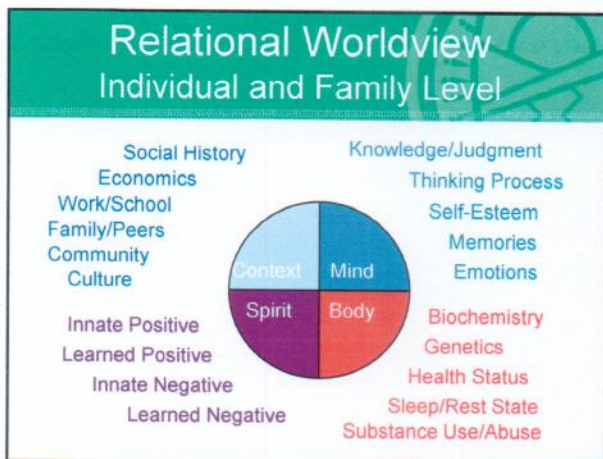
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Relational Worldview Native and Tribal Thought

- Fluid, cyclical view of time
- Each aspect of life is related
- Services aim to restore balance
- Interventions may not be directed at "symptoms"
- Underlying question is "how?"

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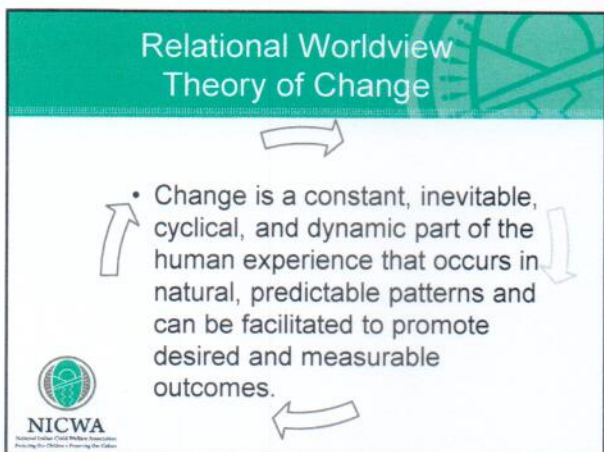
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Relational Worldview and Neuroscience

The human brain is constantly changing by paying attention

- ❑ What we pay attention to depends on safety
- ❑ Some conditions engage the human brain
- ❑ Other conditions cause the brain to disengage
- ❑ If the environment supports engagement brain chemistry will change
- ❑ If the environment presents a threat trauma is reinforced
- ❑ Harmony is a neurological state in which attention is focused on positives



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Implications of Worldview

1. Behavioral implications
2. Helping implications
3. Development
4. Communication
5. Learning




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Indigenous Learning Preferences

- Global (Holistic) Processing
- Visual Perceptual Possessing
- Reflective Information Processing
- Collaborative Learners



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Indigenous Learning Preferences

Global (Holistic) Processing Style

- Understanding of the whole context
- Do not think linearly or hierarchically
- Connection to life and relationships
- Listen before drawing conclusions




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Indigenous Learning Preferences

Visual Perceptual Possessing Style

- Visual processing
- Process information they can see
- Graphs, films, demonstrations, flow charts and pictures are helpful




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Indigenous Learning Preferences

Reflective Information Processing Style

- Learners prefer to stop and consider options
- Time period for students to contemplate before conclusion
- Examine all sides of an issue
- Implications and solutions
- Observational or a "watch-then-do"
- More time watching and listening and
- Less time talking and responding
- Case studies, demonstrations, and group discussions



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Indigenous Learning Preferences

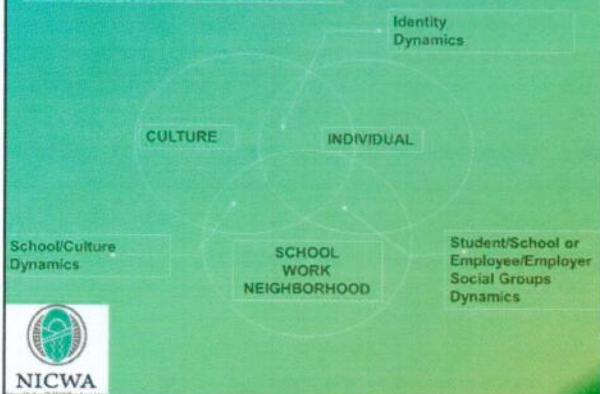
Collaborative Learners

- Individual competition does not produce motivation
- Do not want to be singled out
- Prefer to work collectively
- Group problem solving, and
- Praising the entire group for the good work



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Embracing Complexity



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Engaging Students and Families



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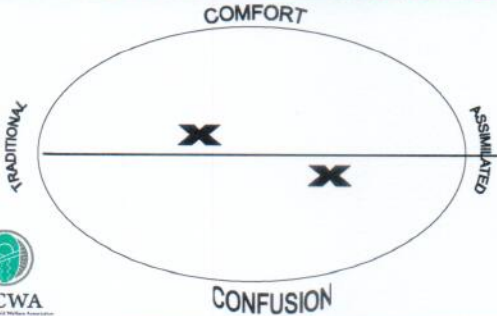

Factors that Influence Communication

- Different styles and preferences
- Impact of federal Indian policy and family & individual experiences
- Range from traditional to assimilated




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The Indian/Native Experience

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Discussion Questions


- What cultural identity variables exist among the students and families you serve and advocate for?
- What are some of the ways that cultural values affect communication?


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What Works?

- Naming
- Context
- Humor
- Empowering
- Humility
- Connecting



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What Works?

- Safety....reducing threat
- Learners coming to their own insights
- Focus... "attention"
- A quiet brain
- Feeding the social brain
- Self-Awareness
- Emotion regulation




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— Zero Point Leadership, 2012

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Culture and Communication

- Communication skill
- Self Awareness – I have a culture
- Non-judgmental attitude – curiosity
- Dynamics of difference – respect
- Cultural knowledge – willingness to learn



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Critical Takeaways

- Jot down a note about:
 - Something you learned that surprised you
 - Something to which you want to pay more attention
 - Something you want to practice
 - Something you want to learn more about



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Thank you!



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