

National Resource Center for Reaching Victims Presents: The impact of violence, trauma, and racial oppression on survivors

Nicole Matthews
Historically Marginalized Workgroup
WOCN, Inc.
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Addressing the Unique Challenges
Facing Women of Color Since 1997



Women of Color Network Mission

The mission of the **Women of Color Network, Inc. (WOCN, Inc.)** is to eliminate violence against ALL women and their communities by centralizing the voices, wellness and leadership of women of color across the Sovereign Nations, the United States and U.S. Territories.

Introductions

Introductions (2)

- Name
- Gender pronouns
- Organization
- Your role at your organization and on this project
- What motivates you to work in your field?

Nicole Matthews



Nicole Matthews is a member of the White Earth Band of Ojibwe, and is the Executive Director for Minnesota Indian Women's Sexual Assault Coalition, a statewide coalition and National Tribal Technical Assistance Provider, addressing sexual violence and sex trafficking against Indigenous people. The mission of this organization is to strengthen the voices of Indigenous women to create awareness, influence social change, and reclaim the traditional values that honor the sovereignty of Indigenous women and children thereby eliminating the sexual violence perpetrated against them.



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Lay of The Land

How is violence
understood by the survivors
from the communities you
work with?

Minnesota Indian Women's Sexual Assault Coalition



JCE Photography

In Indian Country We Know That:

- 100 years ago, women were considered sacred.
- 90% of Indian women in chemical dependency treatment are sexual assault victims.
- Native women experience higher rates of violent victimization than any other group in the U.S.
- For most ethnicities, the perpetrator is of the same race – this is not true for Native women.
- Typically, Native women have experienced multiple victimizations including child sexual abuse, acquaintance rape, marital rape, and/or stranger rape.
- Community silence reinforces the idea that Native women can be raped without fear of any consequences.

Violence Against Native Women: Statistics

- Native women suffer the **highest rate** of sexual assault in the United States. (Dept. of Justice, BJS 2004)
- **46%** of Native women have been raped or have experienced physical violence and/or stalking by an intimate partner in their lifetime (CDC, 2011)
- **34.1%** of Native women will be raped at some point during their life (CDC & DOJ, NVWS 2005)
- **55%** of Native women have experienced some form of sexual violence (CDC, 2014)

Colonization

- When a more powerful nation/group of people dominates the resources of a weaker people or nation in order to strengthen or enrich the more powerful group.
- Promotes a set of beliefs where the values of the colonizers are considered superior to those of the colonized.

Impact of Colonization

- Destruction of cultural traditions and practices
- Destruction of natural resources, e.g. land, water, plants, food, etc.

Destruction of social structures

- Family
- Government
- Economy
- Work
- Language
- Spirituality
- Values

Impact of Colonization (2)

“Our women are tired. They’re tired of getting raped; they’re tired of getting beaten. They’re tired of getting their hopes stepped on anytime they try to do something about it.”

Tinnekkia Williams, Standing Rock Reservation

From: *Tiny Little Laws, A Plague of Sexual Violence in Indian Country*, Kathy Dobie, Harper’s Magazine



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Organizational Barriers

What practices do organizations engage in that cause barriers to your communities?

Practices & Barriers for Tribal Communities

- Misunderstanding or no knowledge of Tribal sovereignty and jurisdiction
- One size fits all approach
- Systemic racism
- Invisibility
- Stereotyping Native people and Tribal communities
- Fear and tokenism



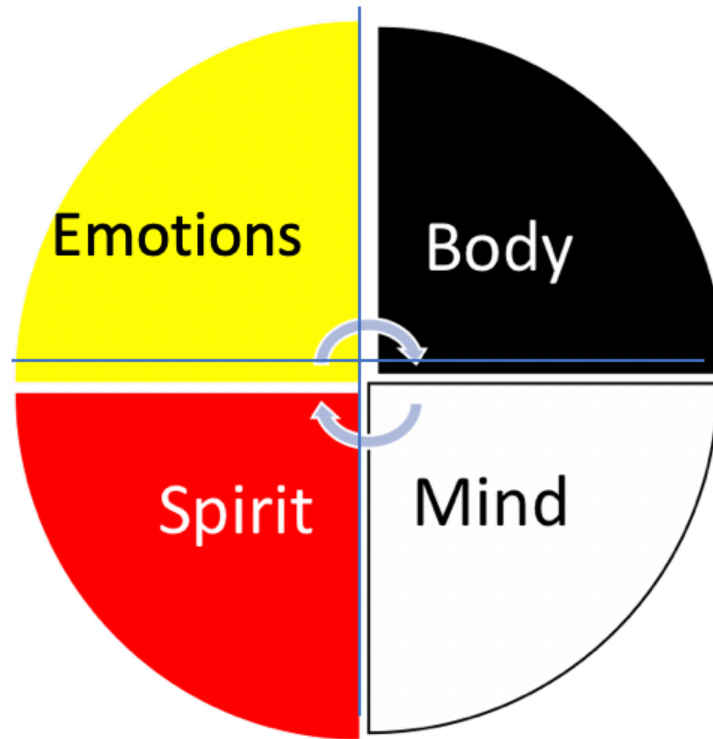
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Intersectional Strategies

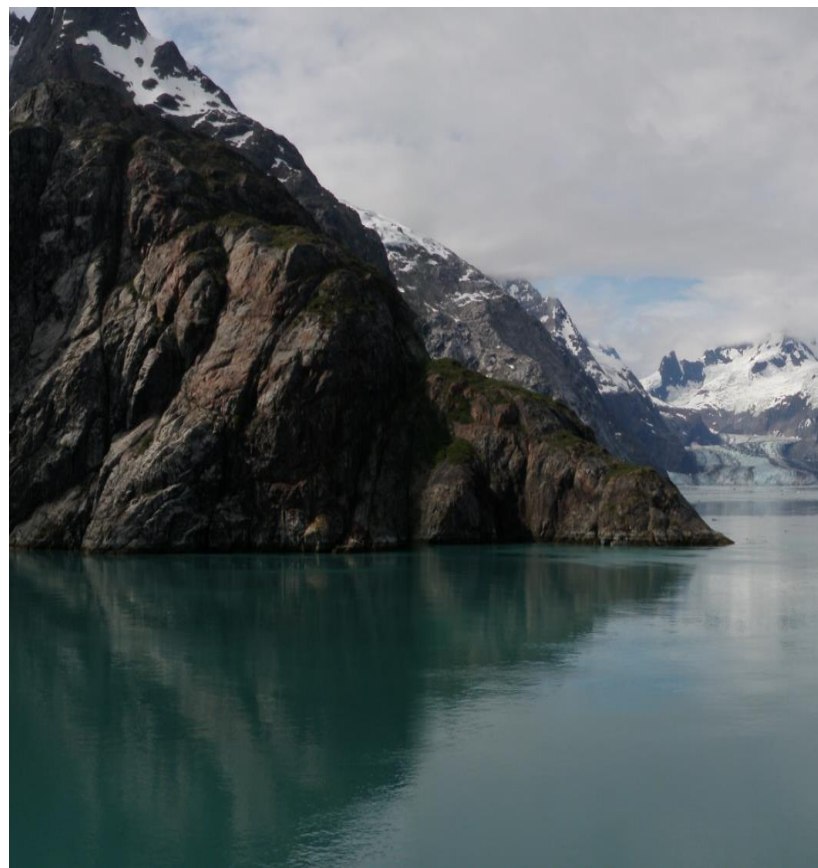
Please share strategies/
practices you use with
survivors of crime from your
marginalized communities?

Holistic Approach



*“I came to the position
with absolute faith and
confidence in our own
people and our own
ability to solve our own
problems.”*

Wilma Mankiller



“You must be able to see where you’ve been before
you can possibly know where you want to go.

Muscogee Creek



De-colonizing = Social Change

Restoration of Cultural identity

Restore tribal values

- Sacredness and respect for Women/children
- Sacredness of men as healthy family/ community members
- Celebrate and respect differences
- Child rearing

Restore customs

- Ceremonies, e.g. naming
- Build/use cradle boards
- Stories/legends/language specific to tribal teachings
- Name-sakes/spiritual teachers for child(ren)

Questions?



THANK YOU
for your time, expertise
and participation!



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