The Gathering of Native Americans

Janet King | Native American Health Center

Carolyn Kraus | UC Berkeley & California Consortium for Urban Indian Health

Cultural Competence Summit XX | March 16, 2017
GATHERING OF NATIVE AMERICANS (GONA) BACKGROUND

- Gathering of Native Americans (GONA)
- Began in the 1990’s in collaboration with Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)
- 25 years of success in many Native American communities
- Downloadable on the web plus many evaluative comments
ADOLESCENT DEVELOPMENT

- GONA Manualized curriculum
- 4 day retreat for principals:
  - Belonging
  - Mastery
  - GONA
  - Interdependence
  - Generosity
DAY 1: Belonging

- Repair the damage of forced assimilation and colonization
- Exercises to rebuild community
- Remembering Native values
DAY 2: Mastery

○ Review Culture before colonization

○ Exercises: What broke apart the Native world

○ What is going to restore the Native world
Interdependence

- Skits: Community Problem
- Community solution
Generosity

- Gift Giving
- Reflections
NATIVE AMERICAN ADOLESCENT HEALTH DISPARITIES

- Significantly higher stress, related to social and economic factors, than white teens

- Historical Trauma
  - Events perpetrated on a group of people with genocidal or ethnocidal intent that have lasting impacts on health, land, and culture
ADOLESCENT DEVELOPMENT

Adolescence is a critical time in human development where we see increases in:

- Goal-setting, social engagement, & risk-taking
- Use of substances
- Depression
- Self-harm
PRIMARY CAUSES OF DEATH AMONG U.S. ADOLESCENTS IN 2015

- **Unintentional Injury**
  - AI/AN
  - API
  - Black or African American
  - White
  - Total

- **Suicide**
  - AI/AN
  - API
  - Black or African American
  - White
  - Total

- **Homicide**
  - AI/AN
  - API
  - Black or African American
  - White
  - Total

Crude Rates per 100,000
Rash of Suicides Prompts Yurok Tribe to Declare State of Emergency

Ryan Burns / Friday, Jan. 22 @ 12:20 P.M. / Tribes

Below is a press release from the Yurok Tribe:

The Yurok Tribal Council is working with Tribal, state and federal agencies to address an alarming increase in the number of suicides committed by young Yurok people.

In the last 18 months, seven Tribal members, ranging in age from 16-31, took their own lives. In response to this perplexing pattern, the Tribal Council issued an emergency declaration on December 28. The Tribe is also developing a broad, collaborative plan to identify and resolve the root causes of this epidemic.

“My heart goes out to all of the people, directly or indirectly, impacted by this tragedy,” said James Dunlap, Chairman of the Yurok Tribe. “We are doing everything we can to answer the community’s call for a culturally appropriate response to this crisis.”

Five years ago, psychiatrist R. Dale Walker was invited to a small Northern Plains reservation that had suffered 17 suicides in eight months. It was there, listening in a group therapy
DEMOSOGRAPICS OF AI/ANs IN CALIFORNIA

- > 80% of AI/AN people live in urban areas
- 109 federally recognized tribes
- 203,009 AI/AN people under age 18
- 28% of AI/AN people in CA are under age 18
RESILIENCE
FRESNO, BAY AREA, & SACRAMENTO GONAs

- Fresno and San Francisco Bay Area GONAs are on-going programs for AI/AN adolescents

- Sacramento GONA was held in 2012 and 2013

- Four to five day program

- Youth and community gathering
Do Native American adolescents who participate in GONA show significant increases in self-reported measures of resilience?
STUDY TIMELINE

**Winter 2012**
- Recruitment
  - By health center staff

**Summer 2012**
- GONA Program
  - Pre-GONA and Post-GONA Data Collection

**Winter 2013**
- Recruitment & Follow-Up
  - By health center staff
  - Six month follow-up data collection with 2012 cohorts

**Summer 2013**
- GONA Program
  - Pre-GONA and Post-GONA Data Collection

**Winter 2014**
- Recruitment & Follow-Up
  - By health center staff
  - Six month follow-up data collection with 2013 cohorts

**Summer 2014**
- GONA Program
  - Pre-GONA and Post-GONA Data Collection

**Winter 2015**
- Recruitment & Follow-Up
  - By health center staff
  - Six month follow-up data collection with 2014 cohorts

**Spring 2015**
- Data Matching, Cleaning, & Analysis

**Notes:**
- Recruitment & Follow-Up
MIXED-METHODS STUDY DESIGN

- Community-based participatory research
- Focus on strengths-based measures
- Repeated measures design
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VARIABLES OF INTEREST</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Primary quantitative variables were selected for this study:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Hope (Herth Hope Index)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Family Connection</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Community Connection</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Secondary variables for this study include:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Questions on:</td>
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<td>- Family and Community Relationships</td>
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<td>- Physical Activity</td>
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<td>- Outlook</td>
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STATISTICAL TESTS:

- Primary variables of interest were analyzed using paired t-tests
- Secondary variables of interest were analyzed using chi-squared tests
QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

Responses to two questions were also selected for analysis:

1. In what ways has GONA changed your point of view?

2. What has changed in your life or behaviors because of GONA?

Methods:

- Responses analyzed thematically by three researchers using pile sorting
- Themes were reconciled following the initial sort
PARTICIPANT TRIBAL DEMOGRAPHICS

Amah Mutsun (Ohlone)
Big Sandy Rancheria (Mono)
Cold Springs Rancheria (Mono)
Pomo
Miwok
GONA PARTICIPANTS

TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS IN STUDY

241

FEMALE | MALE | TWO-SPRIT

50% | 49% | 1%

186 participants : 1 GONA
40 participants : 2 GONAs
15 participants : 3 GONAs

AVERAGE AGE OF A PARTICIPANT

14
### FINDINGS: HOPE

**HERTH HOPE INDEX**
- 12 questions
- 4-point scale
- Range: 4-48

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Pre-HHI Mean</th>
<th>Post-HHI Mean</th>
<th>Pre-Post HHI Mean Difference</th>
<th>p-value</th>
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<td>38.8</td>
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<td>2014</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>35.2</td>
<td>37.7</td>
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FINDINGS: FAMILY CONNECTION

- Question: I feel more connected to my family since participating in GONA

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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Pre-Family Connection Mean</th>
<th>Post-Family Connection Mean</th>
<th>Pre-Post Mean Difference</th>
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<td>2013</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>3.2</td>
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<td>2014</td>
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<td>3.1</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>0.20</td>
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### FINDINGS: COMMUNITY CONNECTION

- **Question:** I feel more connected to my community since participating in this program.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
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<th>Pre-Community Connection Score</th>
<th>Post-Community Connection Score</th>
<th>Pre-Post Connection Mean Difference</th>
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<tr>
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<td>2.95</td>
<td>3.11</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.057</td>
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# FINDINGS: 1 VS 2 GONA EXPOSURES

## 1-GONA Exposure Cohort (2012 OR 2013 OR 2014)

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<th>Variable</th>
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<tr>
<td>Family Connection</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community Connection</td>
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<td>&lt;0.05</td>
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## 2-GONA Exposure Cohort (2012 & 2013)

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</thead>
<tbody>
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<tr>
<td>Family Connection</td>
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<td>0.40</td>
<td>0.500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Connection</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>0.99</td>
<td>&lt;0.05</td>
</tr>
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</table>
SIX-MONTH SURVEY FINDINGS

82% LEARNING ABOUT CULTURE

78% HELP OUT FAMILY

74% MORE PHYSICALLY ACTIVE

74% POSITIVE ABOUT FUTURE

n=27  |  p<0.05
**RESULTS:** In what ways has GONA changed your point of view?

| Focus on culture, tribal traditions & heritage | Traditional values: we are all connected, respect for elders, connection to nature |
| Finding a purpose in life, realizing community priorities | Increase in learning new perspectives & ideas |
| Shift in making positive choices regarding physical fitness and substance use | Increased sense of responsibility |
“I don’t have to be ashamed of who I am because I'm brown”

-GONA Participant, age 16
“My pride in my culture.”

-GONA Participant, age 14
RESULTS: What has changed in your life or behaviors because of GONA?

- Increase in family and community connection
- Respect for others
- Increase in leadership
- Generosity
- Changes in spiritual practice
- Opportunity to meet new people, openness to meeting new people
“I will do what I feel benefits me and my community.”

-GONA Participant, age 16
“It has helped me to open up and make new friends, and it’s made me feel happier and more at peace.”

-GONA Participant, age 17
CONCLUSIONS

• There is an association between exposure to the GONA intervention and an increase in hope, family connection, and community connection.

• Based on qualitative results, the GONA intervention increases participant self-efficacy, community connection, connection to Native American culture, and physical activity.
CONTRIBUTIONS

• Fills a 15+ year gap in evidence on GONA curriculum:
  • First evidence-based research that the GONA evaluation has positive outcomes for AI/AN communities that use the curriculum

• Strengths-based approach to research on health interventions with adolescents
CHALLENGES

- Strengths-based approach
- Small sample size
- Secondary data analysis
- No comparison site/control group
- Time between intervention & data collection results
NEXT STEPS

California Reducing Disparities Project
• Expand GONA Research Network with two new sites in 2017
• Initiate formal research project across 5 GONA sites

Cultural Connectivity Scale
• Developed by Angela Snowshoe in Canada
• Adapted by Bay Area and Sacramento Native Communities
CHI MIIGWETCH (THANK YOU)

- MENTORS/UC BERKELEY THESIS COMMITTEE
- CALIFORNIA CONSORTIUM OF URBAN INDIAN HEALTH
  - JYL MARDEN, DIRECTOR
  - APRIL MCGILL, PROGRAM COORDINATOR
- NATIVE AMERICAN HEALTH CENTER
- JANET KING
- FRESNO AMERICAN INDIAN HEALTH PROJECT
  - NATIVE AMERICAN MEDIA LAB
- SACRAMENTO NATIVE AMERICAN HEALTH CENTER

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  - SCHOENEMAN FUND
  - JOSEPH A. MEYERS CENTER FOR RESEARCH ON NATIVE AMERICAN ISSUES
QUESTIONS?