# What Is Trauma?

“trauma results from an event, series of events, or set of circumstances that is experienced by an individual as physically or emotionally harmful or threatening and that has lasting adverse effects on the individual’s functioning and physical, social, emotional, or spiritual well-being”

As defined by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

# What is Intergenerational Trauma?

According to Dr. Korey Abbrianono, the term intergenerational trauma, occurs when a traumatic event takes place to either an individual, family, or collective community and gets passed down to subsequent generations. Traumatic events are often perpetrated by outside sources rather than within the family itself. Examples of this include generations that have been exposed to discrimination, oppression, violence, sexual abuse, accidental deaths, and suicide.

Dr. Abbrianono goes on to explain the term was first acknowledged in 1988, when a study (Sigal et al., 1988) of Holocaust survivors found that they were overrepresented in psychiatric referrals by 300%. Its impact has since been demonstrated across various cultures and communities, including descendants of refugees (Sangalang & Vang, 2017), Native Americans who were forced to attend residential schools (Brave Heart, 2003) and African Americans who experienced generations of slavery, segregation, and institutionalized racism (Degruy, 2005).

# What is Historical Trauma?

“Historical trauma is an example of intergenerational trauma and refers to the legacy of traumatic events that are experienced by a collective group of people. Often, these communities have faced oppression and the social and psychological effects can be observed among succeeding generations.”

As defined in What is Intergenerational or Historical Trauma.Abbrianono,Korey, Stress and Trauma Evaluation, and Psychological Services

## According to, Examining the Theory of Historical Trauma Among Native Americans,Kathleen Brown-Rice, states:

“To explain why some Native American individuals are subjected to substantial difficulties, Brave Heart and Debruyn (1998) utilized the literature on Jewish Holocaust survivors and their decedents and pioneered the concept of historical trauma. The current problems facing the Native American people may be the result of “a legacy of chronic trauma and unresolved grief across generations” enacted on them by the European dominant culture (Brave Heart & DeBruyn, 1998, p. 60). The primary feature of historical trauma is that the trauma is transferred to subsequent generations through biological, psychological, environmental, and social means, resulting in a cross-generational cycle of trauma (Sotero, 2006). The theory of historical trauma has been considered clinically applicable to Native American individuals by counselors, psychologists, and psychiatrists” (Brave Heart, Chase, Elkins, & Altschul, 2011; Goodkind, LaNoue, Lee, Freeland, & Freund, 2012; Myhra, Kathleen Brown-Rice, NCC, is an Assistant Professor at the University of South Dakota. Correspondence can be addressed to Kathleen Brown-Rice, Division of Counseling and Psychology in Education, School of Education, University of South Dakota, 210E Delzell, Vermillion, SD 57069, kathleen.rice@usd.edu. 118 The Professional Counselor\Volume 3, Issue 3 2011).

# Native American Historical Traumas: The Problem Policies

- The Indian Removal Act, 1830
- Trail of Tears, 1838
- Navajo-Long Walk, 1863
- Kill the Indian and Save The Man, 1832
- Indian Boarding Schools, 1869
- Indian Adoption Project, 1958

# The Indian Removal Act, 1830

The Indian Removal Act was signed into law by President Andrew Jackson on May 28, 1830, authorizing the president to grant lands west of the Mississippi in exchange for Indian lands within existing state borders. A few tribes went peacefully, but many resisted the relocation policy. During the fall and winter of 1838 and 1839, the Cherokees were forcibly moved west by the United States government. Approximately 4,000 Cherokees died on this forced march, which became known as the "Trail of Tears."

In his message on December 6, 1830, President Jackson informed Congress on the progress of the removal, stating, "It gives me pleasure to announce to Congress that the benevolent policy of the Government, steadily pursued for nearly thirty years, in relation to the removal of the Indians beyond the white settlements is approaching to a happy consummation."

Jackson declared that removal would "incalculably strengthen the southwestern frontier." Clearing Alabama and Mississippi of their Indian populations, he said, would "enable those states to advance rapidly in population, wealth, and power."

Library of Congress

# The Trail of Tears, 1838

From May 1838 and March 1839, federal soldiers forcibly removed 16,000 Cherokees from Tennessee, Georgia, Alabama, and North Carolina, taking them to stockades, stripped of their homes with little to no belongings to march by foot to what the government called Indian territory, present-day Oklahoma. At least 4,000 Cherokees died—one quarter of the population—and many were buried in unmarked graves.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SosZ2ZRJymU

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# ➢ Navajo-Long Walk, 1863

By the early 1860s, Americans of European descent began settling in and around Navajo lands, leading to conflict between Navajo people on one side and settlers and the U.S. Army on the other. In response to the fighting, the Army created a plan to move all Navajos from their homeland.

The forced removal of the Navajo, which began in January 1864 and lasted two months, came to be known as the "Long Walk." According to historic accounts, more than 8,500 men, women, and children were forced to leave their homes in northeastern Arizona and northwestern New Mexico. In the dead of winter, they made the 300-plus-mile trek to a desolate internment camp along the Pecos River in eastern New Mexico called the Bosque Redondo Reservation, where the military maintained an outpost, Fort Sumner. Along the way, approximately 200 Navajos died of starvation and exposure to the elements.

Four years later, having endured overcrowded and miserable conditions at Bosque Redondo, the Navajo signed the historic U.S.-Navajo Treaty of 1868. The treaty allowed the Navajo to return to only a small portion of their original homeland in Arizona and New Mexico. The U.S. government promised basic services in exchange for peace, and the Navajo began the long walk home on June 18, 1868.

# Kill the Indian and Save the Man

The assimilation of Native Americans into western culture became a top government priority in the United States. The words used by Captain Richard Henry Pratt in his speech delivered in 1892 during the National Conference of Charities and Correction, paints the perfect picture of what Westerners thought of Native Americans. Those words were, "**Kill the Indian in him, and save the man**."Pratt's ideas on assimilation led to Indian Boarding Schools.

In 1879, Richard Pratt opened the first of many Indian Boarding Schools in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. His goal: to use education to uplift and assimilate into the mainstream of American culture. That year, 50 Cheyenne, Kiowa, and Pawnee arrived at his school. Pratt trimmed their hair, required them to speak English, and prohibited any displays of tribal traditions, such as Indian clothing, dancing, or religious ceremonies. Pratt's motto was "kill the Indian and save the man."

The Carlisle Indian School set the model for Indian education. To achieve Pratt’s goal of civilization, and assimilation, these schools took Indian children away from their families and tribes and sought to strip them of their cultural heritage.

According the Bureau of Indian Affairs, The purpose of federal Indian boarding schools was to culturally assimilate American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian children by forcibly removing them from their families and Indian Tribes, Alaska Native Villages, and Native Hawaiian Community.

https://www.bia.gov/service/federal-indian-boarding-school-initiative#:~:text=The%20purpose%20of%20federal%20Indian,Villages%2C%20and%20Native%20Hawaiian%20Community.

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# Kill the Indian and Save the Man

Captain Richard Henry Pratt's speech in which he used the now well-known phrase to describe his philosophy of assimilation: "Kill the Indian in him, and save the man." The speech was delivered in 1892 during the National Conference of Charities and Correction, which was well received.

In 1879, an army officer named Richard H. Pratt opened a boarding school for Indian youth in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. His goal: to use education to uplift and assimilate into the mainstream of American culture. That year, 50 Cheyenne, Kiowa, and Pawnee arrived at his school. Pratt trimmed their hair, required them to speak English, and prohibited any displays of tribal traditions, such as Indian clothing, dancing, or religious ceremonies. Pratt's motto was "kill the Indian and save the man."

The Carlisle Indian School became a model for Indian education. Not only were private boarding schools established, so too were reservation boarding schools. The ostensible goal of such schools was to teach Indian children the skills necessary to function effectively in American society. But in the name of uplift, civilization, and assimilation, these schools took Indian children away from their families and tribes and sought to strip them of their cultural heritage.

# According the Federal Bureau of Indian Affairs

In June 2021, Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland recognizes the troubled legacy of federal Indian boarding school and their intergenerational impact and to shed light on the traumas of the past.

Indian child removal went hand in hand with forcible removal of Native Americans from their land. The government not only took their homes but their babies, too.

Secretary Halland's findings detail the conditions experienced by children who attending the boarding schools, including **manual labor and discouraging or preventing the children's native languages, religions, and cultural beliefs. While children attended federal Indian boarding schools, many endured physical and emotional abuse and, in some cases, died.**

The investigation found that from 1819 to 1969, the federal Indian boarding school system consisted of 408 federal schools across 37 states or then territories, including 21 schools in Alaska and 7 schools in Hawaii. The investigation identified marked or unmarked burial sites at approximately 53 different schools across the system. As the investigation continues, the Department expects the number of identified burial sites to increase.  Covid-19 has delayed the continued investigation.

# Indian Adoption Project, 1958

To further the government's effort to assimilate Native American children to mainstream western culture, the Indian Adoption Project removed Native American children from their families and placed Native American them with white families. This caused the destruction of their families and resulted in several generations of Native children losing their identities.

# The Solutions

- The Indian Child Welfare Act, 1978
- New Mexico’s Indian Family Protection Act, 2022

# Indian Child Welfare Act, 1978

The purpose of the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) is "...to protect the best interest of Indian Children and to promote the stability and security of Indian tribes and families by the establishment of minimum Federal standards for the removal of Indian children and placement of such children in homes which will reflect the unique values of Indian culture... "(25 U.S. C. 1902).

The law protects American Indian and Alaska Native children in state child welfare systems and helps them remain connected to their families, cultures, and communities.

ICWA also:

- Creates minimum protections for Indian children in the child welfare system
- Specifically addresses system abuses directed at American Indian children
- Promotes heightened cultural considerations as well as the preservation of the American Indian tribes

# Indian Family Protection Act, 2022

- Conduct affirmative efforts to determine a child's Tribal affiliation
- Meaningfully collaborate with Tribal courts to ensure appropriate jurisdiction
- Work with families and Tribes to reunite an Indian child with their Tribe
- Provide active notification to the relevant Tribe for any custody proceedings relating to an Indian child
- Provide Tribal courts the option to assume jurisdiction before taking further action
- Coordinate with the relevant Tribe when conducting an investigation regarding an Indian child
- Follow language access requirements for proceedings, including providing an interpreter if necessary for family members with limited English proficiency
- Give Tribes the right to intervene in proceedings subject to IFPA

Thank you for being part of the solution. It will take all of us working together for the sake of the children to stay true to the spirit of ICWA and IFPA.

https://www.icwlc.org/education-hub/understanding-the-icwa/

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