

# OK TF-CBT TIDBITS

Official Newsletter from Oklahoma TF-CBT



## Honoring Children- Mending the Circle: TF-CBT for American Indian/Alaskan Native Youth

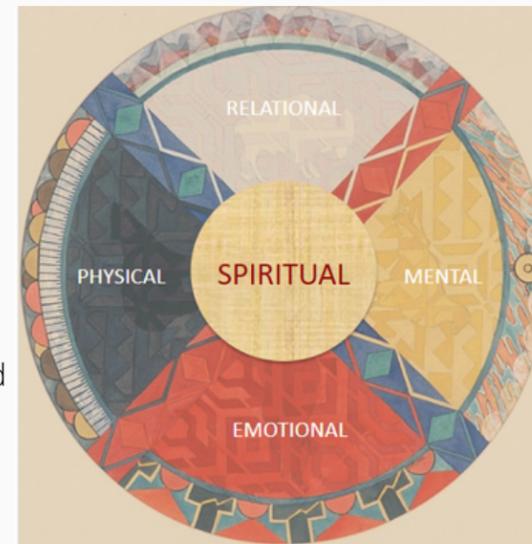
Given the known vulnerabilities facing American Indian and Alaskan Native youth and families, Drs. Dee BigFoot and Susan Schmidt developed an enhancement of TF-CBT for AI/AN families, titled "Honoring Children - Mending the Circle." Building on the core concepts of TF-CBT, this application conceptualizes trauma as impacting an individual's personal harmony and balance across five domains of wellness as seen in the graphic to the right.

In the first phase of TF-CBT, therapists support youth and families in recognizing trauma impacts within the physical, emotional, cognitive, relational and spiritual domains of personal well-being. This may include identifying and understanding the impacts of historical and intergenerational trauma on the youth, family and their community.

Throughout TF-CBT, families are invited to incorporate aspects of their cultural affiliation into their family's healing process, including traditional beliefs, healing practices, ceremonies and other helpers and healers important to their family and community into treatment. Therapists partner with families to personalize the PRACTICE components utilizing relevant stories, metaphors and cultural practices that enrich psychoeducation, coping skills development, trauma narration and processing, conjoint sharing and safety enhancement.

For example, when introducing the relaxation component, a provider might explain the stress response system through storytelling: "Animals have always been our teachers. They teach us when to stay and fight, to run, to fly, to form a circle, to become a herd, to escape danger. We have to be aware of what we see, think, feel, and how we respond. By understanding our body's reaction to a situation, we can understand that it's nature's/Spirit's way of telling us how to care for ourselves in a safe way." (Bigfoot, Schmidt, 2022).

Click here more information on [Honoring Children-Mending the Circle](#)



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## Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion: Ins and Outs of ICWA

The Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA), was passed by congress in 1978 after research showed that a disproportionate number of children (25-35% of all American Indian/Alaskan Native Children (AI/AN)) were removed from their homes by state child welfare and private adoption agencies. Subsequently, 85% of those youth removed were placed outside of their families and communities, even when kinship placement options were available. With concern for active and potential loss for language, culture, and identity within tribal communities, ICWA's principle is that children whose safety necessitates removal from their AI/AN caregivers have better outcomes when placed with extended family members or members of their immediate community. ICWA has rigorous standards that guide services providers in enhancing primary caregivers' capacity to safely parent their children and maintain and regain custody. ICWA bylaws indicate "active efforts" (a more stringent term than the standard 'reasonable efforts' utilized more broadly in child welfare). "Active efforts" are defined by a standard of providing intensive services to the family prior to removal of an AI/AN child from their parent and intentionality to reunify families, when possible, with their AI/AN parents and/or a kinship caregiver within their tribe. As results of ICWA have proven positive for the youth who are served by this system, ICWA has been labeled the 'gold standard' of child welfare policy and practice by 18 national child advocacy organizations.

To learn more about ICWA below are some additional resources for exploration.

[OKpolicy.org](http://OKpolicy.org)

[National ICWA Flowchart and Glossary](#)

[ICWA As the Gold Standard for Child Welfare](#)

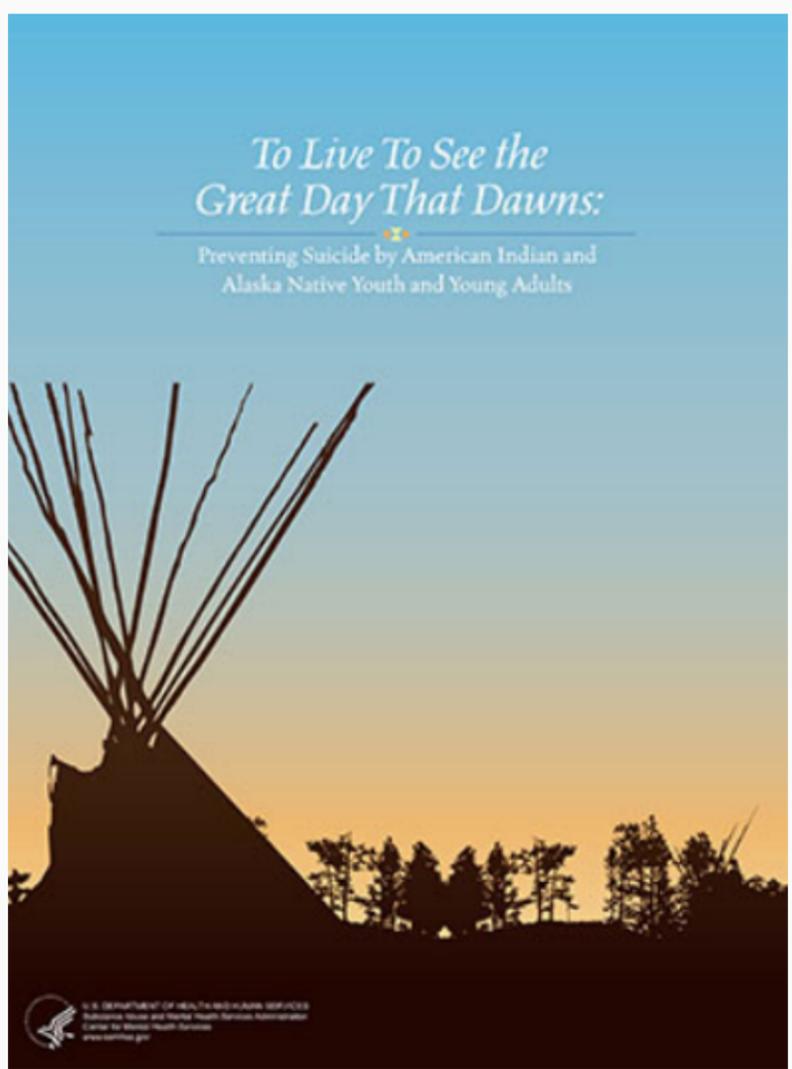
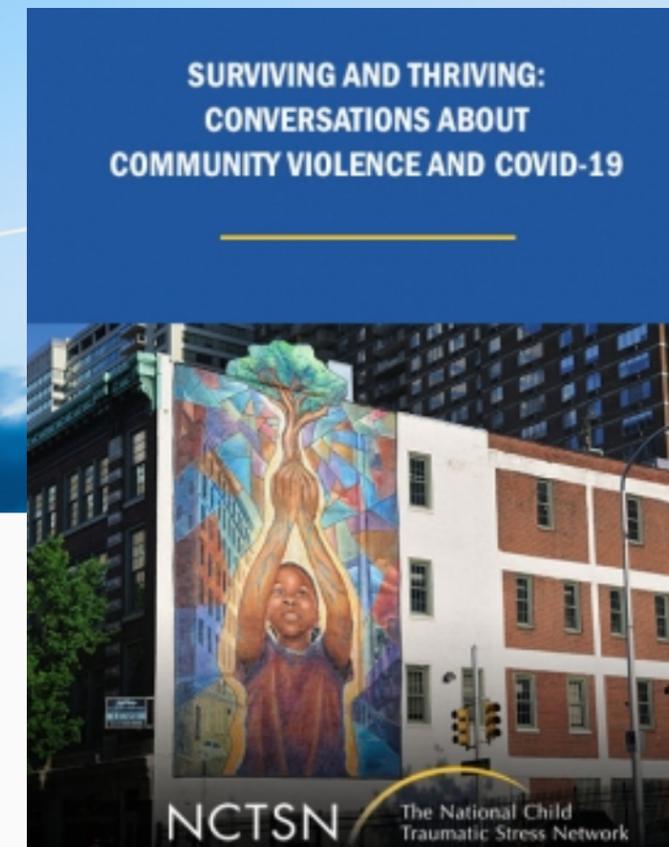
**ICWA promotes children's rights to be connected to their extended family. These connections can be described as concentric circles. When a child is situated within these circles, they naturally build resilience. - Sheldon Spotted Elk**





# Additional Resources for Serving the AI/AN Community

The following images are linked to specific mental health resources for clinicians supporting AI/AN youth and families.



# Clinical Application Corner

## AMERICAN INDIAN/ALASKA NATIVE AFFILIATION MODEL

<p><b>High/Strong Affiliation</b></p> <p>American Indian/Alaska Native cultural and ethnic identity is secure</p> <p>Highly desirous to maintain high/strong tribal affiliation &amp; practices</p> <p>Other cultural and ethnic heritage(s) are not assumed or desired</p>	<p><b>Limited or No Affiliation</b></p> <p>American Indian/Alaska Native cultural and ethnic identity is insecure with limited tribal connection</p> <p>Highly desirous to acquire high/strong tribal affiliation &amp; practices</p> <p>May have other cultural and ethnic heritage(s) that are not assumed or not valued as highly</p> <p>Affiliation may be marginal due to removal from tribal connections (e.g., family separation, foster care, adoption, disconnection from tribal homelands, limited knowledge, etc.)</p>
<p><b>Limited or No Affiliation</b> (other ethnic identity secure)</p> <p>Identity of another ethnic identity secure (does not primarily view or values self as American Indian/Alaska Native)</p> <p>Limited or no interest in affiliation with American Indian/Alaska Native ethnicity due to other ethnicity</p> <p>May not express interest in American Indian/Alaska Native ethnic heritage and has found value in other ethnic heritage(s) (Caucasian, Black, Hispanic, Jewish, etc.)</p> <p>May seek financial or medical assistance but not interested in Native ethnic belonging</p>	<p><b>Limited or No Affiliation</b> (other cultural based identity secure)</p> <p>Identity of another culture based secure (does not primarily view or value self as Native)</p> <p>Limited or no interest in affiliation with American Indian/Alaska Native nor other ethnicity identity</p> <p>Identify to greater degree with other cultural base (military, sports, religious, medicine, wealth, region, language, gender, education, entertainment, etc.)</p> <p>May seek financial or medical assistance but not interested in Native cultural belonging</p>

Utilization of the AI/AN Affiliation Model (pictured left), developed by Dr. Dee Bigfoot, can be a critical first step in TF-CBT with AI/AN families. This model allows for open conversation with families about their beliefs, traditions, values and cultural practices. Culturally- and spiritually- based practices can be partnered with TF-CBT to enhance youth and family healing. For example, traditional tribal community practices such as singing, smudging, drumming, beading and ceremonies such as sweat lodges naturally support relaxation, emotion regulation, positive relationship development and may also incorporate elements of gradual exposure and cognitive processing of trauma memories.

CULTURAL PRACTICES, VALUES, AND LIFESTYLE (BIGFOOT, 2022)

Our OK TF-CBT team believes wholeheartedly in the NCTSN's *unofficial* motto: **"Steal shamelessly & Share relentlessly!"**

When, in your TF-CBT work, you develop or find resources that would be beneficial to our larger OK TF-CBT community, please share with us to include (with credit) on our website!



## Upcoming Conferences

Many Local and National Conferences and Symposiums are upcoming within the field of child maltreatment and education. Hope to see you there!

- [Oklahoma Advanced TF-CBT Conference](#), March 6th-9th; Virtual
- [Center on Child Abuse and Neglect \(CCAN\) Conference](#), April 5-7; Edmond, OK
- Oklahoma Children's Conference, April 11-13 (Registration TBD)
- [National Children's Advocacy Center \(NCAC\) International Symposium on Child Abuse](#), March 20-23; Huntsville, AL
- [American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children \(APSAC\) Colloquium](#); May 22-26; Denver, CO

