

Chapter 10

Dis-placement and Dis-ease: Land, Place, and Health Among American Indians and Alaska Natives

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*This land is mine
All the way to the old fence line
Every break of day
I'm working hard just to make it pay*

*This land is mine
Yeah I signed on the dotted line
Camp fires on the creek bank
Bank breathing down my neck*

*They won't take it away...
They won't take it away from me*

--White Australian Farmer – “Father”

*This land is me
Rock, water, animal, tree
They are my song
My being's here where I belong*

*This land owns me
From generations past to infinity
We're all but woman and man
You only fear what you don't understand*

*They won't take it away...
They won't take it away from me*

--Indigenous Australian Tracker – “Albert”

“This Land is Mine/This Land is Me” from
the film, *One Night the Moon* (2001)

Inspired by real events and the documentary *Black Tracker*, indigenous Australian Director Rachel Perkins' (Arrernte People) musical film *One Night the Moon* illustrates the complex and difficult relationships between aboriginal and settler communities of Australia as their respective worldviews and consequential actions determine the outcome of a life-and-death situation. The story revolves around a young farm girl (Emily) who wanders off one night into the Australian outback. In a pivotal scene, men are gathered on the White farm owner's property, ready to begin the search for the missing girl. An indigenous Australian Tracker, Albert, is there to assist but is ordered off the land by the White farmer and father of the lost girl who does not want “some darkie leading the search” – a decision that later

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proves to be tragic. At the moment of ordering Albert off of his land, the father enters into song with the lyrics noted above, “This land is mine...,” articulating his fierce and resolute stance of contracted ownership and therefore ultimate stewardship of the land. Forced out of the scene and away from the search, Albert joins the song with contrasting lyrics, “This land is me...,” reflecting an entirely different relationship to the land, one which is intrinsic, relational, and without dominion. This is a key turning point in the film, where indigenous knowledge of land and place is rejected with devastating consequences for the young girl, her family, the community, and ultimately everyone involved. The story is clearly allegorical of the devastating consequences of colonization and racism; in this case, rejection of indigenous knowledge and practice proved to be fatal. Juxtaposing indigenous and Western European ways of relating to land, place, and time, its implications are consistent with contemporary social and environmental challenges. Global climate change and its resulting consequences are rapidly endangering indigenous communities worldwide. As market interests in land-based resources from water and mining interests to genetically engineered food crops continue to erode the landscape, the critical link between place and health becomes evident and the need for immediate intervention becomes imminent. Now, more than ever, the deeply situated land-based knowledge of indigenous peoples is pressing to be heard – not only to save the planet but to save all of our collective health and well-being.

Indigenous peoples (IP) throughout the world suffer devastatingly high rates of health disparities, many of which are linked to land loss and destruction, as well as general lack of access to healthy land environments (La Duke 1999). Globally, IP have disproportionately high rates of chronic and communicable diseases (Gracey and King 2009; King 2009) coupled with poor living conditions, inadequate housing, poor nutrition, and exposure to high environmental contaminants, leading to a disproportionate burden of chronic health deficits as well as high levels of morbidity and mortality (Gracey and King 2009; King 2009). The 2006 Indigenous World International Working Group on indigenous affairs states the following: “Indigenous peoples remain on the margins of society: they are poorer, less educated, die at a younger age, are much more likely to commit suicide, and are generally in worse health than the rest of the population” (Stidsen 2006: 10). This is particularly true for indigenous groups “whose original ways of life, environment, and livelihoods have been destroyed and often replaced with the worst of Western lifestyle – i.e., unemployment, poor housing, alcoholism, and drug use” (Stephens et al. 2005: 11). To date, research has just begun to incorporate a more holistic orientation to understanding health and wellness (Burghardt and Nagai-Jacobson 2002; Mark and Lyons 2010; Wilson 2003), with a focus on moving beyond “the absence of disease” model of wellness (King 2009; Krieger 2005) to defining and articulating the social, cultural, spiritual, mental, and more recently, environmental aspects (including geography and place) of well-being and health (Burgess et al. 2005; King 2009; Mark and Lyons 2010). In terms of IP, a more holistic or *wholistic* orientation is clearly consonant with cultural worldviews and traditional knowledge relevant to health and well-being

(Mark and Lyons 2010; Walters and Simoni 2002; Wilson 2003). In recent years, the interconnectedness of the mind, body, and spirit has gained acceptance, particularly in the fields of psychoneuroimmunology (Lyons and Chamberlain 2006), and epigenetics (Jasienska 2009; Krieger 2004, 2005; Olden and White 2005), as well as with particular psychophysiological health outcomes including cardiovascular (Kuzawa and Sweet 2009), inflammation disorders, and neuroendocrine and immune functions (Seeman et al. 2003). Although the relationships among land, wellness, and health are well articulated in Indigenous origin stories and tribally specific Original Instructions¹ (Deloria 1992, 1995; Pierotti and Wildcat 2000), only recently have these relationships been empirically examined in the health sciences (Burgess et al. 2005; Oneha 2001; Wilson 2003). The indigenous philosophical–spiritual orientation to land and ethical code of conduct is captured in this quote from a Ggudju elder (indigenous Australian):

Our story is in the land.
It is written in those sacred places.
My children will look after those places,
That's the law.

Cited in Burgess et al. (2005: 118)

The land–health nexus is also captured by Anderson (1995); as cited in Burgess et al. (2005: 120), an aboriginal scholar who states

Our identity as human being remains tied to our land, to our cultural practices, our systems of authority and control, our intellectual traditions, our concepts of spirituality, and to our systems of resource ownership and exchange. Destroy this relationship and you damage – sometimes irrevocably – individual human beings and their health.

IP Original Instructions were and are tied to the land and cosmos. Gregory Cajete, a Tewa scholar (2000: 186) notes

Native people expressed a relationship to the natural world that could only be called 'ensoulment'...which for Native people represented the deepest level of psychological involvement with their land and which provided a kind of a map of the soul. The psychology and spiritual qualities of Indigenous peoples' behavior...were thoroughly 'in-formed' by the depth and power of their participation mystique with the Earth as a living soul. It was from this orientation that Indian people developed 'responsibilities' to the land and all living things, similar to those that they had to each other. In the Native mind, spirit and matter were not separate: They were one and the same.

¹Original Instructions is a lingua franca term used by some Native scholars and community leaders to represent the tribal-specific spiritual and ethical codes of conduct and instructions handed down for millennia as to how the people should conduct themselves, honor their relationships, and fulfill their responsibilities and obligations to all of creation, ancestors, future generations, and spirit worlds.

Although classic social determinants of health, such as poor socioeconomic status, substandard housing, and poor access to appropriate health care all contribute to poor health among IP, these factors do not sufficiently explain the high rates of poor health and mental health, particularly with respect to post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), anxiety, and depression among IP, specifically American Indians and Alaska Natives (Walters et al. 2002). As a result, indigenous scholars have turned their attention to examining how historical and societal determinants of health, particularly the role of **place-based historically traumatic events (e.g., forced relocation and land loss), environmental microaggressions (discrimination distress based on land desecration), and disproportionate exposures to high rates of lifetime trauma, not only are hazards to contemporary IP health but may also persist for generations (Evans-Campbell and Walters 2006; Evans-Campbell 2008; Krieger et al. 2010).**

After reviewing the literature on indigenous place and health, this chapter shares empirical findings related to land and place loss on physical and mental health outcomes among a national sample of gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender (hereafter collectively referred to as two-spirit) American Indian and Alaska Natives (hereafter referred to as AIAN or Native; The Honor Project, RO1MH65871). Two-spirit AIAN face additional health stressors associated with negotiating multiply oppressed statuses. Preliminary empirical evidence indicates that two-spirits experience elevated rates of antigay and anti-Native violence, including sexual and physical assault during childhood and adulthood (Balsam et al. 2004; Evans-Campbell 2008; Walters et al. 2002; Simoni et al. 2006), historical traumatic event exposure (Balsam et al. 2004), and microaggression distress (Chae and Walters 2009) – experiences typically associated with adverse physical and mental health outcomes, including self-rated poor health and high rates of pain (Chae and Walters 2009). Historical and contemporary traumas concurrent with socioeconomic vulnerabilities undercut the health of AIANs, especially among two-spirit populations (Fieland et al. 2007; Walters and Simoni 2002).

The major aim of this chapter is to stimulate work in the area of place and health, specifically examining how AIAN health outcomes can be contextualized and understood in light of historical losses and disruptions tied to place or land. In fact, the very definition of “indigenous” intimates a sacred thread or reciprocal tie to land, place, and identity (King 2009). Cajete (1999: 6) notes that the word “*indigenous*” “is derived from the Latin root *indu* or *endo*, which is related to the Greek word *endina*, which means ‘entrails.’ Indigenous literally means being so completely identified with a place that you reflect its entrails, its insides, its soul.” Any disruption in indigenous land, place, or culture clearly has a potentially harmful effect on indigenous health and wellness, which may then persist for generations to come. Additionally, the resiliency by which AIAN communities have lived and thrived despite high rates of trauma and colonial practices is a testament to IP strength and abilities to adapt and survive.

Indigenous Place: “Native Americans are the Environment: The Environment is Us²!”

Place and Relational Orientation

For IP, the ultimate location of *place* is embedded in a profound relationship with the earth. The earth (or land) is both literally and figuratively the first and final teacher in our understanding of our world, communities, families, selves, and bodies. With such understanding it can be argued that as the land or relationship to land is impacted – physically or metaphorically – so are bodies, minds, and spirits. As La Duke (1999: 2) asserts:

Native American teaching describe relations all around – animals, fish, trees, and rocks as our brothers, sisters, uncles, and grandpas. Our relations to each other, our prayers whispered across generations to our relatives, are what bind our cultures together. The protection, teachings, and gifts of our relatives have for generations preserved our families. These relations are honored in ceremony, song, story, and life that keep relations close-to buffalo, sturgeon, salmon, turtles, bears, wolves, and panthers. These are our older relatives, the ones who came before and taught us how to live. Their obliteration by dams, guns and bounties is an immense loss to Native families and cultures.

Indigenous worldviews recognize the interdependency between humans and nature, the physical and spiritual worlds, the ancestors and the future generations; all living things, animate or inanimate, are bound by a connection to everything else. This interconnectedness of all things is the first law of ecological thought (Cajete 1999). A *sacred* ecology acknowledges the central role of spirituality and cultural cosmology in understanding this interconnectedness; “Native American intellectual tradition still continues to express the North American landscape in intellectual and spiritual reciprocity, where the more-than-human grants qualities of mind to the human” (Sheridan and Longboat 2006). From this vantage point, human cognition or imagination is less central in the equation of defining place: ancient knowledge is so large that it has seen and known everything before. While cognitive processes are important in the articulation of ideas, it does not take a human mind to make meaning because meanings have already been set by ancestral knowledge. The meanings generated by the mind are instead seen as offerings of gratitude back to the ancestors for the wisdoms and lessons of place they have helped us discover, but which were already there. In essence, we are receptors accepting what is revealed by place. Thus, place is not a cultural product: rather, cultural products are defined by their *relationship* with and to place.

As Cajete (1999) notes, for AIAN, the relationship to place is based on an established intimate relationship with the landscape that has persisted for over 30,000 years, thus they “lack an immigrant experience within their memories” (Deloria 1995).

² Quote from Corbin Harney (Western Shoshone) as cited in Gonzales and Nelson (2001: 496).

AIAN's long-standing relationship with place leads to a "metaphysical attachment – a sacred thread – that does not bind the people so much as remind the people of the obligations and responsibilities carried forward by generations: That thread...reminds them of their past and their future, their ancestors and their offspring, their spirit and their obligations" (Watkins 2001: 42). This sacred orientation to place is a key element of an acute "ecological awareness" (Cajete 1999) that is circular, dynamic, fluid, spatial, and spherically directional. This sacred orientation is critical to understanding AIAN worldviews that bind place to relational ways of understanding the world. As Cajete (2001: 625) notes,

Understanding orientation to place is essential in understanding what it is to be related. Many indigenous people recognize seven directions: the four cardinal directions – above, center, and below. This way of viewing [a relational] orientation creates a sphere of relationships founded on place and evolving through time and space. This is a deeply contexted and holistic reflection of relational orientation.

This sense of relationship with place is inextricably linked to indigenous traditional ways of being in relation with relatives (Cajete 1999). Metaphorical examples of the manifestations of relational place orientations are revealed in indigenous constructs of place and beings that inhabit place or space as "relatives" or "relations" as revealed in common references to "mother earth" or to rocks as "grandfathers." We converse with place as if with relatives. Place is part of our ancestral heritage, our present, and our future. It links us in immediate and visceral ways to our past, present, and future. In this sense, IP emerge from the place and have a bidirectional relationship of caring with place – place cares for us and we care for it. **In a study investigating the connections between culture, health, and place in First Nations people, Wilson (2003: 88) asked First Nations (Anishinabek) individuals about their views on the influence of the land on spiritual, physical, mental, and emotional health.**

I believe that we came from the earth – just like everything is alive, potatoes, plants, anything comes alive and flourishes with flowers. The earth provides everything, wild animals, insects. The earth provides for us. The earth provides strength, that's why we call it mother. She provides life...helps us live. Without her we would not live.

In Anishinabek worldviews, the earth is seen as a feminine being and is regarded as the source of all life-sustaining things (Wilson 2003). In this interview excerpt, it is clear that this individual views the earth as a relative (mother), with whom this person shares a great deal of mutual care, respect, and honor. This relationship is experienced as core to this individual's very existence. Another description from an elder expresses similar sentiments (Wilson 2003: 88):

Mother Earth is everything that you see. You look everywhere on earth and you see Mother Earth. The way you raise your children, the way people do things together, the way we live among our people. She is in everything we do.

As Wilson (2003: 88) notes, "the relationship Anishinabek have with the land cannot be captured by the simplified notion of being 'close to nature.' The land is not just seen as shaping or influencing identity, but being an actual part of it."

Guided by a sacred ecology and Original Instructions (OI), AIAN have an intimate knowing and being in relationship with land and place. All of nature, including plants, animals, stones, trees, mountains, rivers, insects, and other beings embodied relationships and were connected to the greater “web of life” of which each and every being has a purpose and relationship to one another that must be honored, and indeed, celebrated or renewed through ceremony and everyday living. Through making, sharing, and honoring these relationships, indigenous peoples “perceive themselves as living in a sea of relationships. In each place they lived, they learned the subtle, but all important language of relationship. It was through such a mindset, tempered by intimate relationships with various environments over thousands of years, that indigenous people accumulated ecological knowledge.” (Cajete 2000: 178). This relational orientation reflects an indigenous understanding of reciprocity and the interrelatedness of all beings, all of creation over generations and has led to a deep understanding of environment and place as they are inextricably linked to behavior, practices, wholeness, and, hence, wellness. As Gonzales and Nelson (2001: 496–498) note, “we are operating from an indigenous model of wholeness, where people and place, matter and spirit, nature and culture are interrelated in a dynamic process...this reciprocal relationship goes back to creation myths [Original Instructions]...this exchange is not just one of give-and-take...giving is always the focus, not the taking.” Cycles of ceremony to renew relationships and to maintain balance among all of creation are part of OI, and, through ritual, embody the immense responsibility that befalls human beings in participating in the great web of life. As Gonzales and Nelson (2001: 497) note, “to realize that, with each breath, thought, and action, we are at the threshold of creation is an enormous responsibility. IP have traditionally taken on this responsibility by following natural laws of their creation stories and by performing ceremonies to renew the earth and maintain balance between people, place, and spirits.”

The recognition of the inseparability, reciprocity, and responsibility between humans and the rest of creation, particularly land and place, serves to create an ethical code of conduct in interacting and being in the world. Pierotti and Wildcat (2000) conceptualizes this orientation as traditional ecological knowledge (TEK), where TEK emphasizes that all aspects of physical space are considered part of a connected, interrelated community (humans, animals, plants, land), shifting the Western emphasis from the human to the ecological community of which humans are an integral part. According to Pierotti and Wildcat (2000), a core component of TEK is that nonhumans and nature exist on their own terms independent of human interpretation. Additionally, TEK acknowledges that IP are native to a place and live with nature – following an ethical code of conduct that exists in relation with ecosystems – in contrast to dominant Western worldviews (e.g., Manifest Destiny), which assumes humans are superior to, separated from (e.g., going “into nature”), or in opposition to – where nature needs to be tamed or conquered primarily for the benefit of humans (Pierotti and Wildcat 2000). Although many are surprised to hear of the conflicts that arise between AIAN and conservationists, the very notion of *conserving* nature reveals an underlying dominant Western orientation to the world (Pierotti and Wildcat 2000), where the assumption is that humans are or should be

in control of nature, or that nature should be conserved primarily to benefit humans for economic or spiritual power. This is completely antithetical to AIAN sacred ecology where “Nature exists on its own terms,” all of life has its own reasons for existence, and humans, part of the web of life, clearly play a connected and related role, but not one that assumes superiority over nature (Pierotti and Wildcat 2000). From a Native perspective, attempts to control the environment are fruitless, even harmful, and are best summarized in the sentiment, “Pity the poor Americans who cannot accept the dominion of place over them” (Watkins 2001: 42).

Finally, although we have emphasized the importance of the sacred ecology and relational worldviews of Native peoples, as Pierotti and Wildcat (2000) note, we are not subscribing to the stereotyped romanticized view of the “ecologically noble savage” (Pierotti and Wildcat 2000). In fact, sacred ecology requires Native peoples to be active participants with their environments and to engage in deep relationships with place, animals, and other beings. As Pierotti and Wildcat (2000) note, IP are not “stewards of the natural world.” Rather, we are part of the natural world, the web of life, no greater than any other part, but an integral cog in the whole with responsibilities and ecological ethics that are tied to land, place, and OI (Pierotti and Wildcat 2000).

Place and Spatial Orientation

IP have unique attachments to original lands, and we carry these attachments, or sacred threads, wherever we go. These attachments are linked not only to special or sacred ritual sites but also to the whole of land and creation. In fact, the boundaries between “sacred sites” and secular sites are often difficult to define or even nonexistent as all land and locations are viewed as sacred (Zarsky 2006). AIAN belief systems and emotional intelligence descend from these attachments.

While typical mainstream conceptualizations of place often have a unidirectional and temporal order, indigenous conceptualizations do not. In her research exploring the role of healing landscapes with the Amuzgo Indians of Oaxaca, Mexico, Elizabeth Cartwright (2007: 10) cites Casey’s (1993) description of place to illustrate the idea that “who we are is based on where we are”:

Place ushers us into what *already* is: namely, the environing subsoil of our embodiment, the bedrock of our being-in-the-world. If imagination projects us out *beyond* ourselves while memory takes us back *behind* ourselves, place subtends and enfolds us, lying perpetually *under* and *around* us. In imagining and remembering, we go into the ethereal and the thick respectively. By being in a place, we find ourselves in what is subsistent and enveloping.

This description illustrates a more complex comprehension of place by appreciating the past and future sensory experiences along with the enveloping and alive process of the present. It brings alive the possibility of place as not occurring at a particular instance but something that happens dynamically in all directions over time. As such,

knowledge of place is deepened and broadened, allowing for alternative experience of space and time.

Additionally, while we are “in the here and now,” we are simultaneously surrounded by future and past generations. Meyer (2008) notes that for IP, knowledge regarding anything is based on “sequential immortality.” For example, among the aboriginal populations of Australia, dreamtime is a space and place where ancestral knowledge coexists with and interacts with contemporary indigenous experience of the physical world, and land is the core connection between these two worlds. Land is the literal and metaphorical vehicle for teaching and understanding our lessons, and as such, place cannot be referenced as a simple physical reality. Such understandings can be found in both dream and “real” time, which are never separated from one another. Traditional land-based knowledge has been passed down through generations, with each generation making its own observations, testing them, and sharing wisdom through oral, pictorial, and/or written communications regarding ecological knowledge. This ecological knowledge, although filled with intergenerational wisdom, remains flexible and adjustable to fit the current generation’s historical and ecological context (Deloria 1992).

Native spatial orientation stands in stark contrast to Western Euro-American temporal orientation, “where the latter tend to look backward and forward in time to get a sense of their place in history, while native peoples look around them to get a sense of their place in history” (Pierotti and Wildcat 2000: 1334; Deloria 1992). In this traditional spatial orientation, there is no isolation from any part of nature or creation – there is no separation from biology, geography, history, land, and the cosmos (Deloria 1992). As noted by Pierotti and Wildcat (2000), spatial thinking is revealed in the seven direction orientation to offer prayers or acknowledgement by many IP – this orientation acknowledges not only respect for the space in which Native people belong but also the spiritual forces that are tied to these directions.

While this complexity of space, time, reality, and consciousness may be difficult to articulate with Western logical processes, it is the reality in indigenous spiritual cosmologies and, hence, in daily living. Thus, for IP, spirituality and ways of relating not only form the core of place understandings but also the core of everyday behavioral expressions embodied in health practices and behaviors. The oversimplification or romanticization of “being close with nature” stereotypes AIANs and trivializes the profound relationship AIANs have with place (Pierotti and Wildcat 2000). The drive to disassemble and simplify the intricate webs of indigenous relationships with space and place illustrates an epistemological stance that takes us away from the wholeness involved in indigenous cosmologies. Place is an interweaving of mind, body, soul, and spirit. Any disassembly of these essential components removes the very core of our being-in-the-world, with resulting material consequences, a process that has been played out for hundreds of years through colonization. The removal of people from the land and their land-based cosmologies and ethics through colonial processes has devastating and important implications for the health and wellness of contemporary IP.

Place, Embodiment, and Health

*We are place, we are. Not those who occupy that place.
We do not exist, we are. We only are.*

Comandante David and Subcomandante Marcos

Over the last several decades, there has been an emergence of the body as a key focus in the social sciences. Researchers are centralizing the body in questions of inequities in health and investigating aspects of embodiment as influenced by social, cultural, political, and economic processes (Krieger 2001; Krieger and Davey 2004). As such, it can be inferred that the body is directly impacted by place and what happens in places. In the past, bioarchaeological studies produced important information about the everyday lives of individuals and groups. From evidence of habitual motion left on bones, scientists could discern social status, race, gender, and age (Joyce 2005; Krieger 2004). Like most legacies of scientific engagement, there has historically been a split of inner and outer body as centered questions, but by looking at social epidemiological trends in health status, scientists are finding clear links between what is going on in the social world and the biological corporeal world. For example, low-birth-weight babies, a frequent problem experienced by indigenous populations, and certain bacterial infections are associated with conditions of poverty, sanitation, and access to health services (Krieger and Davey 2004). In essence, what is happening outside of the body is reflected inside and vice versa; the body is just as affected by the policies, structures, and processes that shape daily living conditions as by individual biological processes. As such, the boundaries of “the body” and the spatial context around it are now being described as “inextricably linked” (Joyce 2005: 149).

Shifting from theoretical and practical investigation of “bodies” to “embodiment” allows for deeper understanding of the complexities involved in the human experience as both biological and social creatures. While bodies are sites – records of process, animated stories of lived experience, visual/textual narratives of past and present, embodiment “is the articulation of agency and structure, causality and meaning, rationality and imagination, physical determinations and symbolic resonances” (Meskell, as cited in Joyce 2005: 151). In this way, bodies can be seen simultaneously as cultural artifacts, political entities, and representations of lived experiences (Joyce 2005; Krieger 2001, 2004).

In ecosocial theory and epidemiological research, the concept of embodiment is seen as a central component in understanding the human process of being both social and biological creatures (Krieger 2001, 2004; Krieger and Davey 2004). Emerging research and scholarship pays attention to “how actualization and suppression of people’s agency, that is, their ability to act within their bodies, intimately depends on socially structured opportunities for, and threats to, their well-being” and “in the case of social inequalities and health, it likewise presumes that observed differences reflect biologic expressions of social inequality” (Krieger and Davey 2004: 95). Embodiment is an important construct that illuminates key processes for explaining the complicated ways that social worlds get lived out in bodies. According to

Krieger (2004: 1), the idea of embodiment “advances three claims: (1) bodies tell stories about – and cannot be studied divorced from – the conditions of our existence; (2) bodies tell stories that often – but not always – match people’s stated accounts; and (3) bodies tell stories that people cannot or will not tell, either because they are unable, forbidden, or choose not to tell.” With this framework, the high rates of chronic diseases, accidents, and suicides in indigenous communities can be viewed as bodies telling the stories of the catastrophic upheavals imposed upon them by colonial processes. This invokes the interconnectedness of all things: what happens to the land happens to our bodies, what happens to our bodies happens to our spirits, and it is happening individually, collectively, and globally. As Chief Sealth (aka Seattle), Chief of the Suquamish (1786–1866) noted:

You must teach your children that the ground beneath their feet is the ashes of your grandfathers. So that they will respect the land, tell your children that the earth is rich with the lives of our kin. Teach your children what we have taught our children, that the earth is our mother. Whatever befalls the earth befalls the sons of the earth. If men spit upon the ground, they spit upon themselves.

Dis-placement and Dis-ease: The Impact of Historical Trauma and Land Losses on Health

Mother earth...we come from her, so we are part of her and she is part of us. If she is sick, I am sick, and vice versa.

Gonzales and Nelson (2001: 497)

The recognition that land, environment, and health are interconnected is an ancient understanding within many of the world’s populations. For example, the Roman philosopher Seneca viewed disease (1 BCE) as “not of the body but of the place.” However, for IP, disease, or literally, dis-ease (out of balance, disharmony, disequilibrium) is tied to the holistic understanding of the interconnectedness of mind, body, emotion, spirit, and land. Indigenous knowledge recognizes *place* as integral to one’s sense of being which is also central to both individual and collective spiritual health and wellness. Conversely, for IP, loss of place (i.e., displacement) is akin to loss of spirit or identity. Many Native scholars have noted that place and land are directly tied to indigenous identity and health – it is the site where dynamic interactions occur among humans and all of creation (Wildcat 2001). As Deloria (1992) notes, it is through this dynamic interaction with place where a person discovers his or her identity as well as purpose. Cajete (2000: 186) refers to the dynamic relationship to the natural world as the “ensoulment of nature” or the “psychology of place” which represents the “deepest level of psychological involvement with their land and which provided a kind of map of the soul.” Place literally makes us.

Moreover, connection to place not only creates healthy identities and spirit but is also protective. Watkins (2001: 42) utilizes a Navajo weaving metaphor to illustrate this health protective aspect of place:

American Indians also share a cultural–historical relationship with the land. Their past and future is intertwined with it, as the fabric of their culture is woven of threads tied to places. The sacred locations are the foundation threads of the fabric, the warp, while the cultural connections are the weft threads. The four sacred mountains which form the boundaries of the Navajo world are the edges of the blanket, and every local landscape threads within the blanket. Thus, all individual Navajos wear a multipatterned protective blanket of their culture around them.

Nevertheless, when dis-placement occurs, social and spiritual upheaval ensues for Native people, leading to mental and physical health crises. Historically and contemporarily, dis-placement (*being* without place/spirit) of IP from their original lands and ongoing exploitation of contemporary lands have led and continue to lead to ill health and dis-ease. Specifically, Cajete (1999: 17) notes that indigenous communities have drifted or been forced from a

...practiced and conscious relationship with place, or direct connection with their spiritual ecology. The results for many Indian communities are ‘existential’ problems, such as high rates of alcoholism, suicide, abuse of self and others, depression and other social and spiritual ills...Tewa people call this state... *pingeh heh* (split thinking, or doing things with only half of one’s mind).

In other words, as much as connectedness to place is ensoulment, dis-placement is literally, a form of “soul loss” (Cajete 2000: 188). Thus, when historically traumatic relocations such as the *Long Walk* (forced relocation of Dine’ [Navajo] to military encampment in 1864) occurred, or when dispossession from land or place forced IP to be torn from the land where the ashes of their ancestors live, this loss, which was “a symbol of their connection to spirit of life itself...led to a tremendous loss of meaning and identity... that can ultimately be healed only through re-establishing meaningful ties. Reconnecting with nature and its inherent meaning is an essential healing and transformational process for Indian people” (Cajete 2000: 188).

Historical Trauma and Health

When the earth is sick and polluted, human health is impossible.... To heal ourselves we must heal our planet, and to heal our planet we must heal ourselves.

Bobby McLeod, indigenous Australian (Koori)

In recent years, indigenous health has been increasingly linked to historical trauma stemming from historically traumatic events. The history of traumatic assaults experienced by IP is well documented and includes centuries of targeted attacks on indigenous people and land. Over successive generations, these attacks have included community massacres, pandemics from the introduction of new diseases, forced relocation, and the prohibition of spiritual and cultural practices, (Thornton 1987; Stannard 1992). For example, in his 1862 order to Captain Helms, commander of the Arizona Guards, governor of Arizona, John R. Baylor, called for the annihilation of all “hostile” Indians living within Arizona:

The Congress of the Confederate states has passed a law declaring extermination to all hostile Indians. You will therefore use all means to persuade the Apaches or any tribe to come in for the purpose of making peace, and when you get them together kill all the grown Indians and take the children prisoner and sell them to defray the expense of killing the Indians. Buy whiskey.... for the Indians and I will order vouchers given to recover the amount expended. Have a sufficient number of men around to allow no Indian to escape.... I look to you for success against these cursed pests.

Historical assaults also include place-based, environmental assaults such as radioactive dumping on tribal lands, flooding of homelands, outlawing traditional hunting practices, and the introduction of diseases into communities. Some of these events, such as forced relocation and experiencing the destruction of natural habitats, are common experiences suffered historically by all IP communities. Other events such as the prohibition of whaling in Northwest coast communities are more culturally or tribally specific.

A key facet of historically traumatic assaults is that they are perpetrated with intention upon a group of people, their environment, and their sacred artifacts or burial sites for the purpose of cultural destruction, genocide, or ethnicocide. Individually, each of these events is profoundly traumatic; taken together, they constitute a history of sustained cultural and ethnic disruption and destruction directed at IP (Evans-Campbell and Walters 2006). The resulting trauma is often conceptualized as collective in that it impacts a significant portion of a community, and compounding, as multiple historically traumatic events occurring over generations join in an overarching legacy of assaults. For IP, cumulative historical trauma events are coupled with high rates of contemporary acute lifetime trauma and interpersonal violence (Greenfeld and Smith 1999), as well as high rates of chronic stressors such as dealing with an ongoing barrage of microaggressions and daily discriminatory events (Chae and Walters 2009; Walters et al. 2008). Together, these historical and contemporary events undermine indigenous identity, health, and well-being (Evans-Campbell 2008) in complex and multifaceted ways. At the individual level, the impact of historical trauma on health and wellness includes impairments in family communication (Felsen 1998), symptoms of PTSD, survivor guilt, anxiety, and depressive symptomatology (Evans-Campbell 2008; Whitbeck et al. 2004). At the community level, collective responses include the disruption of traditional customs, languages, and practices (Evans-Campbell 2008; Wardi 1992) and self-reported intergenerational historical trauma (Balsam et al. 2004). Notably, despite exposure to historical and cumulative traumatic stressors, many Native people do not manifest psychopathology. Indeed, emerging research indicates that the very areas of Native culture that have been targeted for destruction (e.g., identity, spirituality, traditional practices) may, in fact, be sites of resistance.

A related field, intergenerational trauma, also recognizes collective traumatic events but is inclusive of natural disasters and other traumatic events (e.g., famine) that are man-made but not targeted with intention upon a particular group for social, cultural, ethnic, or political decimation or annihilation. Although the study of historical trauma and intergenerational trauma is still in the nascent stage of empirical examination, preliminary research indicates that the impact of these events may persist for some individuals or families over generations (Bar-on et al. 1998;

Nagata et al. 1999; Yehuda 1999), that the trauma may have a more pernicious effect on descendants of survivors if both parents experienced the event (Karr 1973), that the trauma may be differentially experienced by women compared to men (Lichtman 1984; Brave Heart 1999), and that the trauma can literally become embodied, manifesting as poor mental (e.g., depressive symptomatology) and physical health outcomes (e.g., CVD or birth outcomes) in later generations (e.g., Barocas and Barocas 1980; Jasienska 2009; Kuzawa and Sweet 2009). Research with diverse populations shows that descendants of survivors are not more likely than others to have poor mental health. Rather, they may have a higher vulnerability to stressful events, and when faced with a lifetime stressor, descendants may be more likely than others to develop PTSD or PTSD symptomatology (Solomon et al. 1988; Yehuda 1999).

Although there is strong evidence that poor health outcomes are linked to genetic, environmental, and behavioral risk factors (Olden and White 2005), the actual pathways and mechanisms, particularly biological mechanisms, for the intergenerational transmission of traumatic events are hotly contested and remain open to debate. Specifically, the relative impact of historical trauma on descendants' physical and mental health is a point of contention among Native and non-Native scholars. Some scholars have argued that the intergenerational effects of historical trauma (i.e., distal causes) would be negligible once lifetime rates of exposure to trauma (i.e., proximal causes) were accounted for, particularly physical and sexual abuse exposure (Levin 2009), while other Native scholars point to recent evidence about how extreme environmental stress in one generation can alter descendants' health risk and outcomes for generations. Specifically, these scholars point to the amassing of evidence at the cellular level that powerful stressful environmental conditions can leave an imprint or "mark" on the epigenome (cellular genetic material) that can be carried into future generations with devastating consequences (e.g., poor prenatal maternal nutrition can lead to descendant offspring CVD in adulthood; Kuzawa and Sweet 2009). Although empirical research continues to shed light on the potential pathways, mechanisms, and relative proximal and distal impact of historical and intergenerational trauma on health, IP communities simply cannot wait for the debate to be resolved – there are too many lives at stake. Native communities have developed their own community interventions to address the psychological, spiritual, and communal impact that historical (e.g., Takini Network) and contemporary traumatic events have had on physical and mental health, particularly grief and loss reactions (Evans-Campbell 2008; Walters et al. 2006; Whitbeck et al. 2004).

Historical Trauma: Removal and Relocation: Disruptions in Place

The appropriation of indigenous land by force or coercion has been a central theme in colonial interactions with IP. Land has been at the heart of colonial attempts at conquest, and historical trauma events have been the primary vehicle for land dispossession and displacement of indigenous people. Moreover, AIAN continue to inhabit the continent on which they have encountered historical and contemporary

assaults. They live with constant reminders of historical trauma (e.g., living in areas where “massacre” sites are visited by tourists and proudly mislabeled as “battle” sites), and their subsequent trauma, resistance, and resiliency responses are markedly different from those descendent survivors who no longer occupy “place” with their perpetrators (e.g., holocaust survivors who immigrated or escaped from perpetrating countries during or post WWII). As noted by Whitbeck, there is no “safe” place to immigrate or return for AIANs. Many Native populations were forcibly relocated to lands that held (at first) little perceived monetary value or were deemed “uninhabitable or undesirable” by European-Americans. By the mid-nineteenth century, American expansionist attitudes laid the foundation for massive American Indian removal policies, particularly attitudes associated with manifest destiny and the doctrine of “discovery” – the belief that White Americans were heavenly ordained to take over indigenous lands and that American Indians would eventually “vanish” as a result. The attitudes associated with manifest destiny and the doctrine of discovery gave an exclusive justification and right to coercively dispossess indigenous rights or ties to indigenous lands. This is eloquently stated in the US Supreme Court decision (*Johnson v. McIntosh*, 21 US 543, 1823: 573, 587, 590):

Discovery gave an exclusive right to extinguish the Indian title of occupancy, either by purchase or by conquest...the Indians were fierce savages...whose subsistence was drawn chiefly from the forest. To leave them in possession of their country, was to leave the country a wilderness.

The irony of having President Theodore Roosevelt’s image sculpted into the Black Hills and desecrating a sacred landscape does not escape Native communities, particularly given the Roosevelt’s attitudes and policies regarding land and American Indians. In 1894, Roosevelt noted:

All men of sane and wholesome thought must dismiss with impatient contempt the plea that these continents should be reserved for the use of scattered savage tribes, whose life was but a few degrees less meaningless, squalid, and ferocious than that of the wild beasts with whom they held joint ownership. It is as idle to apply to savages the rules of international morality which obtain between stable and cultured communities, as it would be to judge the fifth-century English conquest of Britain by the standards of today.

Although Roosevelt is credited with the establishment of national parks, many Native communities were forcibly relocated to make room for tourists and to establish a “pristine” environment, void of human occupation.

With the passage of the Indian Removal Act of 1830, President Andrew Jackson was the first US president to implement an American Indian removal policy, thereby setting a dangerous precedent for subsequent coerced or forced removals over the next 150 years. Moreover, removal policy was set in place to acquire, by force if necessary, indigenous lands for nonindigenous consumption. This first wave of removal policy at the very least coercively, and in many cases forcibly, removed southeastern tribes living east of the Mississippi to what was then deemed as “Indian Territory” (now the State of Oklahoma), with the first wave of Choctaw removed in 1831, followed by the Seminole in 1832, the Muscogee (Creek) in 1834, the Chickasaw in 1837, and the Cherokee in 1838. Other tribes were also relocated during this period, and some tribes hid or remained in their ancient homelands

(e.g., Mississippi Choctaw, the Creek in Alabama, and Eastern Band of Cherokee in North Carolina). Even before the infamous removal of Cherokee, by 1837, 46,000 American Indians from these southeastern nations had been removed from their homelands, thereby opening 25 million acres for settlement by Whites (Wikipedia 2010). Most of the waves of relocation occurred during the winter months, and many tribes were inadequately equipped or dressed with government rationing, in some cases only one blanket per family, with limited provisions to make the over 1,000 mile trek. Most suffered from exposure, disease, and starvation in the relocations, and as a result, tribes, clans, and families were decimated. For example, over 4,000 of the 15,000 Cherokee perished during relocation, giving rise to the phrase associated with this removal – *Nunna daul Isunyi* – “the Trail Where They Cried” or the *Trail of Tears*. Examples of the brutality of the relocation *process* itself cannot be underestimated. It is best captured by the Cherokee experience (as cited in the Illinois General Assembly – HJR0142 and accessed on Wikipedia 2010), where:

In the winter of 1838 the Cherokee began the thousand mile march with scant clothing and most on foot without shoes or moccasins. The march began in Red Clay, Tennessee, the location of the last Eastern capital of the Cherokee Nation. The Cherokee were given used blankets from a hospital in Tennessee where an epidemic of small pox had broken out. Because of the diseases, the Indians were not allowed to go into any towns or villages along the way; many times this meant traveling much farther to go around them. After crossing Tennessee and Kentucky, they arrived in Southern Illinois at Golconda about the 3rd of December, 1838. Here the starving Indians were charged a dollar a head to cross the river on “Berry’s Ferry” which typically charged twelve cents. They were not allowed passage until the ferry had serviced all others wishing to cross and were forced to take shelter under “Mantle Rock,” a shelter bluff on the Kentucky side, until “Berry had nothing better to do”. Many died huddled together at Mantle Rock waiting to cross. Several Cherokee were murdered by locals. The killers filed a lawsuit against the U.S. Government through the courthouse in Vienna, suing the government for \$35 a head to bury the murdered Cherokee.

During Cherokee removal, Cherokee leaders and families prepared for the eventual return of their people to their homelands by placing Cherokee markers on trees, now known as arborglyphs, to help future generations of Cherokee find their way home and access their familial, clan, and tribal possessions. According to Forest Wade, a Cherokee descendent, the Cherokees so closely guarded the codes of the arborglyphs that they can “only be seen and deciphered by a member of the tribe or someone highly trained in this art. This knowledge, forbidden to the white race, was so secret that death was the penalty to any Cherokee who revealed it to anyone other than their own race or a blood brother.” Even during the chaos and terror of removal, Cherokee elders had the importance of place for future generations of Cherokee in the forefront of their mind as they ensured there was a tie between the land, trees, and people via the arborglyphs. The trees literally bore and continue to bear witness to the historical trauma related to land dispossession suffered by the Cherokees and other tribal nations.

The Cherokee removal is but one of many historical relocations. In some removals, tribes were loaded onto trains and relocated hundreds of miles from family and tribe or forcibly moved to areas of the North American continent that were previously unknown to them (Whitbeck et al. 2004). Similar to the Dine’ internment at Bosque

Redondo in 1864, in many removal and relocation cases, tribes were placed onto land that was already occupied by other IP (creating conflict among the relocates and the original inhabitants of that territory) or were forced to cohabit with “enemy” tribes on reservations. Moreover, by the 1880s, the US government was also removing children and placing them hundreds of miles from families and traditional lands into boarding schools. Torn from family, land, and ancestors, children were forbidden to practice any form of their traditional ways of life and, instead, were forced to learn Western mannerisms and speak English. Many reportedly died from “homesickness” (Evans-Campbell 2008). The punishment for speaking in a native language or attempting to practice traditional spirituality was often harsh, and children quickly learned to keep their traditional practices secret. As documented in numerous texts, physical abuse and neglect were commonplace; high numbers of children were also sexually abused. Refusing to send children to boarding schools or leaving reservations was illegal for many years and met with imprisonment, withholding of rations, or harsh physical punishment (Evans-Campbell 2008). Dis-placement during the 1800s well into the mid-1900s meant dis-placement from land, place, and with the boarding school policies as well as the Court of Indian Offense (1880s) that prohibited cultural and spiritual practices under threat of imprisonment, many tribal nations suffered greatly from disruptions from place, land, identity, family, and culture. Relocation and removal policies were and always have been fundamentally tied to material gain through land acquisition. As Hughes notes (as cited in Cajete 2000: 179), Americans of European descent:

...saw America as wilderness, an obstacle to be overcome through settlement and the use of living and non-living resources. The land was a material object, a commodity, something from which they could gain economically. For the most part, they viewed the [indigenous] people they encountered as another resource that they would either use or abuse in accord with their agenda for material gain.

By the 1950s, the US government continued to enact historically traumatic events related to displacement of AIAN, once again to acquire indigenous land and resources. Specifically, Congress passed “termination” acts on a tribe-by-tribe basis which disbanded the tribe, extinguished their traditional rights to land, hunting, and fishing, ended any federal aid to the tribes, and eradicated tribal rights as sovereign nations. From 1953 to 1964, over 109 tribes were terminated with over 2.5 million acres of trust land removed from protected status and converted to private ownership. Over 3% of the American Indian population were terminated from tribes (over 12,000 people) during this period in US history. Public Law 280, which was passed by Congress in 1953, gave state governments the power to assume jurisdiction over Indian lands and reservations, which had previously been excluded from state jurisdiction (U.S. Department of Justice 2005). The main effect of PL 280 was to disrupt the federal trust relationship between the federal government and the tribes, leading to devastating effects on tribal sovereignty, culture, and welfare. PL 280 allowed the federal government to take over indigenous lands, particularly ones rich in mineral and water resources. Finally, concomitant with termination era policies, the federal government initiated another relocation program, the Indian Relocation Act of 1956 (aka Public Law 959) encouraging over 100,000 American Indians to leave

their tribal lands with unfulfilled and underfunded promises of assistance related to job training and employment in selected US cities (e.g., major termination states and corresponding cities such as Los Angeles, Minneapolis, Phoenix, Chicago). The Bureau of Indian Affairs established Indian centers in these urban areas (e.g., Oakland's Intertribal Friendship House), and despite the economic deterioration that ensued on reservations, and unfulfilled government funding to vocational programs, urban relocation efforts unintentionally stimulated the growth of Pan-Indian social movements (e.g., American Indian Movement). Nevertheless, due in large part to PL 959, over 60% of AIAN live outside of tribal lands and communities in urban areas. Despite displacement from original homelands for some AIAN, AIAN continue to go "home" to tribal lands during holidays, summers, family gatherings for important events, and to fulfill ceremonial obligations, a process referred to as circular migration. Moreover, after some of the removal policies, some tribal communities remained isolated enough to have limited periods of cultural resurgence and renaissance (e.g., Oklahoma Choctaws postremoval and pre-civil war) despite the initial devastating effects of relocation and removal.

Historical Trauma and Environmental Destruction

In the perception of many Native cultures, their landscapes are seen as metaphoric extensions of their bodies.

Cajete (2000: 185)

Historical trauma loss also includes the systematic destruction or willful neglect of the animals, plants, flora, fauna, soil, trees, and waterways. Today, Native peoples' lands are subject to some of the most invasive, toxic, industrial, and destructive practices. Indigenous communities are targeted in part because the lands are not regulated well given the jurisdictional disputes and because Native peoples are simply easy targets given the high rates of poverty and isolation on indigenous lands and reservations. For example, according to La Duke (1999), over 317 American Indian reservations are threatened by environmental hazards, including toxic waste pollutants infiltrating land and water systems. Moreover, nuclear testing proliferates on indigenous lands (e.g., Marshall Islands) with over 1,000 atomic explosions detonated on Western Shoshone land in Nevada (La Duke 1999). Additionally, at least 16 reservations have been targeted for nuclear waste storage. Moreover, the devastating impact of environmental pollutants from corporations have left many communities with high rates of PCB contamination in their waterways or natural foods from poorly regulated industrial runoffs or in other cases high rates of radiation exposure from abandoned uranium mines leaking into soil, water, and airways (La Duke 1999). Environmental toxins not only harm the body of the People but also disrupt the communities' abilities to fulfill their lifeways and OI. For example, a Native leader noted that the mercury poisoning in their waters disrupted:

...our way of living, the ways that our people used to live before: spirituality, culture, self-esteem, and all of that...the mercury killed everything...we lost everything... it took 30 years for them to even acknowledge what they had done to us. They compensate [other] people for natural disasters, but they don't compensate us for what they did to us. Ours wasn't an act of the Creator, it was the act of man.

Frobisher as cited in La Duke (1999: 102).

Attacks on animals have also been another form of historical trauma for Native people. General Sheridan once said, "The best way to kill the Sioux is to kill the buffalo." This genocidal strategy attempts to cut off the food supply for the plains Native peoples and directly attack their relationship to the buffalo. The buffalo kills literally disrupts the people's ability to fulfill their relationship with these relatives, who are brothers, sisters, and elders to them – it is as much a direct spiritual assault as it is a material assault. In 1997, Rosalie Little Thunder was among a group of Native activists who went to pray for the buffalo that was being killed to cull the herd by the National Park service. The 1997 buffalo killing triggered a historical trauma collective memory of the Little Thunder massacre (1855) of which Rosalie is a descendant. She notes that in September of 1855 (La Duke 1999: 155):

Then that General Harney came, the one that peak's named after [Harney's peak, known to the indigenous people as " "]. Little Thunder went out to meet him with the truce flag, and he met him, and he fed him...There was grandma there. That grandma had her ten-year-old grandson with her. She said to him, 'stay here, don't come out yet.' And she laid her shawl over him and hid him in the bushes by the tall grass. They started shooting down the people then. And when she was shot, she threw herself on top of that little boy. That way she hid him. That little boy, he was my grandfather...he remembered his grandmother's blood dripping through the shawl onto him. He stayed there until there was no sound. He and the surviving members went back to Pine Ridge on foot. Close to 70 people were killed there...this was so strange: That's what the whole scene was when they were killing the buffalo [in 1997]. That was what was coming back to me [as she witnessed the buffalo killing]. I had my ten-year-old grandson standing next to me. And they started killing the buffalo, just like that, shooting them down. I covered his face with my shawl, and told him to go [no] move.... you get the sense that nothing changes from 1855 to 1997. Actually, that time span is just a clap of thunder in our history. It's not that long.

Environmental destruction, particularly through interrupting natural waterways through redirection of water and dams, has pernicious health effects on Native peoples. Perhaps the best contemporary example of this can be seen in the rapid rise of diabetes among the Pimas and Maricopas after their water was diverted from their traditional lands for non-Native community and commercial consumption. As noted in the film, *Unnatural Causes*, "A survey conducted in 1902 found only one case of diabetes among the Pima. But within 30 years of the building of the Coolidge Dam, there were more than 500." Rod Lewis, former general counsel for the Gila River Indian Community also noted, "There is direct connection between the diversion of water in the upper Gila River and the health status and economic status of the Pimas and Maricopas...we were practically without water for almost an entire century...unable to grow crops."

Microaggressions and Place

Microaggressions are the chronic, everyday injustices that Natives endure – the interpersonal and environmental messages that are denigrating, nullifying, demeaning, or invalidating. These verbal and nonverbal encounters place the burden of addressing them on the recipient of the encounter, creating chronic stress (Sue et al. 2007; Walters et al. 2008). Microaggressive environments serve to diminish identity and render invisible indigenous presence and realities. For Native peoples, many microaggressive messages are literally carved into mountains (e.g., Mount Rushmore) or plaqued onto historical markers at sites that typically commemorate “battles,” which, in many cases, were outright massacres. A prime example is the original plaque that commemorates the “Sand Creek Battle Ground” (the marker reads: “Sand Creek Battle Ground” Nov. 29 and 30, 1864). In this “battle” now known as the Sand Creek Massacre, the US military, led by Chivington, knowingly attacked a peaceful encampment and then murdered and mutilated over 200 Cheyenne and Arapaho, two-thirds of whom were women and children.

The carving up, as in the case of Mt. Rushmore, desecration, or destruction of Native places are historical traumatic events, whereas having to live with the aftermath and bear witness to place-based HT destruction in the everyday environment are environmentally based microaggressions. Other land-based microaggressions include the renaming of places with nonindigenous names. This serves two purposes in terms of microaggressions – it erases from the American imagination the indigeneity associated with that place, and it creates new protocols by which people are expected to behave. Colonial renaming is an attempt to reset protocols to place. For Native peoples, naming is a very sacred process; with a name comes relational protocols for both the named place as well as those who are in association with the named place. Naming establishes protocols and responsibilities to place, clarifies the significance of place in relation to those protocols and the people for whom it is named, and creates expectations for types of behavior to occur in relation to that place. The renaming of indigenous places quite literally supplants sacred meaning with metaphorical and symbolic colonial reminders and “conquest” messages (e.g., Mount Ranier instead of Lushootseed word *Talol* or *Tahoma* meaning “mountain of waters”) of the power and privilege of colonial control. Moreover, many places, particularly sacred sites, tend to be renamed with English words that are highly offensive and insulting, such as Squawteat Peak in Central Pecos valley Texas, or Devils Tower in Wyoming (known as *Mato Tipila*, which means “Bear Lodge” in Lakota), or given nicknames such as Rum Runner Road (i.e., Snoqualmie Pass).

The seizing of land, whether justified by “Manifest Destiny,” broken treaties, land allotment policy, or brute force, has exacted a spiritual, physical, and mental toll on IP. Assaults on the land are akin to assault on the body and the people; displacement from land is akin to being stripped from one’s family of origin; seizing the land is akin to stealing from a relative and forbidding any Native family members their rights of access to that family member; disrespecting the land and its relatives

through toxins, dumping, or mismanagement is akin to neglecting or hurting a relative. Cajete (2000: 188) notes that:

Relationships between native peoples and their environments became so deep that separation by forced relocation in the last century constituted, literally, the loss of part of an entire generation's soul. Indian people have been joined with their lands with such intensity that many of those who were forced to live on reservations suffered from a 'soul death.' The major consequence was the loss of sense of home and the expression of profound homesickness with all its accompanying psychological and physical maladies. They withered like mountain flowers pulled from their mother soil.

Historical Land Loss: Preliminary Empirical Associations with Health Outcomes

A profound sense of loss associated with historically traumatic events tied to land and culture that happened to parents, grandparents, and ancestors continues to haunt the everyday emotional life of some tribal communities (Whitbeck et al. 2004), particularly with respect to losses associated with land. Specifically, in one study conducted with elders from two large reservation communities, Whitbeck et al. (2004) explored responses to a variety of historical and contemporary losses associated with historical trauma (e.g., loss of tribal land, forced boarding school attendance, loss of language, losses associated with broken treaties, loss of traditional spiritual ways, loss of family ties due to boarding schools). The findings indicated that although respondents were generations from historically traumatic land loss events, the trauma associated with such events was a critical factor in their emotional and cognitive life (Whitbeck et al. 2004). Specifically, when asked about how often they thought about loss of land, about one fifth of the respondents (18.2%) indicated that they thought about it several times a day or daily and over one third (33.7%) thought daily about the loss of culture (Whitbeck et al. 2004). Moreover, when asked about how often they thought about the loss of family due to government relocation [dis-placement] efforts, 10% indicated that they thought about it several times a day or daily, and nearly 16% thought about it at least weekly (Whitbeck et al. 2004). Two primary emotional themes emerged: anger and depressive symptoms. In terms of land loss, one elder noted:

They stole our land, they stole a lot of land, and they killed a lot of people. So what do you expect us to do? Just stand here and take it?

Whitbeck et al. (2004: 123)

Finally, findings from the study indicated that cognitions about historical losses were associated with emotional distress and were primarily associated with anger and anxiety or depressive symptom expression. Disentangling the effects of proximal traumatic stressors (e.g., child abuse) from the more distal stressors associated with historical trauma was not addressed in that study; however, the authors

proposed that “high impact” loss individuals (i.e., those who think daily or more about historical losses) might be more susceptible to proximal stressors (e.g., microaggression distress), as they interact with historical trauma, thereby increasing emotional distress (Whitbeck et al. 2004). Evans-Campbell and Walters (2006) refer to the interaction of distal and proximal discriminatory traumatic stressors as colonial trauma response (CTR), whereby historical trauma responses may become triggered or activated by exposure to contemporary discrimination distress. Specifically, although historical trauma specifically focuses on historical collective traumatic events and responses, CTR is a complex set of both historical and current trauma responses to both collective and interpersonal events (Evans-Campbell and Walters 2006; Evans-Campbell 2008). A defining feature of CTR is its connection to colonization, whereby CTR reactions may arise as an individual experiences contemporary discriminatory event (i.e., microaggression) that serves to connect him or her to a collective and often historical sense of injustice or trauma. In their overview of CTR, Evans-Campbell and Walters (2006) presented an example of a Native woman who was called a race-based derogatory name by a stranger, and although she felt personal rage over her current experience on an individual level, she simultaneously and immediately viscerally connected to her collective sense of historical trauma and ancestral pain. Evans-Campbell (2008: 333) notes that “the connections between past and present trauma may be quite subtle, making it difficult for individuals to see the relationship between contemporary responses and a historically traumatic past. As a result, emotional responses to current microaggression may initially seem overreactive or too intense, even to those directly involved.”

Empirical Findings: Historical Traumatic Place Loss and Health Among Two-Spirits

The Honor Project Study

Respondents were recruited as part of a multisite cross-sectional national health survey of Native two-spirit persons from seven metropolitan areas in the US: Seattle–Tacoma, San Francisco–Oakland, Los Angeles, Denver, Oklahoma City–Tulsa, Minneapolis–St. Paul, and New York City. Eligibility criteria included the following: (1) self-identifying as American Indian, Alaska Native, or First Nations *and* either being enrolled in their tribal nation *or* reporting at least 25% total American Indian blood; (2) self-identifying as gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, or two-spirit *or* having engaged in same-sex sexual behavior in the past 12 months; (3) being 18 years of age or older; (4) speaking English; and (5) residing, working, or socializing in one of the urban study sites.

Multiple sampling strategies were used to minimize selection bias including targeted, partial network, and respondent-driven sampling (RDS) techniques.

At each site, coordinators proposed six to eight diverse (by gender and age) first wave “seeds” ($n=36$) of which 33 participated. A second wave of RDS generated 58 nominees, of whom 50 participated. Volunteer respondents also were solicited through newsletters, brochures, posters, and word of mouth. We achieved a total response rate of 80.1%. There were no significant differences between RDS (seeds and nominees) and volunteer respondents for the cohort overall or by site on key sociodemographic variables (i.e., gender, education, employment, income, or housing).

Each respondent received \$65.00 for completing a 3–4 hour computer-assisted self-interview. A total of 451 respondents were interviewed between July 2005 and March 2007. Of these, four respondents were later excluded due to ineligibility, leaving a total of 447 participants. The data analytic sample in the present study focused on the 354 participants who provided complete data on historical traumatic place loss.

Participants

Participants were 354 Native American adults from seven urban sites across the United States. By gender, participants were 51% male, 42% female, and 7% transgender. The mean age was 39.6 years ($SD=10.7$, Range=18–67), and the median monthly household income range was \$501–1,000. With respect to education level, 17% had not graduated high school, 28% had graduated high school or received a GED, and 55% had some post-high school coursework but no degree. Twenty-five percent were raised in reservation or tribal lands, 36% in an urban area, 17% in a suburban area, 14% in a rural area, and 8% were raised elsewhere. Over half identified with a single Native tribe (62%) and the rest identified with two or more tribes (38%).

Measures

Historical Loss Scale: We used two items from the Historical Loss Scale (Whitbeck et al. 2004) to assess trauma associated with land loss and forcible relocation. Respondents were presented with a statement related to land loss (“*The loss of our land*”) and forcible relocation (“*The loss of families from the reservation to the government relocation*”) and asked to indicate the frequency with which they think about each type of loss on an eight-point scale from 0 (*never*) to 7 (*several times a day*). Higher scores reflected greater perceived loss.

Colonial Trauma Response Scale: We used two items from the Colonial Trauma Response scale (Walters 1999) to assess trauma associated with unknown burial location of one’s ancestors and the consequences of land neglect. Respondents were presented with a statement related to ancestor burial (“*It is hard to grieve for my ancestors since I do not know where they are buried*”) and land neglect (“*People*

are suffering because we aren't taking care of the land") and asked to indicate their agreement on a four-point scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 2 (*strongly agree*). Higher scores reflect greater perceived historical and contemporary trauma associated with ancestral place loss and land neglect.

Childhood Trauma Questionnaire: We used ten items from sexual and physical abuse subscales the Childhood Trauma Questionnaire (CTQ; Bernstein et al. 1994). The CTQ has been used previously with Native American populations (Duran et al. 2004). Furthermore, it has demonstrated convergent validity with the Childhood Trauma Interview (Fink et al. 1995). Each subscale consists of five items which were summed to create an index of childhood sexual and physical assault. Items are scored on a six-point scale ranging from 0 (*never true*) to 5 (*always true*), with higher scores indicating more abuse and the items summed to create separate a scale score ranging from 0 to 25, with higher scores reflecting greater abuse. Cronbach's alpha for the sexual and physical assault scales in the present study were 0.95 and .90, respectively.

MOS-HIV. We used the 35 question MOS-HIV health survey (Wu et al. 1997) to assess overall mental and physical health. The MOS-HIV has been shown to be internally consistent and reliable and potentially acceptable as a generic measure related to health quality of life since the instrument is not specifically anchored to HIV-related questions. The scale includes questions related to ten dimensions of health including general health perceptions, pain, physical functioning, role functioning, social functioning, mental health, energy/fatigue, cognitive functions, health distress, and general quality of life. Questions included "How often during the past 4 weeks did you feel weighed down by your health problems?" The responses were rated on a Likert scale ranging from 1 (*all of the time*) to 6 (*none of the time*). Other questions, such as "Does your health limit you from eating, dressing, bathing, or using the toilet," used a three-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*yes, limited a lot*) to 3 (*no, not limited*). Separate indices of overall mental and physical health scores were calculated and scaled from 0 to 100 with higher scores reflecting better health. Cronbach's alpha for the overall survey was 0.95 in the present study.

Statistical Methods

We first assessed the bivariate correlations between overall mental and physical health with the four land loss variables. Correlations were evaluated for the entire sample as well as separately for males, female, and transgender participants.

Hierarchical multiple regression analyses were conducted to assess the association of land trauma with overall health. Mental and physical health was evaluated as outcomes in two parallel regression models. The primary objective of the regression analysis was to assess whether land trauma would predict variance in mental and physical health, variance not explained by other types of trauma. The secondary objective was to assess whether the associations between land trauma and overall health would differ by gender. In step 1, childhood sexual assault (predictor 1),

childhood physical assault (2), and military combat exposure (3) were entered into each model to account for lifetime trauma. In step 2, trauma associated with land loss (4), forcible relocation (5), unknown burial location of ancestors (6), and land neglect (7) were entered to assess the effect of trauma connected with land. In step 3, gender [male, female, and transgender; dummy-coded as female vs. male (8) and transgender vs. male (9)] and all interactions between gender and each land trauma variable (10–17) were entered to test for moderation by gender.

Results

Overall mental health averaged 44.7 (SD=11.0, Range=13.7–66.1), and physical health scores averaged 49.5 (SD=12.0, Range=18.6–66.5). Mean childhood sexual ($M=13.3$, $SD=7.7$) and physical assault ($M=11.9$, $SD=6.7$) were in the low to moderate range of severity. Five percent of participants had lifetime military or combat experience. Self-reported thoughts regarding *land loss* ($M=3.2$, $SD=1.6$) and *forcible relocation* ($M=2.8$, $SD=6.7$) occurred in the weekly range of frequency. On average, participants disagreed that *unknown burial locations* of their ancestors made it difficult to grieve for them ($M=2.3$, $SD=1.0$), whereas on average, there was agreement ($M=3.0$, $SD=1.0$) that *land neglect* was associated with greater suffering of the people.

Bivariate correlations between the land trauma and the overall mental/physical health variables are presented in Table 10.1.

With the combined sample, all correlations were significant with the exception of the two correlations between land neglect and the mental ($r=-0.02$, $p=n.s.$) and physical ($r=-0.02$, $p=n.s.$) health variables. The magnitude and pattern of the correlations in the male sample were similar to the combined sample. However, the correlations between health and land loss were not statistically significant in the female and transgender sample. Correspondingly, the sample size of the male subgroup ($n=181$) was larger than the female ($n=147$) and transgender ($n=26$) subgroups.

The hierarchical regression analysis for land trauma predicting overall mental health is presented in Table 10.2.

Table 10.1 Zero-order correlations between land loss and overall mental and physical health by gender identity among two-spirit Native Americans

	All ($N=354$)		Male ($n=181$)		Female ($n=147$)		Transgender ($n=26$)	
	MH	PH	MH	PH	MH	PH	MH	PH
Loss of land	-0.22**	-0.17**	-0.24**	-0.17*	-0.14	-0.14	-0.28	-0.06
Forcible relocation	-0.15**	-0.17**	-0.17*	-0.19*	-0.12	-0.14	-0.10	-0.01
Burial of ancestors	-0.17**	-0.15**	-0.23**	-0.21**	-0.16	-0.11	0.03	-0.08
Land neglect	-0.02	-0.04	-0.02	0.03	0.05	-0.03	-0.09	-0.08

MH overall mental health, PH overall physical health

* $p<0.05$; ** $p<0.01$

Table 10.2 Summary of hierarchical regression analysis for land trauma predicting overall mental health ($N=354$)

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	β	<i>p</i>
Step 1: Lifetime trauma				
Childhood sexual trauma	-0.11	0.09	-0.08	0.19
Childhood physical trauma	-0.34	0.10	-0.21	<0.01
Military combat exposure	-4.87	2.59	-0.10	0.06
Step 2: Land trauma				
Loss of land	-1.35	0.42	-0.20	<0.01
Forcible relocation	-0.02	0.41	0.00	0.96
Burial of ancestors	-1.39	0.53	-0.13	0.01
Land neglect	0.85	0.59	0.08	0.15
Step 3: Moderation of land trauma by gender				
Gender identity				
Female vs. male	-3.85	4.83	-0.17	0.43
Transgender vs. male	-0.89	9.46	-0.02	0.93
Gender identity \times land trauma				
Female vs. male \times loss of land	1.21	0.94	0.21	0.20
Female vs. male \times forcible relocation	-0.27	0.89	-0.04	0.76
Female vs. male \times burial of ancestors	0.43	1.12	0.05	0.70
Female vs. male \times land neglect	-0.50	1.26	-0.08	0.69
Transgender vs. male \times loss of land	-0.61	1.44	-0.06	0.67
Transgender vs. male \times relocation	0.04	1.48	0.00	0.98
Transgender vs. male \times burial of ancestors	3.10	2.10	0.18	0.14
Transgender vs. male \times land neglect	-1.79	2.14	-0.14	0.40

Note: $R^2=0.08$, $F(3,350)=10.62$, $p<0.01$, for step 1; $\Delta R^2=0.06$, $F(4,346)=5.56$, $p<0.01$, for step 2; $\Delta R^2=0.02$, $F(10,336)=0.67$, $p=0.75$, for step 3

The lifetime trauma variables in step 1 accounted for 8% of the variance in overall mental health, $F(3,350)=10.62$, $p<0.01$. The addition of land trauma in step 2 accounted for an additional 6% of the variance in overall mental health, $F(4,346)=5.56$, $p<0.01$. Differences by gender in step 3 accounted for an additional 2% of the variance in overall mental health, a contribution that was nonsignificant, $F(10,336)=0.67$, $p=0.75$.

The hierarchical regression analysis for land trauma predicting overall physical health is presented in Table 10.3.

The lifetime trauma variables accounted for 6% of the variance in overall mental health, $F(3,350)=7.48$, $p<0.01$. The addition of land trauma accounted for an additional 4% of the variance in overall mental health, $F(4,346)=3.53$, $p<0.01$. Differences by gender accounted for another 4% of the variance in overall mental health, a contribution that was marginally significant, $F(10,336)=1.57$, $p=0.12$.

What happens to you and what happens to the earth happens as well so we have, as I said before, common interests. We have to somehow try to convince people who are in power to change the direction they've been taking

Lyons (2008: 22)

Table 10.3 Summary of hierarchical regression analysis for land trauma predicting overall physical health ($N=354$)

Variable	<i>B</i>	SE <i>B</i>	β	<i>p</i>
Step 1: Lifetime trauma				
Childhood sexual trauma	-0.17	0.10	-0.11	0.08
Childhood physical trauma	-0.19	0.11	-0.10	0.09
Military combat exposure	-8.01	2.87	-0.15	<0.01
Step 2: Land trauma				
Loss of land	-0.79	0.48	-0.10	0.10
Forcible relocation	-0.56	0.46	-0.07	0.23
Burial of ancestors	-1.23	0.59	-0.11	0.04
Land neglect	0.21	0.66	0.02	0.75
Step 3: Moderation of land trauma by gender				
Gender identity				
Female vs. male	-2.91	5.36	-0.12	0.59
Transgender vs. male	-4.98	10.48	-0.11	0.64
Gender identity \times land trauma				
Female vs. male \times loss of land	0.29	1.04	0.05	0.78
Female vs. male \times forcible relocation	0.06	0.98	0.01	0.95
Female vs. male \times burial of ancestors	1.00	1.24	0.11	0.42
Female vs. male \times land neglect	-1.68	1.39	-0.23	0.23
Transgender vs. male \times loss of land	0.54	1.60	0.05	0.74
Transgender vs. male \times relocation	1.00	1.64	0.07	0.54
Transgender vs. male \times burial of ancestors	1.11	2.32	0.06	0.63
Transgender vs. male \times land neglect	-2.00	2.37	-0.15	0.40

Note: $R^2=0.06$, $F(3,350)=7.48$, $p<0.01$, for step 1; $\Delta R^2=0.04$, $F(4,346)=3.53$, $p<0.01$, for step 2; $\Delta R^2=0.04$, $F(10,336)=1.57$, $p=0.12$, for step 3

This chapter has provided preliminary conceptual and empirical links among land-based dis-placements and overall health and well-being among American Indians and Alaska Natives. In our empirical analyses, we found a high proportion of two-spirits who think about the impact of land-based trauma, particularly relocation from traditional homelands, land loss, and land neglect-based historical trauma on a weekly, and in some cases, daily basis. Moreover, the findings indicate that after controlling for contemporary trauma, including childhood physical and sexual abuse, as well as adult military combat exposure, historical trauma land-based events continued to have a significant effect on mental and physical health. These findings provide preliminary support that trauma related to land losses and disruptions may persist and become embodied in physical and mental health. Although we cannot conclude directionality from the cross-sectional nature of the survey data, the findings illuminate some of the place-based historical trauma factors that may lead to poor physical and mental health. Future research is needed to further discern the relationship among proximal and distal HT factors on specific health and mental health outcomes,

such as PTSD and CVD, and to identify important factors that buffer against the impact of such potentially traumatic losses. Previous trauma research with Native communities indicates that trauma exposure is associated with increased risk for diabetes, asthma, and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (Levin 2009). Moreover, although Manson (as cited in Levin 2009: 9) notes that “historical trauma, secondary traumatization and intergenerational grief need to be examined rigorously... they make only a modest contribution to risk compared to current trauma,” our findings suggest that historical traumatic land-based assaults may make much more than a modest contribution to mental health risk – in fact, they may play a significant role in Native health disparities. Finally, the findings are consistent with burgeoning research indicating critical associations between environmental factors and poor health outcomes, particularly the embodiment of stress and health. As Krieger and Davey (2004: 92) note, bodies count:

...they provide vivid evidence of how we literally embody the world in which we live, thereby producing populations patterns of health, disease, disability and death...these aspects of our being not only are predictive of future health outcomes but also tell of our conjoined social and biologic origins and trajectories.

In terms of two-spirit-specific issues, our previous studies have indicated that two-spirit AIAN are more likely than heterosexual AIAN to report high levels of historical trauma event exposure (Balsam et al. 2004). One explanation for the higher self-reported historical trauma event knowledge among two-spirits is that two-spirits might have a greater sensitivity to and awareness of discriminatory events, even historically based ones, due to their multiply oppressed status (i.e., by race and sexual orientation). However, after talking with two-spirit community members, an alternative explanation arose. Some two-spirit persons are the cultural storytellers or cultural knowledge keepers for their people, and as a result, may have historical knowledge of major events that have been passed down through generations. Two-spirits might carry this historical knowledge of trauma events as part of a two-spirit role in their respective communities. Drawing from the work of Wardi (1992), Brave Heart (1999) refers to this process as *Wakiksuyapi* where clans, family groups, or bands actually shoulder the responsibility of remembering historically traumatic events (i.e., “memorial people”). Brave Heart (1999) argues that Native communities may have a strong proclivity toward being a memorial people due to the inherent cultural emphasis on the role of ancestor spirits, collective worldview, and the spatial orientation of Native cultures.

Finally, in many Native cultures, two-spirit people held ceremonial and social roles that were tied to place. Specifically, in some tribes, they cared for the place that ancestors were buried or burned, were involved in funerary rites, which are tied to land and place, and were knowledgeable about plant medicines (Lang 1998). In these cases, place loss is not only tied directly to place, as in the case of relocation, land loss, and land neglect, but is also possibly tied to loss of place-associated ceremonial roles. Place-associated role loss potentially affects all Native community

members, particularly those who hold roles associated with specific place-based responsibilities such as agricultural development, working with and taking care of plant medicines, and funerary responsibilities.

In terms of limitations of the findings, the cross-sectional nature of our data restricts our ability to infer causal direction. For example, it is possible that participants who reported poorer health and mental health were more likely to report historical trauma losses or be more cognizant of historical trauma events. Nevertheless, our findings are consistent with the extant research on the negative effects of environmental stress on health outcomes as well as research on intergenerational trauma and health impacts among descendant survivors. Moreover, our findings are concordant with our theoretical framework and Native scholarship on place and health.

Resistance and Resiliency

As noted earlier, it is important to note that not all historically traumatic events result in collective or individual mental or physical health distress. There are numerous challenges to disentangling the interrelated components of the concepts and understanding what specific mechanisms are at work (Whitbeck et al. 2004: 119). Our tribal communities, families, and individuals vary in their responses to and processing of historical trauma events. Distress based on these events is moderated to some degree by the cultural meaning attributed to the event and meaning derived from the trauma experience (Denham 2008). Thus, it is important to differentiate between the potentiating effect of a historically traumatic event and the actual or soul wound response at the tribal, familial, and individual levels. Moreover, recent research indicates that although the stress impact might actually be embodied at the epigenomic level, predisposing some to a higher propensity for poor health outcomes in descendant generations, the distress might not be expressed until certain contemporary environmental stressors act as triggers releasing the stress reaction in descendant generations. Finally, poor mental and physical health outcomes may also be buffered by important tribal, clan, familial, and individual cultural factors (Walters et al. 2002). Collective memories held by tribes, clans, and families may serve an important survival function in recovering from historical trauma events.

Collective as opposed to individual memory is integral to understanding historical trauma event knowledge transmission. Specifically, collective memory, also known as “social memory,” consists of the thread of individual memories connected to a greater social fabric (Denham 2008). Additionally, individual memories, since they are from the same cloth as the collective memories, cannot exist independent of the collective. The culture and family of a tribal nation play a critical role in keeping these memories alive, and the collective aspects and, in some cases, the familial or individual memories held in common within a Native

family not only keep the culture, identity, and stories alive, but they also serve, particularly in the case of familial or tribal historical trauma narratives, an important commemorative function to strengthen collective identity, to reaffirm identity and resiliency strategies employed by previous generations, and to provide important narratives of strength and hope for future generations. Denham (2008) notes that these family collective memories and the retelling of major events are “commemorative practices” and are an “embodied form of collective memory that allow one to experience and connect with ancestors and the past by working to solidify kinship bonds and experiences. Such activities have the potential to move abstract events or memories of the past into the lived present.” Denham (2008) goes on to note that family members do not construct their identities and sense of “self” from a “chain of personal memories”; rather, tribal family members also “construct their sense of self from a network or chain of intergenerational memories and narratives situated within the larger sociocultural, political, and historical context. That is, narratives and memories of previous generations [over hundreds of years]...are internalized by subsequent generations” and used as a major organizing principle for tribal, familial, and individual identities. This sentiment is reflected in the Native adage, “never forget who you are or where you come from.” From this perspective, historical trauma consciousness narratives of major tribal and familial events may also serve as important reminders of potential resistance, survival, and resiliency strategies employed by the ancestors that future generations can learn from and employ. Historical trauma narratives through stories, songs, and family rituals may potentially buffer family members and future generations from the deleterious effects of major historical trauma events, and provide a foundation of response strategies that can be adopted and passed on through the narrating of these major events and the telling of survival stories. For example, a Native family in the Northwest uses the metaphor of growing up with a “Rock Culture,” a connection to land and place for strength and protection (Denham 2008). A family member notes:

...that’s where we began to learn, that room where everybody was in the evening. They would pray, tell stories, they’d visit, they’d have oral history lessons, or what amounted to that, and they’d sing songs. And my brother and I learned the songs of our family, that’s where we began when we were just little babies, before we could even learn to talk, they were singing to us the songs of our family. Those special songs that were maybe 1,000 years old that were handed down in this circle from those circles, those camps over there. But, these songs made their way here, to this buffer here...So that’s the connection...Our father told us to never forget your Rock Culture. Practice it. One of his last breaths, he even wrote it in a letter, one of the major things he expressed is to not forget our Rock Culture.

In terms of historical trauma, family narratives tend to be strengths-based and emphasize how family members have been successful in overcoming the trauma and facing what seems to be insurmountable devastation or radical cultural changes (as in the case of relocation or other displacements) and are able to learn from these insurmountable challenges not only to survive but also to thrive (Denham 2008). Specifically, Holocaust descendant survivors utilize survival stories that emphasize

overcoming the trauma as opposed to stories that focus on suffering associated with the trauma (Gottschalk 2003). This is akin to what Native communities call “transcending the trauma,” which is a tribal collective, clan, familial, and individual quest to move beyond historical trauma victimization to a “warrior mind” state that transcends the trauma and allows the people to live their OI in the context of contemporary times.

Denham (2008) notes that a historical trauma response should not be required to acknowledge and validate the construct, presence, or impact of historical trauma events. Future research on historical trauma, particularly with respect to place and land loss should also consider resiliency expressions as well as the culturally protective functions of family, culture, and identity, as they may buffer the impact of historically traumatic events on wellness outcomes, particularly chronic health conditions and the embodiment of stressful events (Walters and Simoni 2002). Denham (2008: 411) notes that critical exploration of historical trauma will only strengthen it as a construct and “widen our understanding of individual and collective trauma experiences and the practical efforts to support culturally appropriate responses.”

Conclusion

We are reminded that creation is an ongoing responsibility and that the sacred is as much an experience of immanence-being embodied – as it is of transcendence-being otherworldly. And, last, land is everything because without it, we simply cannot survive: survival is not just a matter of ‘managing environmental resources’ but of living in balance by actively participating in creation through reciprocity and world renewal ceremonies (Gonzales and Nelson 2001: 501).

The major aim of this chapter was to stimulate thinking on the relationships between indigenous place and health, specifically the embodiment of historical trauma associated with dis-placement and land loss as they are manifest in health outcomes. Theoretical and empirical findings reflect that Native health and wellness cannot be decontextualized from historical place-based processes, particularly historical traumatic event exposure and its association with physical and mental health outcomes. In terms of health and mental health practice implications, indigenous worldviews, particularly relational and spatial orientations as well as sacred ecological contexts, must be integrated into assessment and intervention design for individual, familial, and tribal or community-based interventions and prevention efforts. Moreover, these worldviews should be tailored to the contemporary context of the tribal group, family, or individual given varied histories with historical traumatic events as well as varied tribal, communal, and familial responses and negotiated resistance and resiliency strategies employed by ancestors and descendent survivors of such events. The focus on strengths-based familial and tribal survival strategies can be integrated into multilevel treatment approaches, particularly for communities and individuals who experience high rates of lifetime traumatic events (e.g., community

suicides, homicides, unintentional injuries and fatalities, etc.) and high rates of corresponding population-level PTSD and depression.

Finally, on the structural level, findings indicate that place-based traumatic events, particularly historically traumatic events may have profound effects on health and wellness. Given rapid global climate change and rising ocean levels, many indigenous communities, particularly in the South Pacific and Pacific Northwest, will be hit with major land loss. Although global climate problems do not qualify as historical trauma events per se, a lack of response or indifference to the devastating land losses and relocations that will disproportionately impact Native communities can eventually become historical trauma events. Our findings support the need for early prevention efforts to minimize the physical and mental health impact of these land losses. For example, the island of Tuvalu is at the critical danger point, becoming overrun with ocean water. It is estimated that within 50 years, Tuvalu will literally be under water, thereby devastating land and place ties for the indigenous people of Tuvalu. The response to this crisis has been problematic as noted by one journalist (Woorama 2006) who stated that the:

...unspeakable arrogance and irresponsibility for industrial nations responsible for global warming and rising sea levels to refer to Tuvalu as a “sinking island”, as though its impending submersion were a fault inherent in the island and its people. It seems to make people more comfortable to talk of sinking lands, rather than rising seas, as this doesn’t challenge the validity of unsustainable colonial standards of living that continue to ravage the planet.

At stake are human lives, indigenous rights and sovereignty, and ultimately, if displaced, indigenous health and well-being—all major indigenous Peoples’ rights issues. As Robinson notes (2009):

Climate change is contributing to rising prices for grains and staples that are undermining food security for millions....We know there will be more natural catastrophes in future. But they will not always involve horrific headlines and images of hurricanes and tsunamis. More commonly, they will be cumulative and unspectacular. People who are already vulnerable will be disproportionately affected. Slowly and incrementally, land will become too dry to till, crops will wither, rising sea levels will undermine coastal dwellings and spoil freshwater, species will disappear, livelihoods will vanish...Mass migration and conflicts will result. Only very gradually will these awful consequences reach those whose lifestyles and activities are most to blame. Climate change will, in short, have immense human consequences...We have collectively failed to grasp the scale and urgency of the problem...To effectively address it will require a transformation of global policy capacity.

We are at a crossroads related to Western and indigenous understanding and responsibility to indigenous place and land. It is all of our collective responsibility to address indigenous land-based injustices and to deter wherever possible, future historical trauma place-based events. All of our health and wellness depends on it. As Gonzales and Nelson (2001: 496) note, “To have a sustainable culture means having healthy land—one nurtures the other, physically and spiritually”

1. IP and individuals have the right not to be subjected to forced assimilation or destruction of their culture. States shall provide effective mechanisms for prevention of, and redress for, (a) any action that has the aim or effect of depriving them of their integrity as distinct peoples, or of their cultural values or ethnic identities, (b) any action that has the aim or effect of dispossessing them of their lands, territories, or resources (Article 8).
2. IP shall not be forcibly removed from their lands or territories. No relocation shall take place without the free, prior, and informed consent of the IP concerned and after agreement on just and fair compensation and, where possible, with the option of return (Article 10).
3. IP have the right to revitalize, use, develop, and transmit to future generations their histories, languages, oral traditions, philosophies, writing systems, and literatures, and to designate and retain their own names for communities, places, and persons (Article 13).

It is our collective responsibility to address indigenous land-based injustices and to deter, wherever possible, future historical trauma place-based events. All of our health and wellness depends on it. As Gonzales and Nelson (2001: 496) note, “To have a sustainable culture means having healthy land – one nurtures the other, physically and spiritually.”

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