

# Outcomes of a Native American Cultural Education Program for Non-native Counselors

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## Goals of Curriculum

- To increase awareness, knowledge, and understanding of tribal language, history, legends/stories, customs, spiritual ceremonies, songs/dress/dances/food, communication styles and cultural orientations for non-native counselors and staff members.
- To improve substance abuse treatment experiences for Native Americans.
- To explore causal factors for alcohol and drug abuse among Native American populations.
- To identify Native American cultural, spiritual and other factors that affect the prevention, treatment and aftercare of alcohol and drug abuse among individuals and families.

## Introduction

In South Dakota a large number of Native Americans (NA) enter substance abuse treatment offered by non-tribal programs due to a shortage of beds in tribal programs. While NA makes up 42% of clients served in state accredited substance abuse treatment programs in South Dakota, only 16% of the counselors are NA. Prior to the development of the curriculum there were: no existing academic paths to acquire NA cultural competencies; misperceptions/misunderstandings of NA ways and traditions; shortages of NA counselors; and inadequate matching of treatment programming to NA clients' culture.

A survey conducted among non-NA substance abuse counselors in SD, **The Native Cultural Assessment Survey**, showed that 42% of the clientele of non-tribal substance abuse treatment programs were NA, that 64% of the counselors had no cultural awareness training, and that the majority of the remaining 36% had less than 20 hours of NA cultural competency training. These results led the PATTC to develop the **"The Native American Curriculum for State Accredited, Non-Tribal Substance Abuse Programs in South Dakota"**.

### The Native American Curriculum increased my confidence in working with Native American Clients

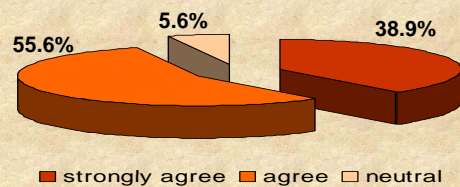


Figure 2

### The Native American Curriculum has helped me to assist with developing culturally specific discharge plans

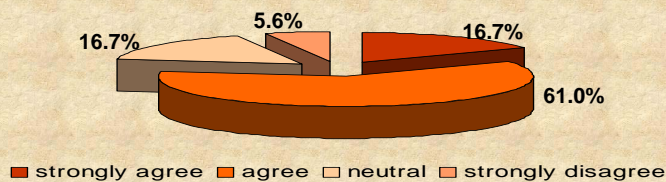


Figure 3

#### Disclosure of potential conflicts of interest:

The authors of this presentation have no financial relationships that relate to the topic of this presentation.

#### The aim of this study is:

To determine the effectiveness of the curriculum in increasing the knowledge base and understanding by non-Native American counselors about a range of relevant aspects of Native American Culture.

#### Participant knowledge of Native American cultural and spiritual ways

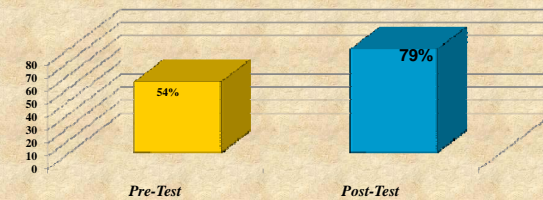


Figure 1

## Results

#### 1. Pre- to post-test change:

On average, participants' scores increased from 54% on the pre-test to 79% on the post-test, showing an increase in knowledge about Native American cultural and spiritual ways. (Figure 1)

#### 2. Evidence of effectiveness in follow-up survey:

Of participants who completed the follow-up survey (n=33), 56% felt that the curriculum increased their confidence in working with Native American clients (Figure 2), 77.7% either agreed or strongly agreed that the curriculum assisted them in developing culturally specific discharge plans (Figure 3), 77% either agreed or strongly agreed that the curriculum helped them integrate Native American cultural and spiritual issues into the screening and assessment process (Figure 4), 55.6% either agreed or strongly agreed that the curriculum helped them to develop culturally-specific substance abuse treatment plans (Figure 5), and 88.8% either agreed or strongly agreed that overall the curriculum helped them improve their counseling/therapeutic relationships with Native Americans (Figure 6).

### The Native American Curriculum helped me to integrate Native American cultural and spiritual issues into the screening and assessment process

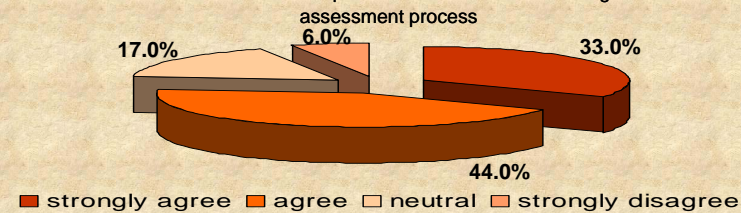


Figure 4

### The Native American Curriculum has helped me develop culturally specific substance abuse treatment plans

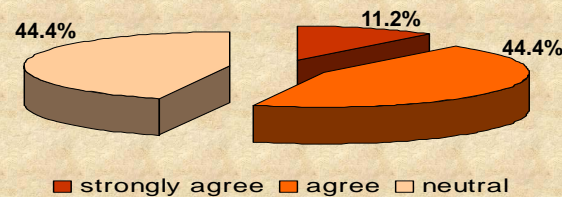


Figure 5

## Methods

#### Subjects

One hundred and fifteen participants in the training program, "The Native American Curriculum for State Accredited, Non-Tribal Substance Abuse Programs in South Dakota," were solicited for participation in the study. Response rate for the pre and post training survey was 100%. The response rate for follow-up was 28%.

#### Questionnaires

A pre- and post training survey instrument was developed to assess participants awareness, knowledge, and understanding of tribal language, history, legends/stories, customs, spiritual ceremonies, songs/dress/dances/food, communication styles and cultural orientations by non-native counselors and staff members. A follow-up survey designed to assess the relevance of the curriculum to clinical practice was also distributed to participants who completed the curriculum.

#### Procedures

Pre- and post-tests were administered to all 115 participants between October 2005 and November 2007 to assess knowledge, awareness, and change in participants' cultural competence. A follow-up survey designed to assess the relevance of the curriculum to clinical practice was also distributed to participants who completed the curriculum.

#### Curriculum

The "Native American Curriculum for State Accredited, Non-Tribal Substance Abuse Programs in South Dakota" has been offered to substance abuse counselors at various sites in SD since 2005. The program consists of 22-hour modules and is offered at every site in its entirety. Plans are in place to continue to offer the curriculum at various sites in SD and ND during the 2008-09 fiscal year. This program will also be offered to providers in MN and WI.

#### Curriculum components

- Twenty-two Instructional Modules
- Instructor's Guide
- Participant Resource Book

### Overall, the Native American Curriculum has helped me to improve my counseling/therapeutic relationships with Native Americans.

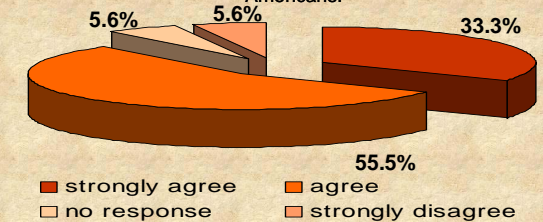


Figure 6

## Conclusion: Curriculum Implementation Outcomes

- More counselors are receiving Native American (NA) cultural competency training.
- Counselors are increasing their knowledge of NA cultural and spiritual ways.
- Counselors are applying newly learned counseling strategies with NA clients.
- Counselors desire increased learning about NA culture.
- Programs are adding to their NA cultural resources, i.e. printed material, DVDs, videos, etc.
- More NA staff/counselors are being utilized by non-tribal programs
- Programs are providing opportunities for NA clients to experience their traditional ways, through purification lodges, smudging, and talking circles.