



WHY WE HURT

The Ongoing Impact Of Historical Trauma In Bristol Bay
&
Community Solutions for The Next 500 Generations



WHO WE
ARE



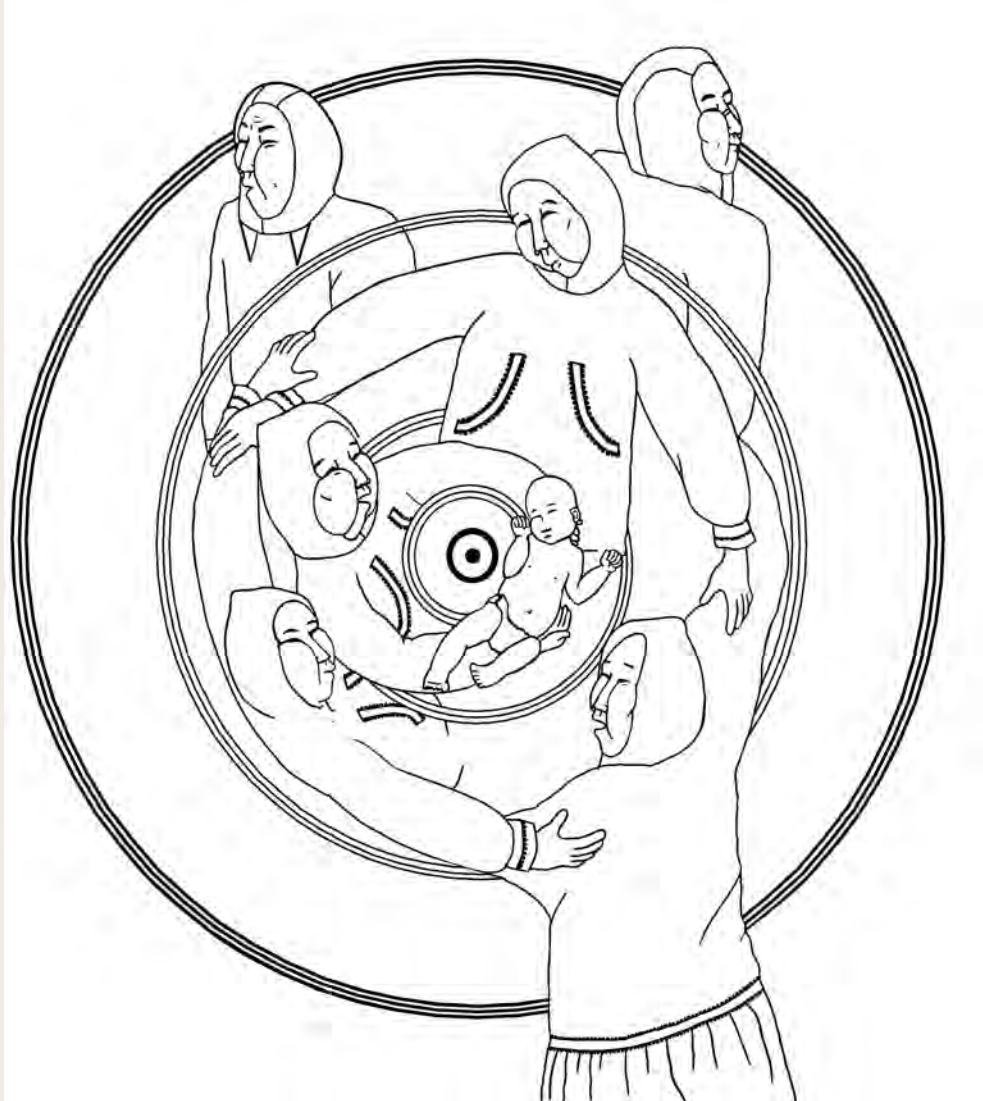
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THE YUPIAQ COMMUNITY STRUCTURE

- Yua or Ellem Yua (Spirit/creator) at the center
- Children closest to spirit
- Elders teach and connect with children
- Female Identifying relatives care for community and provide
- Male identifying relatives protect and provide
- Every person is important and valued



CALRICARAQ – THE WAY TO HEALTHY LIVING

Our ancestors passed down teachings that were a gift from the creator so that we could live well. They were taught by example and with stories.

- **Kenka-** Unconditional Love as a way of being
- **Naklegtaq kusgurtaq**– Being Empathetic
- **Tuvqataq-** Being Compassionate
- **Takumcutaq-** Being Sympathetic
- **Patagavkenani-** Having Patience
- **Anglanilleq-** Natural Laws Of Life
- **Qanruyun-** How to Be
- **Ayuqucirtuun-** Humor Provoking Joy

Citation: Concepts borrowed from YKHC Calricaraq Program

CULTURE IS:

- Healing
- Prevention
- Resistance
- Resiliency
- Protective
- The application of thousands of years of “evidence-based practice”

Citation: SAMHA – Culture Is Prevention, 1999

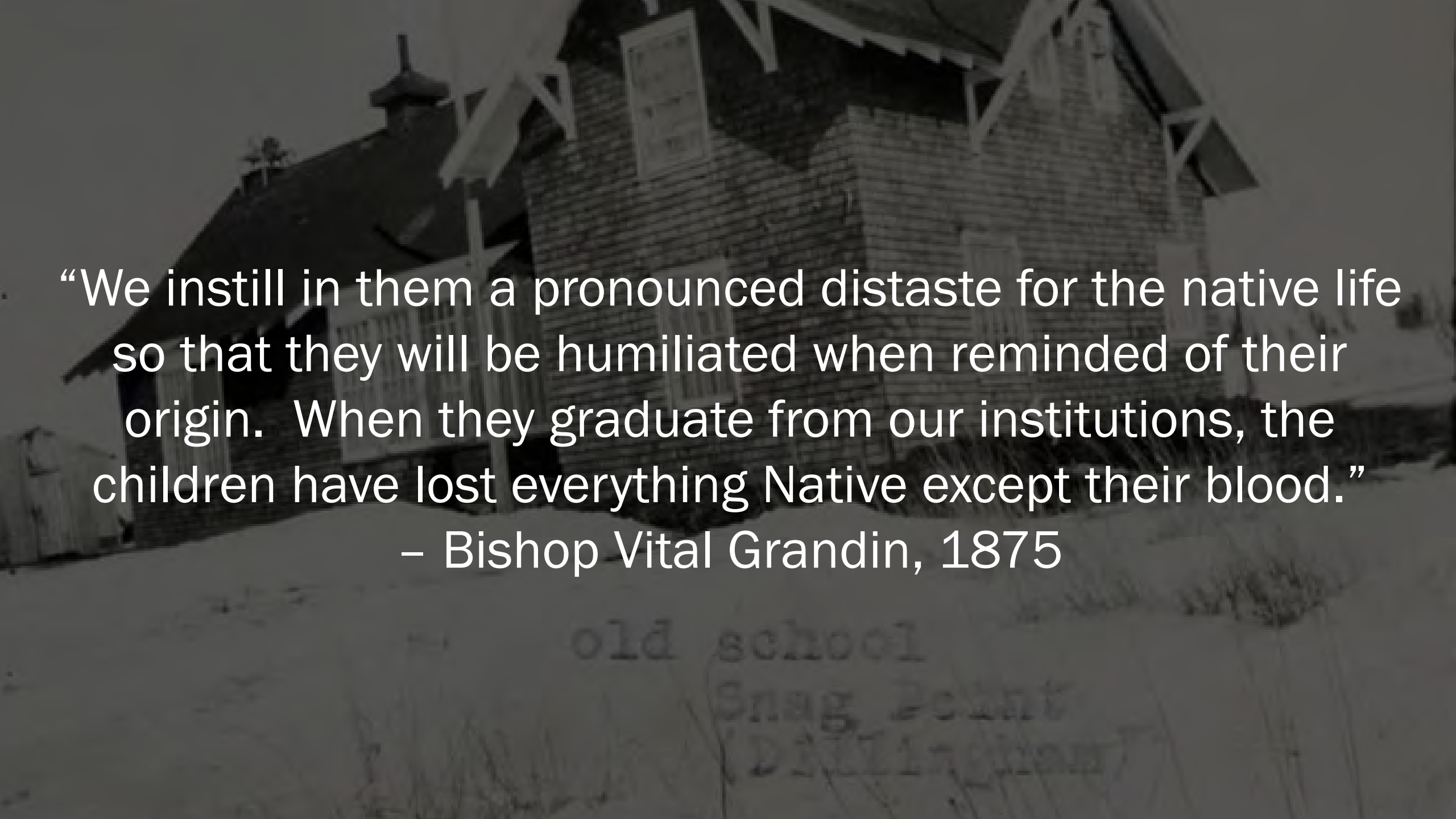
Citation: Tucker Walters & Beltran, 2015 and 2007

Citation: Gordon, Him & Jordan, 2022

Citation: Braveheart, Chase, Elkins, and Altschul, 2011

Citation: Yamane & Helm, 2022





“We instill in them a pronounced distaste for the native life so that they will be humiliated when reminded of their origin. When they graduate from our institutions, the children have lost everything Native except their blood.”

– Bishop Vital Grandin, 1875

THE INTENT OF THE DOCTRINE OF DISCOVERY/ DOMINATION WAS TO ACQUIRE LANDS

- The original language is based on the concept of terra nullius meaning vacant lands. The meaning was re-interpreted to land not occupied by Christians after Columbus sailed to North America and found that there were people occupying those lands
- Pope Nicholas directed King Alfonso to “capture, vanquish, and subdue the saracens, pagans, and other enemies of Christ,” to “put them into perpetual slavery,” and “to take all their possessions and property”
- The ideology supported dehumanization of people living on their homelands
 - *Murder*
 - *Torture*
 - *Forced-assimilation*
 - *Dispossession*
- The Doctrine of Discovery became the foundation of US and international law used to justify the extermination of native people.
- The Doctrine of Discovery inspired the Monroe Doctrine in 1823 which declared dominance over the western hemisphere including the concept of manifest destiny that justified westward expansion because it was “sanctioned by God.”

Historical Trauma, Genocide and Survival: *the Elephant in the Room*

- **Congressional genocidal policy:** *no further recognition of their rights to the land over which they roam....go upon said reservations...chose between this policy of the government and **extermination**....wards of the government, controlled and managed at its discretion (U.S. Senate Miscellaneous Document 1868 cited in Brave Heart, 1998)*
- **BIA started under the War Department;** BIA Education Division called “Civilization Division” & IHS evolved from BIA
- **Congressional policy of forced separation** of children from family and tribe – early boarding school trauma
- **Honesty about this legacy and impact upon current relationships, mistrust, and strategies to move forward are part of trauma informed care**

TRAUMA RESPONSE WARNING



VIOLENCE IS A LEARNED BEHAVIOR



- Violence is a learned behavior passed down in families in our region over the last 200-300 years
- Settlers/Colonizers were our first abusers
- Western culture does not honor the environment, women, children, elders, differently-abled or lgbtq+ people, community orientation, or our original spiritual practices.
- There were no words for rape or child abuse in Yugtun before contact.
- Sexual violence, racism and adverse childhood experiences cause high rates of substance use disorder, suicide, eating disorder, cancer, diabetes, heart disease, depression, anxiety and incarceration
- We were healthy for 10,000+ years before contact

COLONIZATION IS UNNATURAL

- They took our bodies – sexual violence as a war tactic, enslavement and trafficking starting with first contact.
- They took our land – Land was claimed for the fur and fishing industries without considering traditional land use patterns. Today, native allotments can be sold to non-native people and are thereby stolen from the next 7 generations of our children, often through poverty- driven coercion. Part of the process of erasure.
- Blood Quantum – disrupting our natural ways of being and replacing them with systems of violence that are designed to erase us.
- They took our stories – the story they tell about us is not right. They severed the connection between youth and elders in boarding schools so that our oral history and language were not passed down.
- They took our ways of parenting – sold it back to us as attachment / gentle parenting.
- They took our language – we are charged to attend universities to relearn our language after our parents and grandparents were beaten and humiliated for speaking it.
- They took our resources –The state of Alaska Department of Fish and Game does not consider moose or caribou a subsistence food. We need to ask for permission to feed ourselves. We apply for competitive grants to fund public health programming that is often not accessible to our rural people.

INCARCERATION RATES

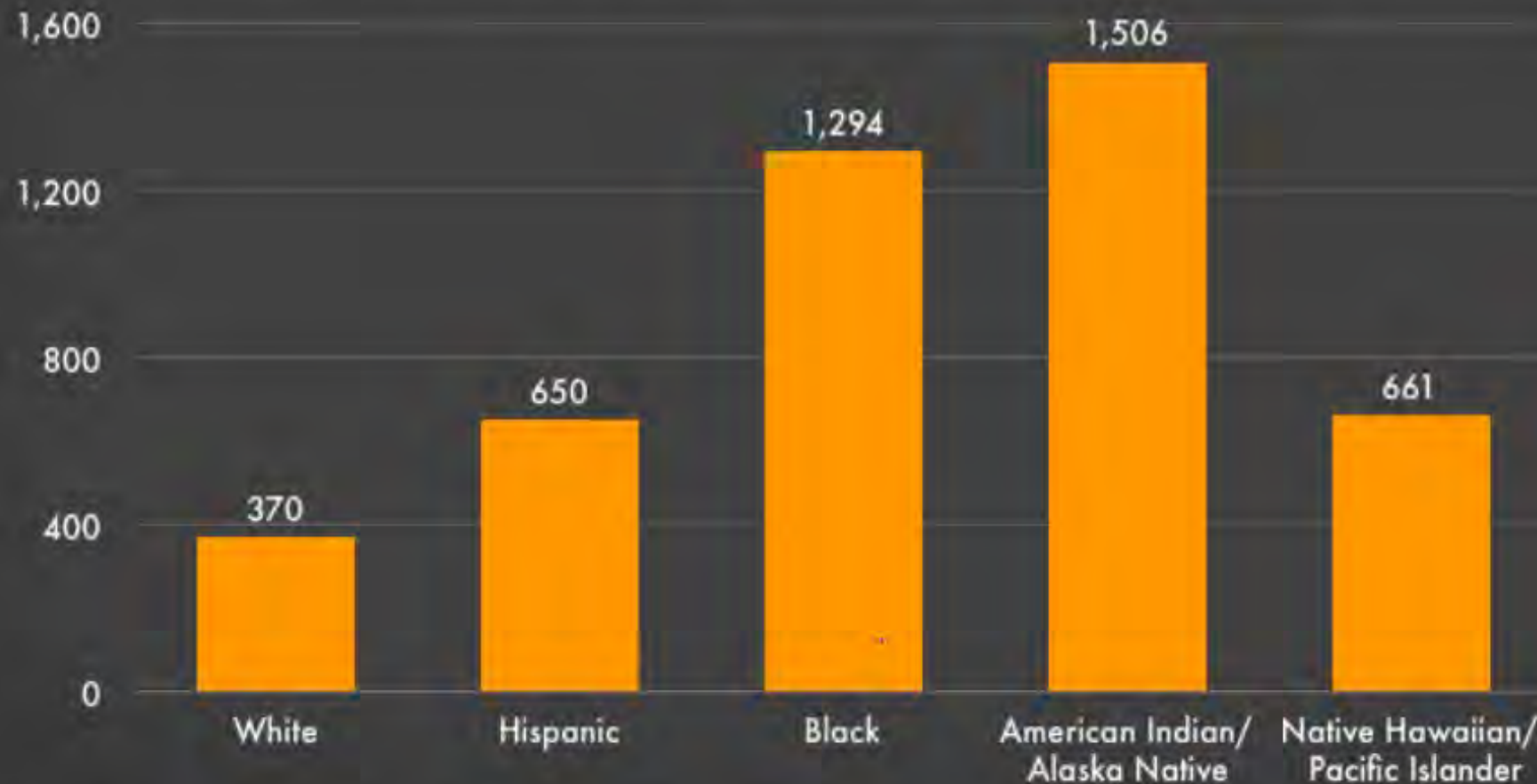
COMPARING ALASKA
AND FOUNDING NATO COUNTRIES



Incarceration rates per 100,000 population

ALASKA INCARCERATION RATES BY RACE/ETHNICITY, 2010

(Number of people incarcerated per 100,000 people in that racial/ethnic group)



What Is Trauma?

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

WHEN WE DON'T HAVE THE TOOLS OR WORDS TO SAY WHAT WE NEED, OUR BEHAVIORS TELL A STORY FOR US

We need to:

- Understand the ways people survive suffering.
- Validate, normalize, acknowledge, witness, hold (catch people's words and not let them drop).
- Recognize that we are responsible for unlearning our beliefs and behaviors that perpetuate harm rooted in historic trauma.
- Acknowledge how our systems perpetuate abuse and embrace change.

NATURAL REACTIONS TO TRAUMA –WAYS WE PROTECT OURSELVES TO SURVIVE

We all do the best we can until we know another way. We may mistake survival tactics with behavioral issues.

- Inability to trust others - **People have to work harder to earn trust because of lifetime experiences/generations of harm.**
- Assuming responsibility for too much- Damage to traditional community structure prevented those reciprocal family systems from functioning. Caused by lack of connection to community and culture. **Being afraid to depend on others – We couldn't depend on others because they were experiencing their own trauma.** Assimilating to a culture rooted in power and control.
- A burning need to be in control – **The brain's protection against feelings of powerlessness** associated with harm.
- Denying problems – **The brain and body's subconscious inability to acknowledge and process an individuals own suffering** because of a lack of resources and support. Implications in relationships: If I can't acknowledge my own, I can't see it for other people either. Brain may preserve primary relationships – my mother/father/auntie/uncle/grandparent caused trauma, but they were also someone I has a secure attachment with. The brain subconsciously preserves that attachment for survival.

NATURAL REACTIONS TO TRAUMA –WAYS WE PROTECT OURSELVES TO SURVIVE CONT.

- Seeking to be in chaos and drama – **Violence is normalized** and a consistent part of our lives by design. It was introduced on a massive scale and it continues today. Multiple intersecting levels of violence – Individual/internalized, interpersonal, community, institutional, policy, laws- sanctioned. **The absence of it can be uncomfortable.** We are targeted.
- Being unable to relax, let go and have fun. – The bridge for empathy is missing for us – resiliency (being in survival mode) means there isn't room for rest or ease. No vacation from pain, suffering.
- **We are either grieving a death, navigating multiple crises – individual, community and collective.** Constantly facing erasure and genocide, health issues connected to our own trauma.
- The need to be right- **perfectionism rooted in compliance** with assimilation abuse and compliance with individualism.
- A deep sense of injustice- A normal response to oppression. We continue to feel/see the impact of oppression in our daily lives but may not have the internal resources to name it and release it. **We cannot confront the people/systems who hold power over us and cause harm, so we vent it on each other.** When this happens, it is called Lateral Oppression.
- Rage – Part of the “fight” trauma response. The limbic system can hijack our brains.

QARUYUN

- Qaruyun is traditional Yupiaq medicine used to help another human being accept and become whole again
- It means to sit with another person and listen with out judgement to help them draw out their pain so that they can heal
- It is a Yupiaq teaching that encompasses empathy and compassion
- Qaruyun is evidence that peer support and harm reduction have always existed in Yupiaq cultural practices

