

Discussion Guide

Native America: Diversity Within Diversity

Focusing on Education

Video and Discussion Purpose:

“R.E.A.C.H. for Diversity” is a national Veterans Health Administration diversity campaign that features a series of five videos. The focus in this second video is on diversity education and this guide will provide topics and areas for discussion. The video and discussion guide are education training tools to increase VA employees’ knowledge related to cultural competency and cross cultural communication as well as increase their overall understanding about diversity and its many facets.



**Developed by
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Veterans Health Administration
Employee Education System
in collaboration with the
Under Secretary for Health Diversity Advisory Board**

“awareness and understanding that Diversity fuels the human potential that drives organizational growth”

R.E.A.C.H. for Diversity
Respect, Education, Awareness, Collaboration, Honesty

**The five key diversity principles are:
Respect, Education, Awareness, Collaboration and Honesty**

Discussion Guide
Native America: Diversity Within Diversity

- 1. Tips for Creating and Conducting a Successful Diversity Training Session**
- 2. Discussion Questions/Reflections**
- 3. Overview of Native America: A Cultural Competency Curriculum Compiled by Bruce Kafer**
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Section 1
**TIPS FOR CREATING A SUCCESSFUL
TRAINING SESSION**

The following tips are meant to encourage exploration of respect, enhance communication and promote interaction and discussion.

Training Session Preparation:

1. Reserve meeting space and post an announcement that outlines the

Most of the exercises contained in this discussion guide can be completed in about an hour.

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Watch the video and study this guide.

The more familiar you are with the materials, the better prepared you will be for the session. Your goal is to create an interactive environment which promotes learning and understanding.

Anticipate objections and challenges.

There will likely be some people in the organization who may be hesitant to attend this type of training due to the challenges it may present. Preparation, flexibility, support, perseverance, and communication are the keys to success. Trust the process.

2. Obtain management support for the training.

Invite senior management to give welcoming and closing remarks at the training session. Ask them to provide examples of what the organization is doing to achieve diversity goals.

Conducting the Training Session:

1. Define the goals of session.

Define the goals at the very beginning of the training session. Everyone should understand what you plan to achieve.

2. Show the “R.E.A.C.H. for Diversity” Education video, *Native America: Diversity Within Diversity*.

Make sure you have a DVD player, monitor with sound, and adequate space for people to view the film and engage in discussion.

3. Allow enough time to adequately introduce and conduct some interactive exercises.

Allow participants the time to learn, discuss and interact with each other – do not rush through the session.

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4. Listen for ideas, issues, and concerns.

“Be prepared, be flexible” - be flexible enough to allow the discussion to take a new direction. Be gentle but firm in redirecting discussions while making sure to validate ideas, issues, and concerns.

5. Use the participants’ experiences to encourage discussion.

The most important resource in your organization is your people. Encourage participants to share their experiences with the group to foster an interactive discussion.

6. Relax and have fun.

Conclusion and Assessment:

At the end of the training session, it is important to evaluate the event and assess its success and effectiveness in reaching the goals.

1. Discuss the benefits of the session.

Revisit the goals of the session. Did you achieve them? If not, what changes need to be made for the next session?

2. Assess the educational impact of the session.

Did the training meet the expectations of the participants? Were their issues and concerns about diversity education addressed?

3. Discuss what could have been done better in the session.

Encourage participants to give constructive feedback. Was there something that did not quite work in the training session? What would you change for the future sessions?

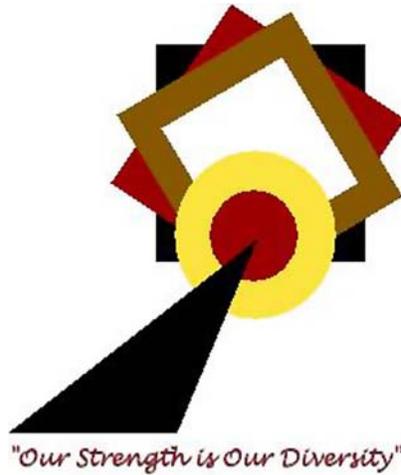
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Examples of interactive exercises:

There are several types of exercises you can use to teach diversity. These activities should encourage dialogue, breakdown barriers, promote understanding and empower teamwork.

To find interactive diversity exercises go to Cultural Pursuit (http://www.wv-hsta.org/mced/activities/student/cultural_pursuit.htm) and Multicultural Pavilion <http://www.edchange.org/multicultural/>.

Section 2



“Native America: Diversity Within Diversity” Discussion Questions / Reflections

Purpose: The purpose of this section is to provide facilitators of the R.E.A.C.H. video, *Native America: Diversity Within Diversity*, with suggested questions that can be asked after the audience has viewed the video. These questions are not all inclusive and facilitators should balance these suggested questions with questions and / or reflections that will come up from the audience. The key is to start with any feedback the participants provide and assist them in exploring questions about race and ethnicity, differences, similarities, and cultural barriers in a safe environment. This will provide a safe session conducive to candid dialogue and will provide a meaningful experience through communication, validation, and positive inquiry. The shared personal experiences of the participants provide an important forum for meaningful connection to diversity concepts and principles.

Suggested Questions/Reflections:

1. What is meant by “diversity within diversity” and why is Native America a good example of this?
2. How did the Native American veterans that were featured differ from each other?
- 3.
4. What role did diversity play in Mr. Kafer’s life and how does that translate into his work in the VA?

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5. Give an example of something new that you learned about Native Americans from the video?
6. What aspects of the Native American culture do you appreciate most?
7. What are similarities between your cultural background's traditions and the Native American traditions?
8. If you work with someone who is Native American, think about your relationship. Do you think Native American culture shapes the relationship in any way? Does culture impact relationships?
9. How could a Native American team member influence the team dynamic of the work group?
10. Did you identify with experiences that were profiled in the video? If so, which ones?
11. What groups typically come to mind when you think of diversity?
12. What experiences have you had where diversity seemed especially complex?
13. Can you share personal experiences that have increased your diversity awareness / knowledge?
14. Did you see the "R.E.A.C.H. for Diversity" principles (respect, education, awareness, collaboration, and honesty) demonstrated in the video?
15. What key things do people need to know about your cultural group?
17. How and when do we challenge our stereotypes of others?
18. What unique challenges does the VA face regarding diversity issues?
19. What suggestions do you have to address these challenges in the VA?

Section 3

OVERVIEW OF NATIVE AMERICA **A Cultural Competency Curriculum**

Compiled by Bruce Kafer, RN, MSN (Oglala Lakota Nation)

Introduction

This education course is designed to assist VA staff in learning more about Native Americans so that we can provide better customer service.

This course covers key aspects of Native America and provides a comprehensive overview to provide you with general knowledge and increase your cultural competency.



Silas Johnson and Larry Johnson

Terms: Native American vs. American Indian and Alaska Native

“Native Americans” is a term that is frequently used to refer to American Indians and Alaska Natives. It is important to understand about the terms that are associated with the Native American population groups in the United States.

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“Native Americans” is a flexible term that is often used to refer to all American Indians and Alaska Natives living in the United States.

American Indians and Alaska Natives are the populations groups that were originally living on the continent that became the United States of America. Many people who study population groups refer to original inhabitants of an area as “indigenous” people.

Sometimes, the term Native Americans also refers to Native Hawaiians and some others from U.S. territories of the United States. However, in most cases and for the purposes of this educational course, the term “Native Americans” refers specifically to American Indians and Alaska Natives.

There has been some discussion over the years about what “Native Americans” want to be called. Generally speaking, in governmental matters they refer to themselves as American Indians and Alaska Natives. The reason for this is because throughout history, this is how they have been referred to in legal documents like the U.S. Constitution, decisions by the Supreme Court, as well as federal legislations that have been passed.

The U.S. government puts American Indians and Alaska Natives together as one racial group. So, that is why you see them referred to together. Of course, the American Indians on the continental United States and the Alaska Natives are two large populations groups that have key differences in their cultural practices, ways of life, languages and customs. It is also important to know that there are many subsets of American Indians and Alaska Natives. Generally, we tend to think of differences in American Indians as being tribal differences and the differences with Alaska Natives as being differences between villages. However, in the most technical sense, Alaska Native villages that are federally recognized are also Tribes.

Please remember that because each Tribe typically has its own indigenous language, they have a name for themselves that is within that language. For instance, the Oglala Sioux Tribe, a federally recognized tribe that resides on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation refers to themselves as “Oglala Lakota.” The Lakota translation for this would be the “people that scatter their own.”

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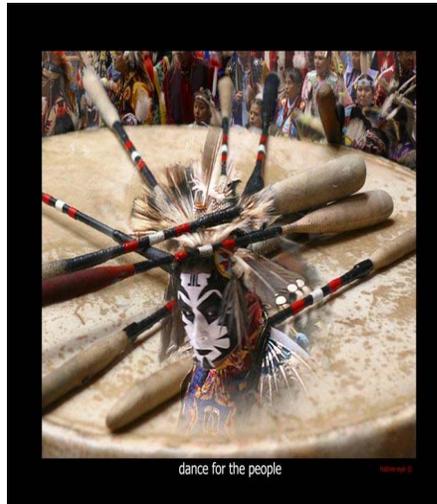


Photo by Robert Schepens (Dakota – Navy SEAL, Vietnam)

Tribal Recognition

To provide some additional clarification on terms, you should know that “Tribe” is probably the most common term that applies to Native America and it indicates a specific group of Native Americans.

There are many Tribes of Native Americans still living in the United States today. Some of these Tribes are recognized in a legal and political way by the United States government. The tribes that receive this formal recognition by the U.S. government are referred to as “federally recognized” Tribes. There are other Tribes that are only recognized by the state in which they are located. These Tribes are referred to as “state recognized” tribes. Finally, there are other Tribes that have no federal or state recognition but the members of the group still consider themselves a Tribe. It is often the case that they are applying for recognition by either the state or federal government.

Today, there are approximately 562 federally recognized tribes and approximately 365 state recognized tribes. There are over 300 American Indian and Alaska Native Reservations in the United States and approximately 200 different indigenous languages spoken.

Government relationships

It is important to know that American Indians and Alaska Natives are the only racial group in the United States that have a special government-to-government relationship with the U.S. government. This is because it says in the United States Constitution in Article 1, Section 8, Clause 3, that the United States can conduct commerce with the “Indian Tribes.” In addition, numerous treaties were signed between the United States and many different “Indian Tribes.” These facts, along

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with other federal legislation are what establish American Indian and Alaska Native Tribes as sovereign governments.

“Sovereign” means that a government is essentially independent. As an example, the United States is a sovereign government, so is Canada, Mexico, France, etc. As you may know, these governments have certain powers that they exercise freely, such as, passing laws, imposing taxes, deciding who can become a citizen, establishing education systems, healthcare systems, printing money, etc.

Similarly, only federally recognized American Indian and Alaska Native Tribes possess the type of sovereignty that allows them to have this unique legal and political relationship with the United States. They too, have the power to tax their Tribal members as well as decide who can enroll as a member, pass laws, operate a court system, create taxes, and establish education systems.

However, there are some major exceptions to their sovereignty, which is that they do not have the power to declare war, to print money, and to possess more power than the U.S. Congress. As a result, the sovereign status that they have is generally regarded as a “domestic dependent” status, so in all actuality, it is a limited sovereignty. This is because the U.S. Congress has decided that they will retain and exercise full power over federally recognized Tribes. What the Congress does now is engage in their relationship with Tribes with a spirit and practice of self-determination. What that means is that the United States policy towards federally recognized Tribes is to further the Tribes’ ability to decide matters for themselves. Congress has charged itself with this responsibility as well as other federal agencies.

Self-determination is a significant concept because at one time in the history of the United States “removal and relocation” was the policy of the United States government. Over time, this evolved from the forcible practice of removal that resulted in the genocide of many Native Americans to a practice of facilitating self-determination by passing federal laws and formally recognizing the unique status that Native Americans hold in this land.

Tribal Powers

Federally Recognized Tribes

Indeed, the federally recognized Tribes are considered “sovereign” nations by the United States federal government and they do have an independent legal authority, which is typical of any organized government. We have discussed some of the limitations of their sovereign status and the fact that Congress has full power over them.

Because federally recognized Tribes hold a unique prominence in the United States, other states, cities, and counties do not have authority over them. The

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federally recognized tribes conduct business like any government. You have learned that they can tax their tribal members, pass laws, and conduct what is called “government to government” relations with the United States.

Federally recognized Tribes have a unique independence in that what legally grants their power as well as limits their power is the United States Congress. What is often disconcerting to American Indian and Alaska Native Tribes is that since the U.S. Congress retains full plenary power over them; in order to gain federal recognition certain things must occur. Congress has charged the Secretary of the Department of the Interior with the responsibility for overseeing a special process that Tribes must meet in order to gain federal recognition.

Federal recognition results in certain benefits for those Tribes that are recognized. If a Tribe gains or has federal recognition they then qualify for certain federal programs that in general have to do with land and natural resource rights and management, education, health care, and other formal programs.

The Secretary of the Interior developed an administrative process for Tribes to use in petitioning for federal recognition. The Bureau of Indian Affairs administers this process. There are seven provisions that Tribes must prove in order to be recognized by the United States government and they are as follows:

1. The group has been from historical times until the present, on a continuous basis, identified as American Indian or Alaska Native.
2. A substantial portion of the group inhabits a specific area or lives in a community viewed as American Indian, distinct from other populations in the area.
3. The group has maintained governmental authority over its members as an autonomous entity throughout history until the present.
4. The group must submit a copy of its current governing documents including its membership criteria.
5. They must prove that the group’s membership consists primarily of persons who are not members of any other Tribe.
6. The group needs to submit a list of all known current members.
7. The group must show that they have not been the subject of federal legislation expressly terminating its relationship with the U.S. government.

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State Recognized Tribes

These Tribes only have recognition by the state in which they reside so they do not have the same voracity as the federally recognized tribes. Thus, they do not qualify for the federal programs but they may conduct government to government to relations with their host state.

The process for establishing state recognition is dictated by the state in which the Tribe is located. There are approximately 365 state recognized Tribes.

Non-recognized Tribes

Native American Tribes that have no federal or state recognition may still consider themselves Tribes. They lack the status that government recognized Tribes have and often times are in the process of seeking formal recognition. Until they establish formal government recognition, they have no real governmental authority as prescribed in law. However, in many cases, they function similar to Tribal entities and their members recognize themselves as a Tribe. As such, this often provides a foundation for recognition by either a state or the United States.

Worldview

There are many differences between Tribes and these should be thought of as cultural differences. The cultural practices of a particular ribe underscore the worldview of that Tribe. Native American ribes are extremely diverse. Essentially, they are more differences than similarities in cultural practices. Basically, the worldview of the Tribe is how they view the larger world around them and their relationship to it. The worldview would also be how they view God as well as other people, nature, and the universe. A good way to explore the worldview of a ribe would be to examine their beliefs about how the planet earth and also how the universe was created. These "Creation" beliefs may be vastly different from that of another Tribe or in some cases they may be similar. The important point to remember is that even though all ribes are Native American, they are extremely diverse and it is common to have differences in worldview. If one takes a close look at one particular ribe, it will be noticed that different ribal members will have different levels of exposure to the traditional practices and the historic worldview of that ribe. Some persons within a ribe may hold very traditional Native beliefs and other persons of the same ribe may have more "westernized" beliefs that reflect the larger dominant western European culture in the United States.

As such, it is possible to see that any member of a Native American Tribe may have a cultural orientation that falls somewhere on a continuum ranging from very traditional to very westernized. Thus, most Native Americans would fall somewhere between those two extremes and some would be at the far ends of the continuum.

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In conclusion, the most important thing to remember is that the worldview of Native Americans is different than the worldview of the larger dominant western European culture that is present in the United States. As a result of this difference, Native Americans often interact differently with western oriented health care organizations and many times are not able to understand how to access them. They become disconnected from health care and develop health care problems that may never be addressed by the prevailing western medical model.



Grass dancer at Edgewater Pow Wow, Cleveland, OH

History

In this section, we will review some of the key federal Acts and other facts that have impacted Native America. This is a limited review and is by no means comprehensive, it is intended to highlight some of the outstanding aspects of the relationship between the U.S. and Native America and underscore the change in that relationship from relocation to self-determination. In addition, it is intended to provide the reader with basic understanding of the cultures within Native America.

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Population Estimates

Scholars differ on the number of Native Americans living in the continent prior to the European arrival. The estimates range from approximately 5 million to 150 million. Generally speaking, most agree upon around 7 million Native Americans prior to the European arrival.

Today, there are 2.1 million American Indians and Alaska Natives in the United States according to Census 2000. This reflects approximately 1% of the total United States population. Those figures represent persons who self-identified with the one race category of "American Indian and Alaska Native." You could potentially find American Indians and Alaska Natives of a mixed racial descent in any Tribal group in the U.S.

Overview

Historically, Native American Tribes have had a difficult relationship with the United States government. This began with the European settlement on this continent and continues to this day. The claims on land that was to become the United States resulted in numerous broken treaties with Native Americans and forced them to relocate.

Please recall that treaties are agreements that nations make with other nations. Each side agrees to the treaty and from that point forward it carries the weight of law with it. In many ways, it is like a contract in that both sides have to agree to it.

In 1871, Congress passed a law that made it illegal to complete any more treaties with Native American Tribes. From that point on, the United State's relationship with Native Americans has been dictated by federal policy and legislation, as well as Supreme Court decisions.

The reason for this major change was that in the mid to late 1800's the United States had gained considerable military and economic strength as a nation. Because of this power, the U.S. no longer felt the need to engage in treaties with Native Americans and it was realized that the U.S. fully held the future of Native American Tribes in their hands.

As a result, an era of relocating Native Americans ensued and many of them were killed resulting in an extensive loss of life for Indian people. Many people are familiar with the "Trail of Tears" which reflected the hardship and suffering as well as loss of life Indian people had to endure in the forced relocation marches.

Acts of Congress

The **Indian Removal Act of 1830** was passed by Congress and essentially characterized the United States policy towards Native America during that era. The

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Act was intended to relocate Native Americans to live west of the Mississippi. The geographic locations that Native Americans ended up living on were often remote and many times were unsuitable for farming and economic development. Native Americans ended up in isolated locations and were forced to adapt to western practices and live life on what become known as “reservations.”

The **Indian Citizenship Act of 1924** made all American Indians and Alaska Natives citizens of the United States. As such, they were granted a right to vote in all local, state, and national elections and possess the same rights as other Americans. Prior this Act, it should be remembered that Native Americans served with honor and distinction in all military conflicts of the U.S. Many Native Americans at the time as well as others regarded this citizenship Act as long overdue.

The **Indian Reorganization Act of 1934** was a federal Act that was along assimilationist lines but also pivotal in policy towards Native America. Essentially, this Act recognizes the sovereignty of Native America and grants them the authority to establish their own governmental control within their own boundaries. Criticisms of this Act by Native Americans are that their governments had to be similar to “White” governments in that they had to develop charters and frameworks reflective of United State governmental structure in order to have their authority recognized. Nonetheless, this act is another significant punctuation of the United States recognition of Tribes as autonomous governmental entities.

As time continues, an era of self-determination for Native Tribes further grows into existence. Many see this represented by the American Indian Movement of the 1960’s and 1970’s and appropriately underscoring that is the **Indian Self-Determination Act of 1975**, which really provides federal Indian Tribes with important autonomy.

Basically, this act (Public Law 93-638) gives Tribes the authority to control their own education and their own healthcare. These “638 compacts” as they are known allow Tribes to have authority and control over programs that affect their education and their health. The ongoing criticism by many of this new policy of self-determination towards Tribes is that it is not adequately funded. As a result of under-funding, healthcare disparities remain and education graduation rates are lower when compared with U.S. national averages. Nonetheless, this allows Tribes to more effectively incorporate culturally congruent strategies that improve their education and health outcomes.

Related to the ongoing self-determination policies for Tribes and reflective of their empowered status in the United States is the **Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978**. Essentially, this act prescribes a hierarchy of activity that must occur in any placement or adoption of Native American children. Where possible, the child is placed in a Native American family first. As such, the appropriate tribal entity must be consulted on placement matters. This Act helps to secure the future viability of Tribes and maintain their socio-cultural integrity.

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This new policy of self-determination is reflected in other key acts that have impacted Native Americans. This would include the **Indian Self Determination and Education Assistance Act of 1996**, which revamps the original act making it more congruent with Tribal priorities as they are fully engaged in the law making process. This streamlines the Tribes' ability to do business and provides clearer boundaries for Tribes to be able to contract with outside entities to meet their needs.

Self-determination policy is also reflected in key Executive Orders, which occurs during President Clinton's tenure. Notably, is the **Executive Order 13021**, the White House Initiative on Tribal Colleges and Universities, which vests the Department of Education with the coordination of all federal agencies to empower the 34 Tribal Colleges and Universities in being able to meet accreditation standards equal to that of other universities and colleges in the United States.

In addition, there is the **Executive Order 13084**, Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments, which prescribes that each federal agency shall have a consultative process in place for coordinating with Indian tribes on any federal policy that may impact them.

The United States maintains its Federal Indian Trust Responsibility to this day. Simply stated, this means that the United States has charged itself with a responsibility to American Indian and Alaska Native people to protect Tribal land, resources, and rights. However, Indian people are often critical of the United States as their programs are typically under funded and do not meet the need acutely evident in Indian country.



Sign at the eastern border of the reservation

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Reservation

To clarify, a “Reservation” is the land that was set aside by the United States government for Native American people to inhabit. This land is held in trust by the United States government for Indian people.

What is unusual about this reservation land is that the American Indians and Alaska Natives do not actually own the land. However, it is their land to use and their sovereign laws and policies apply to their purview over this land.

One of the criticisms of the trust land that is held by American Indians and Alaska Natives is that they have difficulty in obtaining home loan mortgages, as banks do not have the authority to repossess trust land in cases of foreclosure. Trust land in essence is “owned” by the United States government and is only provided for the use of Tribes. Unfortunately, this trust land caveat is a barrier to home mortgage financing as in many cases individual Tribal members have no collateral to use to obtain a mortgage. While there are federal programs to assist with housing, they are under funded and do not meet the widespread need. Indian reservations possess the poorest housing conditions in the nation and as examples, one in five reservation homes lacks complete plumbing, and 40% of reservation housing is considered inadequate.

In addition, American Indians and Alaska Natives are critical of this trust land as it underscores the limitations on their sovereign status. Essentially, that the United States just took over everything and gets to decide on what the American Indians and Alaska Natives can receive and what land they can occupy.

In most cases, reservations both historically and today have the poorest living conditions in the United States. Unfortunately, alcoholism, unemployment, low graduation rates, and crime, characterize the living conditions on Native American reservations.

Gambling Casinos

It is true that some American Indian and Alaska Native Tribes have successful gambling casinos but these Tribes are in the minority. The fact is that the majority of American Indian and Alaska Native tribes live below the poverty line and have extensive social problems and scarce resources.

In 1988, the **Indian Gaming and Regulatory Act (IGRA)** was passed. This Act prescribes certain agreements that must occur in order for American Indian and Alaska Native Tribes to have gambling casinos.

It is important to note that normally individual States do not have jurisdiction over federally recognized American Indian and Alaska Native Tribes. This is because federally recognized Tribes are regarded as sovereign governmental entities and

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only Congress has power over them. As such, States cannot interfere with Tribes or have authority over them; however, because the Congress passed this regulatory Act over Indian gaming casinos, which are regarded as class III gaming, it gives States certain powers in connection with Tribes. Basically, Tribes must enter into a compact with States in order for them to initiate gambling casino operations.

This compact prescribes that States must have first authorized this type of gaming to occur within their State. In addition, the States must give the Tribes written permission for them to operate a gaming casino within their State. This also gives States leverage as far as being able to attain some jurisdiction over criminal activities that may occur related to the gaming establishments.

The IGRA also cites that States must negotiate in good faith with Tribes. In the event that States do not negotiate in good faith, the Secretary of the Interior can intervene through a prescribed process and his or her decision will be binding.

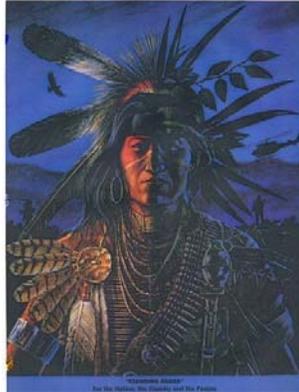
The IGRA is an example of an act that actually limits tribal powers. In most cases, Tribes have the authority to decide what occurs on their land and States have no authority over Tribal decisions. However, because of the IGRA this is one area where states can impose influence on Tribes. An example is the State of Utah, which prohibits class III gaming. As a result, Tribes cannot initiate any gaming casinos unless Utah changes their state law. It is important to note that it was the United States Congress that imposed these restrictions and because they provide States this authority in regards to Indian gaming, States now have some unique power in federal Native American affairs.

Military Service

American Indians and Alaska Natives have the highest military service rate of any racial group per capita. For example, in World War II forty percent of the Cheyenne and Comanche served, and greater than 30% of the Apache, Crow, Kiowa, and Sioux. Ninety percent of the Native Americans that served during the Vietnam War enlisted and approximately 42% of them served in heavy combat areas.

Unfortunately, despite a history of outstanding military service, American Indian and Alaska Native Veterans are four times more likely to report unmet healthcare needs. They tend to utilize mental health services more than other VA services and research shows that this is probably due to an increased rate of post-traumatic stress disorder as a result of the disproportionate service in forward combat areas.

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Enoch Haney (Seminole), artist

1950's and 1960's Relocation Programs

American Indian and Alaska Natives endured a significant period of the assimilation by the U.S. government, which culminated in the Relocation Programs of the 1950's and 1960's.

One of the factors that propelled these programs forward was the outstanding military service that American Indians and Alaska Natives had established. The government felt that since Natives had been so successful in this area, likely they would be successful in living in U.S. cities and could be assimilated accordingly, if given the opportunity. During the 1950's, approximately thirteen cities were identified as being relocation cities and incentives programs were offered to Natives, which were supposed to consist primarily of vocational training and housing assistance.

Many Native Americans who did not speak the English language came to the established relocation cities. As a result of program inefficiencies they could not find work, and ended up living in the poorest areas of the cities. Consequently, many Natives returned home but this also established a new era of the American Indian Center. American Indian Centers were organized in cities by Native activist to bridge the gap that had been created and to provide culturally congruent services for Natives. Many of the urban American Indian Centers are still in existence today and continue to advocate for Native Americans on many fronts.

Today, approximately one third of the entire Native American population lives on reservations with the rest being in urban and rural areas. Interestingly, new research is beginning to show that even Native Americans who live in urban areas still have a poor health profile sometimes worse than that of reservation persons. The researchers can only postulate on the reasons for this and more research needs to be done. The speculation appears to be that despite the close proximity to western service structures, urban Native Americans do not readily engage them. Likely, this is due to their cultural orientation, low-income status, and past bad

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experiences with western oriented service structures as well as general knowledge deficits about how to access various systems.

Traditional Healing



Sacred American Indian Medicine Wheel w/ Eagle feathers

These traditional healing practices were utilized by Tribes and often are thousands of years old. In many cases both historically and today, it is the Native American Medicine People that hold this healing knowledge. Modern medicine has come to recognize the value of traditional healing practices and often terms this indigenous practice as “alternative and complimentary” healing practices despite its long-standing existence.

Because traditional Native Americans possess a worldview that reflects their cultural and Tribal lifeways, it is important that they have access to healing modalities that are consistent with their beliefs. In recognition of that, the Department of Veterans Affairs National Chaplain Center has developed a traditional healing policy that will make it easier for practitioners to incorporate

Native American healing practices and Medicine Men into the VA Healthcare System to provide holistic care to better serve American Indian and Alaska Native veterans.

Department of Veterans Affairs

In the Department of Veterans Affairs, a national policy on the collection of racial and ethnic data has been adopted. This policy has the potential to increase the ability of the Department to move towards rigorous data collection (VHA Directive 2003-027, 2003). Further, this also has the potential to more accurately highlight healthcare disparities among minority populations. The accurate assessment of Native American veteran users and their utilization rates can only shed light on appropriate intervention strategies to more fully engage Native American customers.

In order to better serve Native American customers, the Indian Health Service and the Veterans Health Administration have entered into a Memorandum-Of-Understanding (MOU) in 2003. This umbrella agreement allows for the local creation of policies whereby joint sharing can occur between two separate federal

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agencies (VA / VHA – HHS / IHS MOU, 2003). Both agencies will continue to operate in fiscally challenging times. As such, it is important that innovations between agencies can blossom as a result of collaborative efforts, thus improving access and service delivery for Native American people. It is these types of policy efforts that are in accordance with self-determination that have the most positive impact on the health, education, and welfare of Native America.

Conclusion

Native Americans are the indigenous people of this continent and continue to live in very challenging conditions. They are made up of many different groups that are commonly referred to as Tribes and they hold a unique status in the United States as well as in different states.

American Indians and Alaska Natives are extremely diverse and have many different cultural practices. It is extremely important as we continue into the 21st century that western service delivery systems recognize differences in worldview and develop competency strategies for functioning in ways that accommodate diversity. We must recognize that knowledge of other cultures and education is one key step towards improving access for America's first people.

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Section 4

**“R.E.A.C.H. for Diversity”
Assessment Tool**

RATING SCALE

5 – Strongly agree

4 – Agree

3 – Uncertain

2 – Disagree

1 – Strongly disagree

0 – This does not apply to me

Self Assessment

1. I show respect and seek respect from people I live and work with. _____
 2. I always challenge people who make rude and offensive remarks. _____
 3. I attend educational and cultural events at work and in the community. _____
 4. I have a pretty good understanding of the importance of diversity and how it is tied to my organization’s strategic plan. _____
 5. I am aware of the impact that prejudicial, stereotypical, and oppressive on attitudes and practices can have on building a sense of community. _____
 6. I make efforts to assist people in feeling valued and appreciated. _____
 7. I enjoy working in a diverse environment that brings with it tension, conflict, change, creativity and innovation. _____
 8. I seek out ideas, opinions, and insight that are different from my own when tackling problems. _____
 9. Fear can prevent people _____ me from having diverse relationships. _____
- I’m willing to forgive and ask for forgiveness.

Self- Assessment Total _____

“R.E.A.C.H. for Diversity” Assessment Tool (cont’d)

RATING SCALE

- 5- Strongly agree**
- 4 –Agree**
- 3 – Uncertain**
- 2 – Disagree**
- 1 – Strongly disagree**
- 0 – This does not exist in my work setting**

Work Environment Assessment

Talk about treating people with dignity and respect in my workplace is sincere. _____

Employees in my work setting are treated with fairness and respect. _____

Where I work, there is an ongoing interest in my professional development and career advancement _____

I’m familiar with efforts and activities of the Diversity Council and Special Emphasis Program in my workplace. _____

I feel accepted by my supervisor/manager and peers. _____

Supervisors/managers in my organization have good interpersonal skills. _____

Differences are valued and appreciated in my work environment. _____

My supervisor/manager supports diversity, Equal Employment Opportunity and Alternative Dispute Resolution polices and practices. _____

Where I work, people feel safe in expressing their thoughts, feelings, and opinions. _____

Employees in my work setting can offer suggestions and feel they are heard. _____

Work Environment Assessment Subtotal Score _____

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Self-Assessment Score + Work Environment Assessment Score **Overall**
Score _____

Self-Assessment Scoring Results

50 – 45

Excellent. Congratulations! Based on your answers you have an excellent understanding and positive outlook regarding diversity. You should have few problems engaging others who are different from you. Your score suggests that you value diversity of thought and the benefits that come with it. Your flexibility and willingness to work in a diverse environment reflects a true desire to understand and relate to people as equals. Your relationships with others can be characterized as win/win, empowering, and productive. You make an excellent co-worker and leader. Self-motivation, transparency, and teamwork are characteristics that allow you to thrive in an inclusive work environment. You would make an excellent diversity champion.

44-40

Above Average. Congratulations! Based on your answers you have a good understanding and positive outlook regarding diversity. You appear comfortable working in a diverse work environment. Your ability to fully embrace diversity and inclusiveness is above average; however, you may need some support and encouragement to reinforce you in this area. Your potential for greater success lies in your ability to increase your diversity of thought and relationships with people who are significantly different from you.

39-35

Average. Your score reveals that you have an adequate personal outlook towards diversity. Your ability to work in a diverse work environment is good. Yet, you lack the diversity competency required to achieve success in a diverse and changing environment. You face potential for conflict in a diverse work environment. You may want to consider developing your diversity tolerance and skill set in this area. Additional diversity awareness training and experiences are recommended.

34 and below

Needs Work. Your score reflects that you have difficulty or lack the experience or knowledge to effectively work in a diverse work environment. Your attitude and actions may compromise your work team and organization's bottom line. Your diversity tolerance is low. You may want to consider focusing on improving your ability to consider diverse perspectives and opinions. Additional diversity awareness training and experiences are highly recommended.

Work Environment Scoring Results

50-45

Outstanding Place to Work! Congratulations! Your high score reflects that you work in an environment that is characterized by respect, fairness and collaboration. The organization in which you work is forward-thinking and has most likely aligned diversity as a targeted goal in meeting its overall business objectives. The value of diversity thinking permeates throughout your organization's policy, practices, and procedures. Your high score also reflects that your organization is a high performance organization and an employer of choice. It is well positioned for the future. Retention and recruitment of talent is not in jeopardy. The organization has senior level support of diversity initiatives and activities. Employees feel a strong degree of equity, respect, self-worth and purpose in their work environment. Managers and supervisors have demonstrated strong leadership competencies to overcome barriers that prevent progress and success. Risk-taking, innovation, energy, and community spirit, empowerment, and professional development are respected.

44-40

Above Average. Congratulations! Your score reflects that you work in an environment that embraces respect and integrity. It has a strong appreciation for the importance of diversity in our changing world. Measures to link diversity to the organization's bottom-line has support from senior management. Managers and supervisors have a good understanding and appreciation of what it takes to create and sustain an inclusive diverse work environment. Diversity of thought and cultural understanding are parts of the organization's formula for success. The organization has shown support for diversity through the creation of diversity councils and or affinity groups (special emphasis programs). Employees possess conflict-resolution skills and are open to tapping into mediation if necessary. Employees believe they have a good chance to advance in the organization based on their work performance. They are given time and support to develop their skills. Although the organization has made good strides in managing its diversity, it still has a way to go in taking steps necessary to fully engage its people, procedures, and practices to take full advantage of what diversity has to offer.

39-35

Diversity Challenged Workplace. Your score suggests that your organization is diversity challenged. How diversity adds value to the organization is not clearly understood or appreciated by all. The organization may lack accountability measures that support diversity goals. Traditional cultural celebration programs and special emphasis observations may be in place, but unspoken feelings and lack of diversity management are preventing the organization from achieving a higher level of operating. Employees may not feel a sense of community where they can freely voice their concerns or get their needs met. Your

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organization might consider conducting focus groups or having an outside consultant come in to address issues that are preventing it from truly utilizing its collective talents.

Below 34

Lots of Room for Improvement. Your score appears to indicate that your workplace needs some support in the area of appreciating and managing differences. Your organization has many opportunities where it can grow. First, the organization clearly lacks accountability measures that support diversity goals. Employees may feel little respect or marginalized in their workplace. Fear, prejudices, or unconscious agendas may be present in the work environment. Ability to meet the organizations strategic goals or face future challenges may be hampered because diversity of thought and adequate cultural representation in the organization may not currently exist. Diversity appears to not be a critical factor in business operations, practices, or systems. Closed systems may exist in some or all parts of the organizations. Discrimination complaints or the perceptions of institutional racism and sexism may impact employees' morale and customer services. Diversity consultation and training are needed to enhance employee satisfaction and success, as well as the organization's overall performance.

Overall Scores Rating
(Self-Assessment Score + Work Environment Assessment)

90-100 = Exceptional Working Conditions

89-80 = Good Working Conditions

79-70 = Fair Working Conditions

Below 70 = Marginal Working Conditions

Section 5



Santa Catalina Mountains, AZ

Education and Diversity “Quotes”

Please select three quotes that stand out for you and discuss why they do.

“We should acknowledge differences, we should greet differences, until difference makes no difference anymore.” ~**Dr. Adela A. Allen**

“If we are to achieve a richer culture, rich in contrasting values, we must recognize the whole gamut of human potentialities, and so weave a less arbitrary social fabric, one in which each diverse human gift will find a fitting place.” ~**Margaret Mead**

“Education is not preparation for life: education is life itself.”
~**John Dewey**

“One day our descendants will think it incredible that we paid so much attention to things like the amount of melanin in our skin or the shape of our eyes or our gender instead of the unique identities of each of us as complex human beings.” ~**Franklin Thomas**

“I am a red man. If the Great Spirit had desired me to be a white man, he would have made me so in the first place. He put in your heart certain wishes and plans, in my heart he put other desires. Each man is good in his sight. It is not necessary for Eagles to be Crows. We are poor...but we are free. No white man controls our footsteps. If we must die...we die defending our rights.” ~**Sitting Bull**

“Diversity education is an ongoing process, forever creating the understanding necessary for managing and inclusive and diverse workforce.” ~**National Security Agency**

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“If we cannot end now our differences, at least we can help make the world safe for diversity.”

“Our best chance for happiness is education.” ~**Mark VanDorn**

“It is a great shock at the age of five or six to find that in a world of Gary Cooper you are Indian.” ~**James Baldwin**

“Education’s purpose is to replace an empty mind with an open one.”
~**Malcom S. Forbes**

“As long as the differences and diversities of mankind exist, democracy must allow for compromise, for accommodation, and for the recognition of differences.” ~**Eugene McCarthy**

“Information cannot replace education.” ~**Imparato and Itarari**
“All education springs from some image of the future. If the image of the future held by a society is grossly inaccurate, its education system will betray its youth.” ~ **Alvin Toffler**

“An individual has not started living until he can rise above the narrow confines of his individualistic concerns to the broader concerns of all humanity.” ~**Dr. Martin Luther King**

“I hope young people, when they see it, will understand the internment and...all of the experiences that the Japanese Americans went through. I also hope that they will remember that in America, there are still hate crimes. In America, there are still glass ceilings where many of these Nisei’s were never ever able to achieve their full potential because of the perception people had of them.” ~**U.S. Representative Bob Matsui, Sacramento, California.**

“Communication is the key to education, understanding, and peace.” ~**James Bryce**

“Prejudices, it is well known, are most difficult to eradicate from the hearts whose soil has never been loosened or fertilized by education; they grow there, firm as weeds among rocks.” ~**Charlotte Bronte**

“The highest result of education is tolerance.” ~**Helen Keller**

“What sculpture is to a block of marble, education is to a human soul.” ~**Joseph Addison**

“Being Indian is an attitude, a state of mind, a way of being in harmony with all things and all beings. It is allowing the heart to be the distributor of energy on this planet; to allow feelings and sensitivities to determine where energy goes; bringing aliveness up from the Earth and from the Sky, putting it in and giving it out from the heart.”
~**Brooke Medicine Eagle**

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“Sixty years ago I knew everything; now I know nothing; education is a progressive discovery of our own ignorance.” ~**Will Durant**

“We could learn a lot from crayons: some are sharp, some are pretty, some are dull, some have weird names. All are different colors, but have to learn to live in the same box.”
~**Woody Duncan**

“When we escaped from Cuba, all we could carry was our education.” ~ Alicia Coro
“I change myself, I change the world” ~ **Gloria Anzaldua**

Human beings are more alike than unlike, and what is true anywhere is true everywhere. Perhaps travel cannot prevent bigotry, but demonstrating that all people laugh, cry, eat, worry and die – It can introduce an idea that if we try to understand each other, we may even become friends.” ~**Maya Angelou**

Section 6

Diversity Resources

VA and VHA Diversity Websites

(Any link starting with vaww is behind the VA's firewall and not accessible from the internet)

Diversity Management and Equal Employment Opportunity

<http://www.va.gov/dmeeo>

Under Secretary for Health Diversity Advisory Board

<http://vaww.1/va.gov/gov>

R.E.A.C.H. for Diversity Toolkit

<http://vaww1.va.gov/Diversity/page.cfm?pg=4>

Under Secretary for Health Diversity Advisory Boards COLLAGE Website

http://vaww.collage.research.med.va.gov/collage/E_diversity/

EEO/Affirmative Employment Team

<http://vaww.vhaco.va.gov/eo/>

VA- Human Resources – Diversity Change – Race

<http://klmenu.med.va.gov/FHCSreports/MinCompPCT.asp?AGY=ALL%SECT=3>

Diversity Resource Guide

<http://vhaco.va.gov/eo/documents/Diversity%20Resource%20Manual.pdf>

VA Center for Minority Veterans

<http://www1.va.gov/centerforminorityveterans/>

Office of Personnel Management Web Page

<http://www.opm.gov>

Employee Education System

<http://vaww.ees.Irn.va.gov>

VHA Succession Planning

<http://lrmestweb8.dva.va.gov/succession/Templates/Master.aspx?pid=986>

VA Careers

<http://www.vacareers.va.gov/Search.cfm>

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None VA and VHA Diversity Websites

Diversity Inc.

<http://www.diversityinc.com>

Office of Resolution Management

<http://vaww.va.gov/orm/OPC/Reports/Index.htm>

Teaching Tolerance

<http://www.tolerance.org/teach/>

Cultural Competency Assessment Tool

http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/publications/cultural_competency/assessment_tool/tool_4.htm

United States Government Accounting Office Report: Diversity Management Expert – Identified Leading Practices and Agency Examples

<http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d0590.pdf>

Multicultural Education – Pavilion

<http://www.edchange.org/multicultural/>

Native American Quotes

<http://www.legendsofamerica.com/NA-Quotes.html>

The Human Diversity Resource Page

<http://community-2.webtv.net/SoundBehavior/DIVERSITYFORSOUND/>

Suggested Diversity Videos

- As Simple As Respect: Diversity, Respect, Inclusion in the Workplace
- Dialogue – Now We Are Talking (Four Program Series: Communicate In a Diverse World; Dialogue for Cultural Understanding; Dialogue for Cultural Understanding; Dialogue between Genders, and Dialogue Among Generation).
- Patient Diversity: Beyond the Vital Signs
- R.E.A.C.H. for Diversity Training and Activities Booklet (Respect). Can be obtained through Employee Education System, VA Library Service or VISN Diversity Councils/Committees
- Diversity Advantage Food For Thought
- Joel Barker’s Wealth, Innovation and Diversity

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- The Cost of Innovation and Diversity
- Different Like You
- M. E. E. T. on Common Ground: Speaking Up for Respect in the Workplace

“R.E.A.C.H. for Diversity” Video Series Supports Our Guiding Goals:

- Increasing awareness and sensitivity of diversity in the workforce.
- Serving as resources to VHA leaders in the promotion of workplace diversity.
- Identifying challenges for the advancement of diversity within the VHA and developing programs or initiatives to address the challenges and change paradigms.
- Establishing relationships with internal and community organizations / programs that enhance diversity in the VHA.



Section 7

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Section 8

Photo Gallery



Film crew setting up for a camera takes

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Vietnam combat veteran (Lakota) dancing at Pow Wow



Navajo “relocate” from relocation era of the 50’s

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Silas Johnson, Faith Spotted Eagle, Chris Begay, and Larry Johnson

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A diverse group of VA employees, veterans, and community stakeholders



Horse of the Tohono O' Odham Reservation

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