

## Defining Effectiveness in Culturally-based Programs: A Research Report



A System of Care for Children's Mental Health:  
Expanding the Research Base  
Tampa, FL  
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## Project Overview

- Five-year collaborative effort between the Native American Youth and Family Center (NAYA), National Indian Child Welfare Association (NICWA), and the Research and Training Center on Family Support and Children's Mental Health (RTC)
- Purposes
  - To explore strategies for documenting the effectiveness of NAYA's services
  - To develop methods for measuring and documenting effectiveness in community-based and culturally specific programs.
  - 2005-2006 definition of youth success

## Native American Youth & Family Center

Our Mission  
...to enhance the diverse strengths of our youth and families in partnership with the community through cultural identity and education.



## Cultural Arts and Sports Program



## Educational Programs

Middle School Program  
Tutoring Center  
High School Program  
High School Summer Institute  
Spring, Summer, & Winter Camps



## Youth and Family Services

Foster Care Program  
Pathways Independent Living Program  
Healing Circle  
Housing & Employment Programs  
Generations Project  
Gang Prevention Program



### NAYA Holistic Service Delivery Model

- NAYA Family Center provides services that are intended to restore balance and promote harmony in the lives of Native children and families.
- NAYA Family Center uses a holistic approach to meeting the needs of children and families.
- By providing holistic services, NAYA Family Center hopes to make a positive difference in multiple areas of an individual's life.

### NAYA Family Center's Challenge

- We need a way to show that NAYA Family Center services are helping Native children and families
- Urgent because of state funding requirements for evidence-based practices



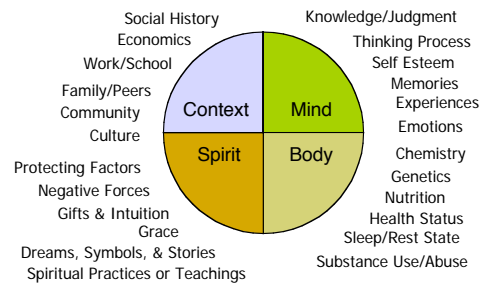
### Worldview

... A culture's worldview is the lens through which they learn how to nurture, protect, and dream for future generations

- Iris Heavy Runner, 2002



### Relational Worldview Model



### Oregon's Senate Bill 267

- Requires mental health, substance abuse, juvenile justice, corrections, and other human service programs to be evidence-based;
- Evidence-based programs are based on research principles and are cost effective;
- Timeline for expenditures of state funds by affected agencies is:
  - 25% of state funds on EBPs by July, 2005;
  - 50% of state funds on EBPs by July, 2007;
  - 75% of state funds on EBPs by July, 2009.

### Evidence-Based Practice (EBP)

#### Concerns

- EBP often do not reflect the complicated lives and needs of many children and families;
- The determination of "evidence" is narrow and focuses on linear cause-effect relationships
- Most EBPs exclude newly developed interventions, traditional healing practices, and therapies developed by specific cultural groups
- EBPs often neglect the cultural and contextual influences on children and families
- There is often a lack of attention to family choice

## Practice-Based Evidence (PBE)

### Definition

PBE is information gathered from service providers, families, and youth about programs that reflect our values and get good results.

### Advantages

- Information about desired goals and outcomes come directly from the people receiving services;
- Cultural factors can be explicitly included in outcomes and interventions;
- Effectiveness can then be measured according to these outcomes.

## Practice-Based Evidence (PBE)

### Concerns

Establishing evidence of effectiveness is challenging because it must be accepted as legitimate by

- the cultural community that is involved,
- the scientific community, and
- funding sources



## Project Goals

To develop ways to evaluate culturally specific services that fit our community.

To develop participatory practice-based evidence research strategies that could be applied in other settings.



## Defining Youth Success

**Focus groups with nine diverse stakeholder groups to learn about the outcomes that people value**

- middle school youth
- high school youth
- Pathways youth
- family members
- elders
- community partners
- NAYA program managers, staff, and board members



## What We Asked

**What does success look like for Native American youth?**

## Analysis Strategies & Steps

- Two sub-groups of members of research team examined focus group notes
  - By question across groups (emphasizing outcomes in first step);
  - By group across questions.
- Categories and themes derived from analysis examined vis-à-vis the Relational World View Model.





### Example of Youth Success - Context

**Healthy Relationships**

- Not being involved in a gang
- Involved in positive groups
- Do not succumb to peer pressure
- Showing care for others
- Finding constructive, non-violent ways to solve problems
- Able to listen to other people's opinions
- Conflict resolution skills
- Making parents proud of their children
- Know lots of people

### Example of Youth Success - Mind

**Personal Capacities**

- Honoring boundaries
- Healthy self-expression
- Willingness to change & acceptance of what can't change
- Celebrating their own success
- Finding constructive, non-violent ways to solve problems
- Being able to de-escalate

### Example of Youth Success - Body

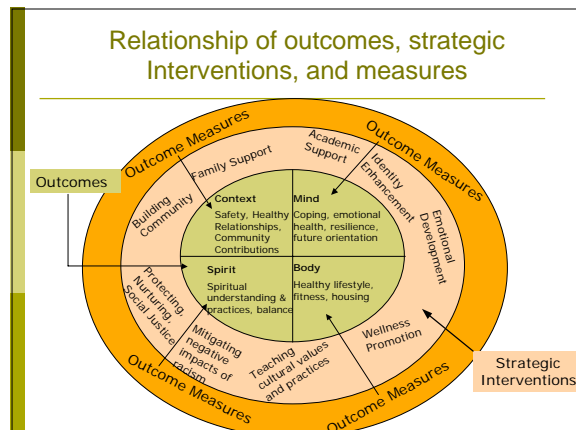
**Healthy Lifestyle**

- Recognize wisdom to care for self & use knowledge (e.g., healthcare, sexuality)
- Use positive methods of stress relief
- Drug/alcohol/tobacco free lifestyle
- Healthy lifestyle – physical well-being & prevention
- Being okay with your body & looking good
- Not putting things into one's body that would make a person unhealthy – this comes from teachings when children are youth – if a youth comes from a home without these teachings somebody should teach them

### Example of Youth Success - Spirit

**Balance**

- 7 ways of walking, health, family, generations, silence, joy, generosity, honoring the four directions, & compassion
- Balance of individuality & cultural obligations
- Walking in both worlds
- Balancing traditional culture & general society
- Having a focus and/or vision - finding a connection with who you are
- Understanding of spirituality for physical well-being



### Appreciation to Project Participants

Thanks to our project collaborators:

- ▣ Elders, family members, youth, NAYA staff and program managers, board members, and community partners who participated in focus groups and follow-up meetings
- ▣ Members of our advisory group
- ▣ NICWA, NAYA Family Center, RTC

### Discussion

- ▣ How do these findings relate to your experiences in thinking about outcomes for youth services?
- ▣ Do you have advice for us as we move into the next stage of our research process?
  - Documentation of strategic interventions
  - Measuring outcomes



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