How Culture Can Be Both a Risk and Protective Factor
Hon. Stevie S. Burden

- Over 30 years of experience in the Prevention and Treatment
- Formerly Certified as a Prevention Specialist and a Certified Alcohol and Drug Counselor II (Retired)
- Worked as a substance abuse treatment provider in residential and outpatient programs with youth, adults, families, and correctional clients
- Supervised state level prevention systems as the State Programs Supervisor and National Prevention Network (NPN) Representative for both the State of Wyoming and the State of Nevada and served on its Executive Committee for 6 years
- Mayor for City of Wheeler, Oregon
Why Are We Here?

Nebraska’s DHHS Office of Minority Health has made health equity for all Nebraskans a priority and is committed to improving health outcomes for culturally diverse populations of Nebraska. This Office provides support to the DBH related to this goal and our work serving our communities with behavioral health prevention, treatment and recovery services.
The Influence of Culture

The way in which culture influences us reaches beyond our race and ethnicity and has different effects for special populations. An understanding of culture can aid staff working with youth by increasing staff awareness of the impact of health disparities and how particular cultural influences might guide adolescent behaviors.
Definition of Culture

• The culture of origin provides its members with a basic understanding of the world and the means to perceive and explain experiences. It teaches about history, customs, philosophy and behavior.

• Culture is the knowledge, experience, values, ideas, attitudes, skills, tastes and techniques that are passed on from more experienced members of a community/group to new or younger members.

• A way of interacting, a belief system or way of living with similar and intersecting points of reference.
Time Out
I’d Like a Do Over Please!
How Culture Can Be Both a Risk and Protective Factor

A Very Unscientific Longitudinal Review for the Sake of a Story
Who Am I Really?

Iyeska

Mixed Blood
British
Dutch
Cherokee
Creole/Cajun

“Walks In Two Worlds”

Bi-Cultural
This is the Intergenerational Story of an “At Risk/Dysfunctional” Clan
Summary of Risk Factors

Community
- Availability of drugs
- Availability of firearms
- Community laws and norms
- Media portrayal of violence
- Transition and mobility
- Low neighborhood attachment
- Extreme economic deprivation

Individual
- Early and persistent antisocial behavior
- Rebelliousness
- Friends who engage in the problem behavior
- Gangs

Family
- Family history of the problem behavior
- Family management problems
- Family conflict
- Favorable parental attitudes and involvement in the problem behavior
- Academic failure beginning in late elementary school

School
- Lack of commitment to school

Constitutional factors

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Risk Factors

- Family History of the problem behavior
- Family conflict
- Favorable parental attitudes and involvement of the problem behavior
- Lack of commitment to school
- Academic failure beginning in late elementary
- Favorable attitudes towards the problem behavior
- Extreme economic deprivation
- Availability of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs
- Transitions and Mobility
- Rebelliousness
Intergenerational Symptoms

- Poverty
- Pervasive substance abuse
- School Dropout
- Divorce – Blended Families
- Domestic Violence
- Transient Lifestyles
- Lack of marketable job skills
- Rural/frontier settings
- Lack of Resources
- Shortened Life Expectancy
Mid-Term Outcomes

All Four were Generations High School Drop outs

Alcoholics

Heroin Addict Welfare Recipient
Can you keep up with me?
Protective Factors

Resiliency Theory
- Social Competence
- Problem-Solving Skills
- Autonomy
- Sense of Purpose and Future

Developmental Assets
- Support
- Empowerment
- Positive Identity
- Social Competencies

Social Development Strategy
- Opportunities
- Skills
- Recognition
Protective Factors

- Resiliency / Perseverance
  - Ability to cope with stress and adversity
  - Excellent crisis management skills
  - Adaptable/Flexible
- Strong Work Ethic
- Resourceful
- Loyal
  - Ability to maintain long term relationships
- Service Oriented
- Strong sense of tradition and history
- Self-reliant / Independent
- Value Education
- Strong Clan Ties
  - Interdependency
  - Respect for Diversity
  - Neighborhood Attachment
  - Each member is valued for their strengths
- Hope
Family Values

- Respect
- Honesty
- Compassion
- Ingenuity/Resourcefulness
- Self-Reliance:
- Creativity
- Humor
- Interdependence
- Reciprocity
- Diversity
- A Life of Service and Stewardship
- Loyalty/Honor
- A Commitment to Life-long Learning
Long-Term Outcomes

• Successfully Blended Families – for five generations
• Multiple High School Completions
• Multiple College Degrees
• Upward Mobility/ Middle Class
• Recognized in Professions as exemplary – multiple awards
• Elected Officials
• A new generation that has never seen their parents or grandparents drunk

Hope abounds
In Summary

- Be willing to be patient
- Let go of stereotypes and negative expectations
- Learn new ways of teaching, communicating, empowering
- With most risk comes strength
- Understand that Dysfunctional and Unhealthy are a matter of perspective
- People will surprise you – let them
- People of different cultures have something to teach you – respect the wisdom of their elders
“Never doubt that a small group of committed citizens can change the world. Indeed it is the only thing that ever has.”

Margaret Mead
If you have questions please feel free to contact me

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