

# How Culture Can Be Both a Risk and Protective Factor

# Presenter Information

*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 out patient 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

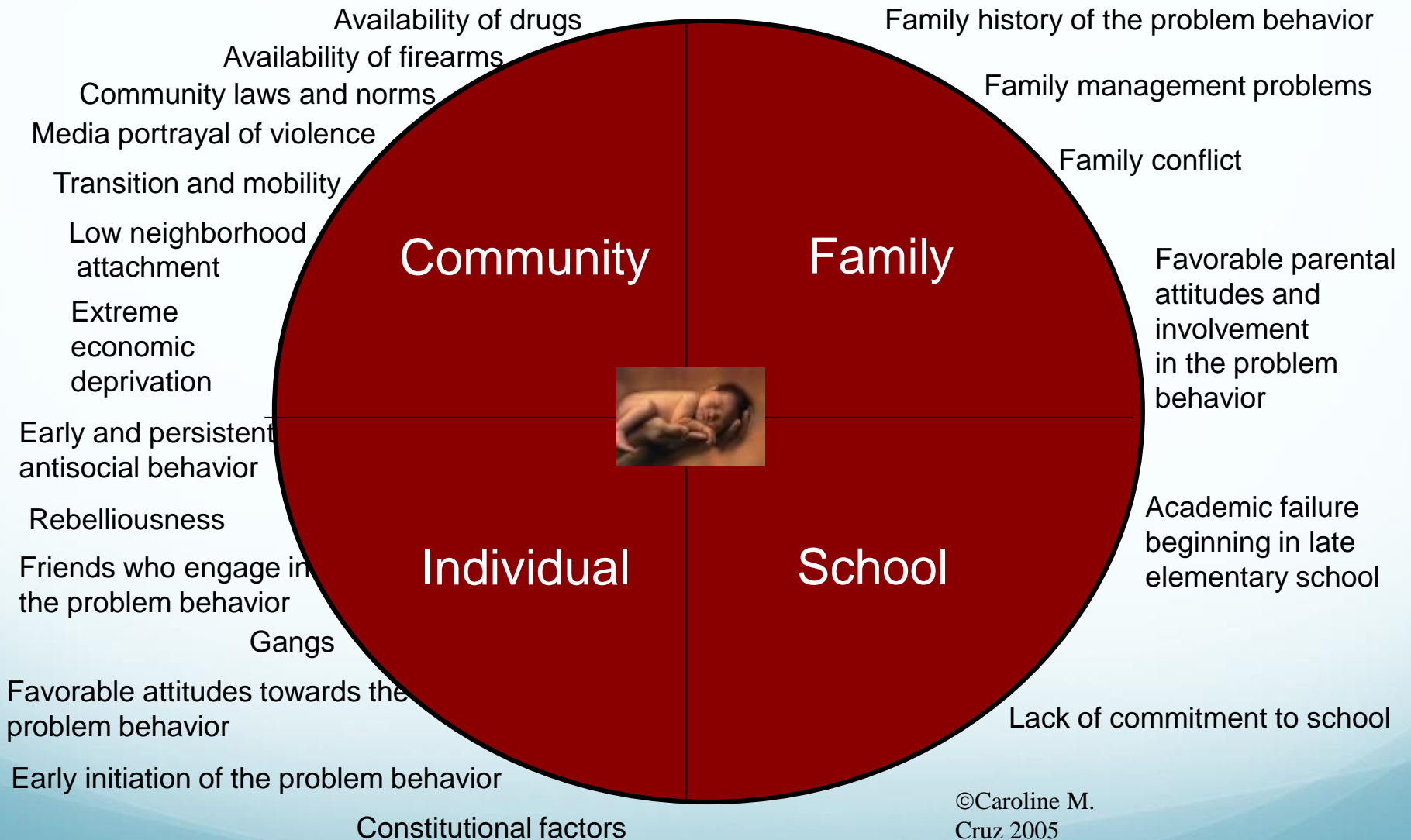




# This is the Intergenerational Story of an “At Risk/Dysfunctional” Clan



# Summary of Risk Factors



# Risk Factors

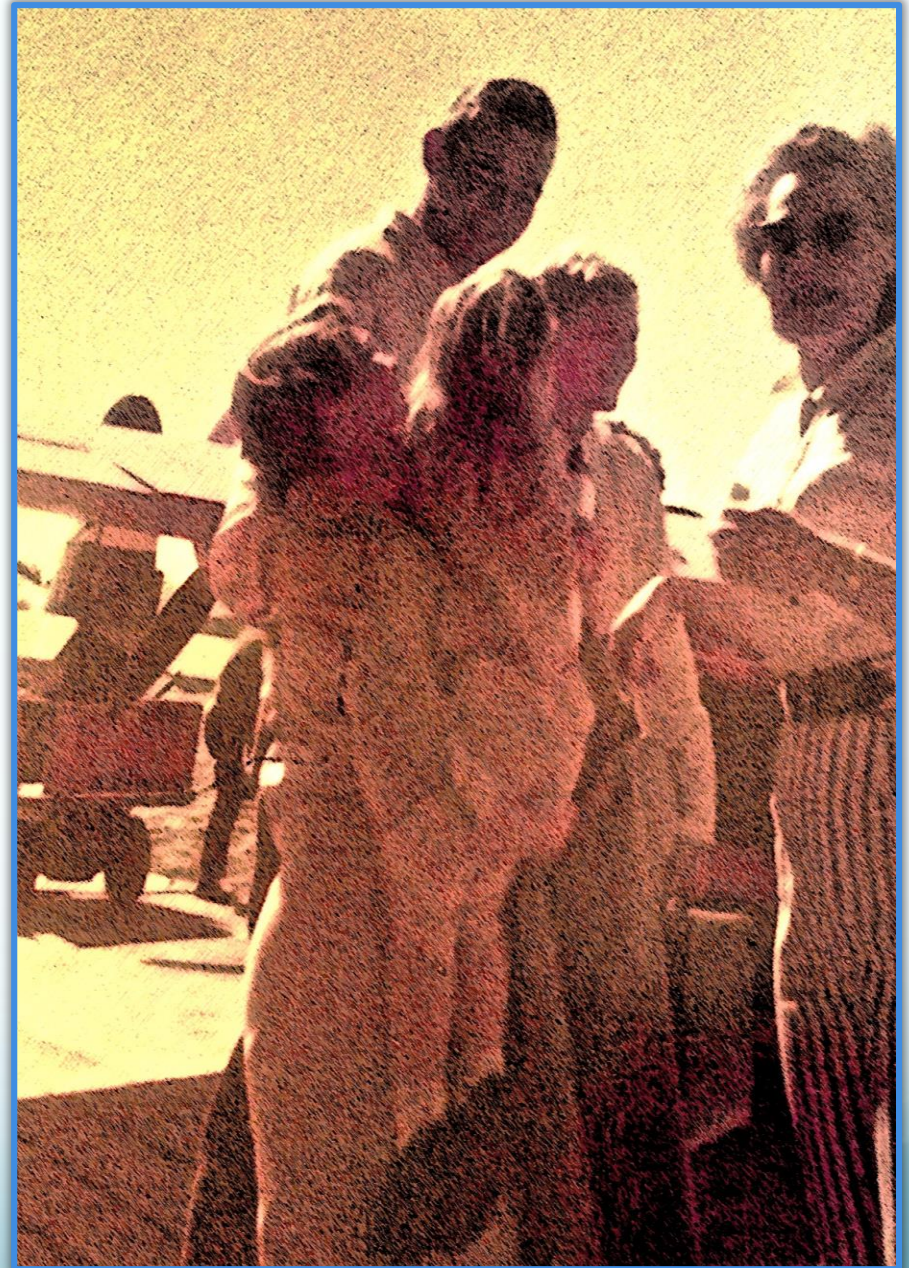
- Family History of the problem behavior
- Family conflict
- Favorable parental attitudes and involvement of the problem behavior
- Lack of commitment to school
- Academic failure beginning in late elementary
- Favorable attitudes towards the problem behavior
- Extreme economic deprivation
- Availability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





# Intergenerational Symptoms

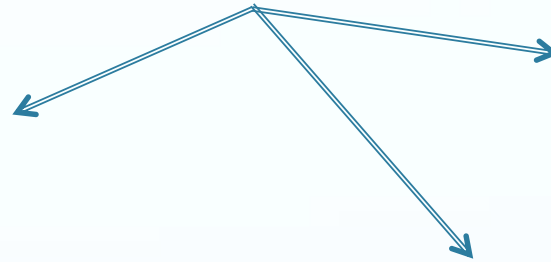
- Poverty
- Pervasive substance abuse
- School Dropout
- Divorce – Blended Families
- Domestic Violence
- Transient Lifestyles
- Lack of marketable job skills
- Rural/frontier settings
- Lack of Resources
- Shortened Life Expectancy



# Mid-Term Outcomes

All Four were  
Generations  
High School  
Drop outs

Alcoholics



Heroin  
Addict  
Welfare  
Recipient





CAN YOU KEEP  
UP WITH ME?  
LARRY

# 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 Lifelong 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*

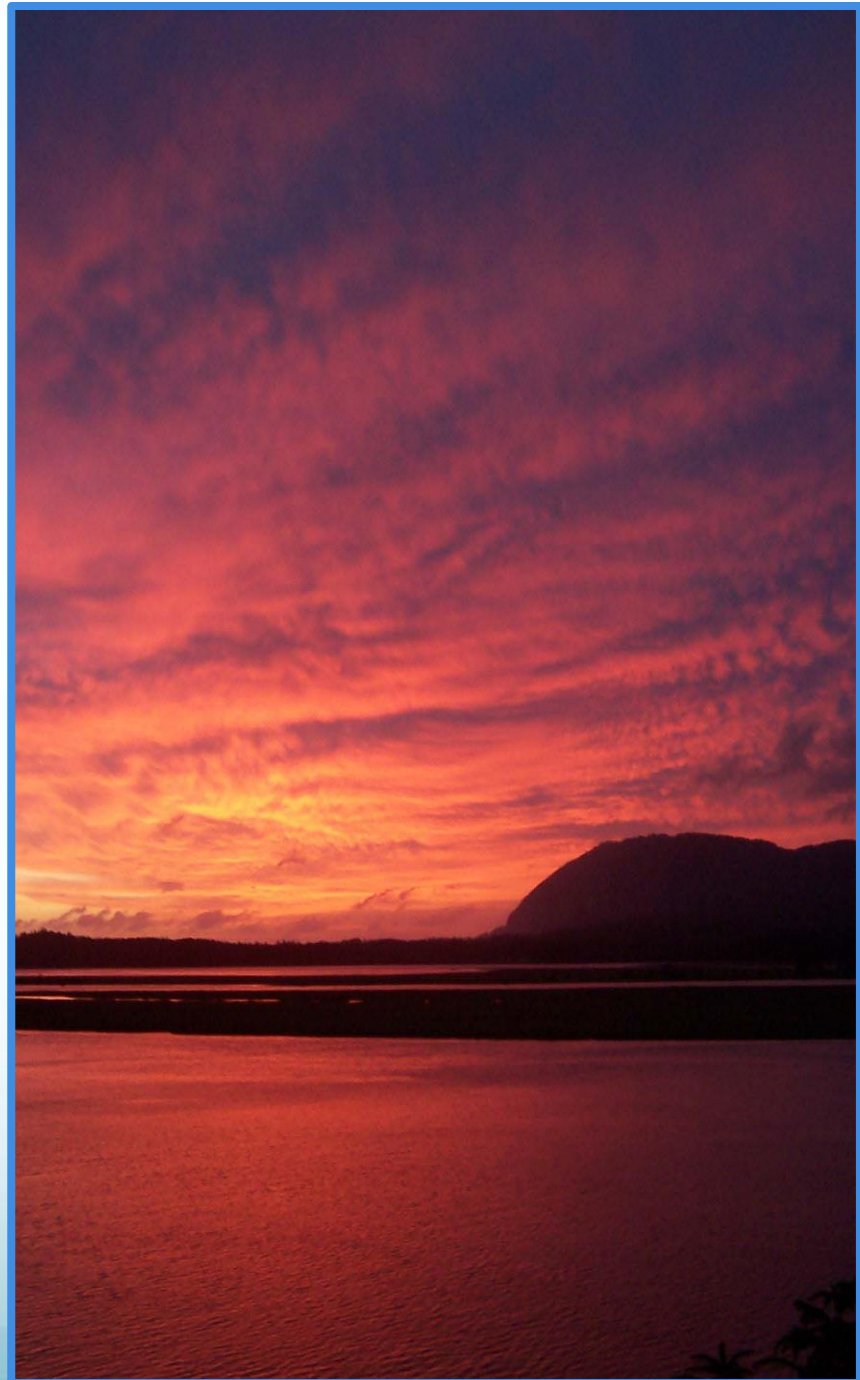


# In Summary

- 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

Stevie S. Burden

P. O. Box 192

Wheeler, Oregon 97147

[stevieburden@msn.com](mailto:stevieburden@msn.com)

503-368-5946