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Associate Professor, Counseling and Human Resource Development, South Dakota State University

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"IN HER WORDS: LAKOTA WOMEN RELATE THEIR TRIBAL COLLEGE EXPERIENCES"

Ruth Harper, Ph.D.

Associate Professor, Counseling and Human Resource Development
South Dakota State University

"The focus on this presentation will be the student development issues and mental health concerns of women who attend one tribal college. . . . The women participants discussed their motivations for attending the college and how higher education adds meaning to their lives."

The focus on this presentation will be the student development issues and mental health concerns of women who attend one tribal college. The information presented in this program is the result of focus groups conducted at Sinte Gleska University on the Rosebud Sioux reservation in South Dakota. The women participants discussed their motivations for attending the college and how higher education adds meaning to their lives.

In addition, work comparing the Native America~ Medicine Wheel to an Adlerian Individual Psychology model will be presented. Data from focus group discussions that supports and refutes this comparison will be shared.

Method

The program will begin with an introduction to Sinte Gleska University, the tribal college where the research was conducted. After reviewing our research method, major themes that appeared in the focus group inter- views will be shared. The presentation will focus both on student development themes and the mental health concerns of these Native American women students.

In addition, a model for comparing the Native American Medicine Wheel to Adlerian Individual Psychology will be presented. Data that supports and/or refutes the relevance of this model will be shared. Discussion with participants will extend the topic to how the material presented compares to the experiences of and with Native American women at other tribal and non-tribal colleges.

Learning Objectives

1. Participants will learn about the place that higher education holds in the world view of the Lakota women who were interviewed.
2. Participants will learn about how Native American women experience attending a tribal college.
3. Participants will learn about a model in which the Native American Medicine Wheel is compared to Adlerian Individual Psychology.

Learning Outcomes

1. Participants will consider how the information presented may apply to the Native

- American women they serve in student affairs or other areas of higher education.
2. Participants will be able to identify some major student development issues for Native American women who attend a tribal college.
 3. Participants will have a new theoretical perspective to consider when working with Indian college students.

Presenter:

Ruth Harper is Associate Professor of Counseling and Human Resource Development at South Dakota State University. Her Ph.D. in Adult and Higher Education is from Kansas State University. She has a master's degree in counseling from the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh and a BA in psychology from Cornell College. Dr. Harper coordinates the college student personnel track in the CACREP-accredited counseling program at SDSU.

There are currently thirty-one tribal colleges in the United States. Tribal colleges provide higher education to people for whom distance, cost, and cultural barriers can be prohibitive factors in leaving the reservation to attend college. Tribal colleges also provide a place for people to receive higher education that is relevant to their tribal nation, especially its culture and language. Most tribal colleges are community colleges that offer two-year degrees. Tribal colleges are linked to success in further higher education. Tribal college graduates who transfer to four-year schools are more likely to attain four-year degrees than other American Indian students (Source: American Indian Higher Education Consortium).