

# Strength of indian heritage



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The article on “ Indian Tradition Helps Shed ‘ Drunk Town’ Image” has underlying issues regarding the strength of “ native” heritage. Residential schools of the 1800’s did a good job of suppressing the language, heritage, land, and spirit of native people of North America. In suppressing these aspects of a culture, the factors that sustain a race’s cultural prevalence are weakened. Prime Minister Stephen Harper admitted in his 2008 formal apology for the implementation of residential schools, that children were primary target of attack for the colonial settlements (Leeuw).

Furthermore, it was admitted that “ ingenious children were understood as eminently concrete embodiments of a culture that... ..was intent on aggressively expunging from a newly emerging Canada. ” The idea was to manage the aboriginal people’s culture as a whole, as if they were all naive children (Leeuw), and the targeting of the young natives was the key to colonial success. Residential school flourished in Canada throughout the 1800’s and into the 1900’s; by 1920, the Indian Act was elevated so that aboriginal children were legally obligated to attend residential schools (Leeuw).

The colonial efforts to assimilate aboriginal people were extremely pervasive; not only did they force the children to go to the residential schools; they were often taken away from their families as well. The Indian residential schools were aimed at severing the artery of culture that ran between generations and was the profound connection between parent and child sustaining family and community (Leeuw).

Annotative Summary B: Native Americans Have are Genetically Predisposed to Alcoholism There is a widespread belief that Native people have a

biological predisposed to become alcoholics has been prevalent for decades. There is a positive correlation that associates native people and alcoholism (Ehlers), however, there is no solid proof that it is due to genetics. Perhaps there is some sort of genetic mutation common in native people that make them more susceptible to becoming alcoholics? A common myth is that the alcohol metabolizing enzymes: alcohol dehydrogenase (ADH) and aldehyde dehydrogenase (ADLH) and their genome precursors are lacking in number, or even efficiency among native people (Ethlers).

In 1976, Bennion and Li determined that “ rates of alcohol metabolism and enzyme patterns in a small sample of Native Americans and ‘ Whites’ were found to have no racial differences” (Ehlers). Certain genes responsible for determining the metabolic effectiveness of enzymes vary from person to person. Drawing from the data Ethler presents, there is an extremely weak correlation between the enzyme activity and race of an individual. Thus, we can come to the conclusion that alcoholism is not linked to any lack of enzymes or inability to break down alcohol with native people.

If native people are not born to be predisposed to become alcoholics, than why are there such a high number of alcoholics? Behaviorist, John B. Watson would strongly agree that a child’s outcome in life is a result of “ nurture” not “ nature. ” Watson’s perspective supports Ethlers findings and helps to uncover the truth behind “ genetically predisposed” alcoholics. Native people are likely products of the environment they grow up in, and given the current conditions of reserve life, it is clear why alcoholism is prevalent among natives.

Annotative Summary D: Traditional Methods Within the article they regularly refer to using traditional methods to help alcoholics take the first step to recovery at the Na'nizhoozhi Centre Inc. (NCI. ) In the article, an interview with one of NCI's counsellors, Harrison Jim, reveals that some native people have troubles with western methods of treatment. Having a more traditional approach might motivate the indigenous population afflicted with alcoholism to seek treatment.

The practices of traditional methods are found to be highly underrepresented according to Delgado-Romero, Galvin, Maschino, and Rowland (2005. ) Much of the traditional approach to health has to do with what is called the " Medicine Wheel. " The wheel has four sections separating different aspects of one's life: The east is red to represent spirituality and the rising sun, the south is yellow to represent daylight and nature, the west is black to represent the setting sun and physical aspects of life, and the north is white to represent cognition and the cold winter.

The goal of life is to maintain balance with these four aspects, and if you do not, you will not be healthy. (Rybak & Decker, 336. ) As the medicine wheel as a guide, many different healing methods are used to treat the sick such as: powwows, music, smudging, storytelling, sweat lodge, pipe ceremonies, and herbs (Rybak & Decker, 2009. ) Though these methods do have connections with increased emotional and physical well-being, their effectiveness remains tentative as not enough data is available. (Rybak & Decker, 338. ) Annotative Summary E: Institutional Dependency

In the article, " Indian Traditions Help ' Drunk Town' Shed it's Image," it mentions that some people coming to the Na'nizhoozhi Centre Inc. (NCI) for

long-term alcohol treatment sometimes develop a dependency on the treatment centre. Though most treatment centres are designed to prepare people to live independently while coping with their addiction, some may develop an “interdependent relationship with their surrounding environment” while in treatment (Segal & Moyes). According to Segal & Moyes, the manner in which an institution is managed can make people more susceptible to institutional dependency.

Two management styles are examined: the first described has very little structure and places more responsibility on the subject, the other focuses on a highly structured environment with less decision making left to the subject. The results show that the management style with less structure produced fewer subjects with institutional dependency than the highly structured environment. In relation to the Na'nizhoozh treatment centre (NCI) in New Mexico, perhaps the use of both high structure and low structure would be of better benefit.

When an individual is brought to the NCI, they're level of intoxication is assessed. Depending on how intoxicated they are, they could be forced to serve a mandatory 5 days, during which they are essentially incarcerated in a highly structured environment. Once the subject has sobered up, they are given ride home and are left with the option to come back for further treatment on their own free will (Holmstrom). Perhaps the study could have found a higher ratio of success if they made use of both high and low structure environments in combination like they did at the NCI.