

Understanding Breastfeeding in the Native American Community

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Minnesota Breastfeeding Coalition Annual Meeting 2018

Disclosures

- Division of Indian Work
- Indigenous Breastfeeding Coalition of Minnesota

Overview

- My personal journey
- Breastfeeding through an Indigenous Lens
- Indigenous Breastfeeding Coalition of Minnesota (IBCMN)
- Success Stories & Suggestions

My Journey

- 1st pregnancy
- High risk
- Utilizing my resources
- Post-partum Issues



Resources

- Print resources: WIC book, pamphlets, brochures, etc.
- Breastfeeding class at Babies-R-US (Le Leche League)
- Supportive spouse, family, & friends
- Researched hospitals: "Baby Friendly" credentials
- Labor & Delivery Nurse
- Regions Hospital Lactation Consultant X2
- Health Partners Lactation Consultant X2
- WIC Lactation Consultant
- MOMS Study through the University of Minnesota
- Facebook Breastfeeding Group
- WIC Peer Breastfeeding Counselor



Notable Quotes

- "I wasn't going to give these to you yet."
- "Well don't you think you should try now?"
- "Are you going to count her hiccups for the next 18 years of her life?"
- "She'll stop by at some point."
- "Let's try a nipple shield."
- "Oh wow! Your milk really has come in!"
- "My son..."
- "You're using a nipple shield!?"

Aha Moment!



- Trained labor & delivery doula
- Mothers of Tradition – White Bison Wellbriety Training
- Co-Leading IBCMN
- Indigenous Breastfeeding Counselor Training
- Family Spirit Home Visiting Program
- ~~~~~
- Peer Recovery Worker Training
- Certificate of American Indian Public Health through Johns Hopkins University
- IBCLC, MPH, Midwifery??...

Breastfeeding Through an Indigenous Lens



Artist:
Wakeah Jhane

http://www.wakeahjane.com/2fbclid=IwAR3J-T0yNCgKkca534jWQwkkZA23FaDlRYQav6ScWjSA1f6Hq2_kLDRu4Y

Terminology

- Indian
- Native American
- American Indian/ Alaska Native
- Indigenous



Not appropriate: Injun, Squaw, Savage!



Why it's necessary?

Many people experience:

- Racism
- Sexism
- Ageism
- Classism

COLONIALISM!



<https://www.theguardian.com/comments/free/2013/feb/18/massacre-wounded-knee-medals-honor-rescinded>

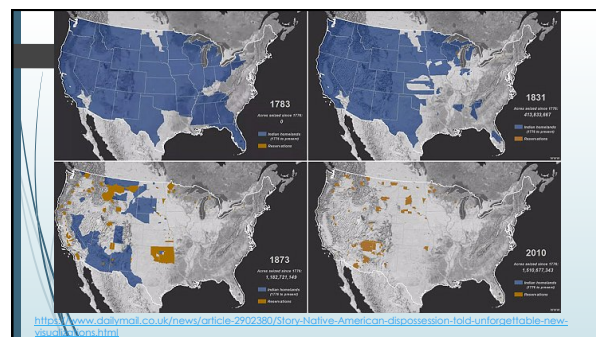
Historical Trauma

■ refers to a complex and collective trauma experienced over time and across generations by a group of people who share an identity, affiliation, or circumstance

• <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4001826/>

“Kill the Indian, Save the Man” -Pratt

- Indian War Era (1700s to 1920s)
- Indian Removal Act (1830)
- Indian Appropriations Act (1851) – formation of reservations
- Dawes Act (1887)
- Boarding School Era (1860 – present)
- Indian Relocation Act (1956)
- Indian Placement Program (1954-1996)



Continued...

- Indian Health Services under Dept. of War until 1955
- Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women (1960s to present)
- Sterilization of Native American Women (1970s)
- Native American children being "adopted out" (until ICWA 1978)
- Commodities- powdered & canned milk w/ syrup
- Minnesota has the highest rates of Native American children being placed in foster homes than any other state (2018)

But how does it relate?

Loss of:

- People; healers, storytellers, medicine keepers
- Land; access to food and medicines
- Knowledge; language, traditions, ceremonies, songs
- Connection; ancestors, tribes, elders, each other

What now?



Indigenous Breastfeeding Coalition of Minnesota

- Started September 1, 2016 in Red Lake with an "American Indian Breastfeeding Promotion and Support Meeting"
 - Brainstorming of "American Indian Collaborative Breastfeeding Project"
 - Shari Bebeau, MDH WIC Consultant
- Two conference call meetings were held Spring 2017
- Fall of 2017: Millicent Simenson, Natalie Nicholson & Takayla Lightfield joined
- Meets every-other-month via conference call, and once/year for an in-person gathering
- Official members of MBC Spring of 2018
- Zero Budget

Our mission is to re-establish a strong, traditional breastfeeding support network for our Native families and caregivers.

Goals:

1. Develop a breastfeeding toolkit for American Indian families.
2. Promote health benefits of breastfeeding for mothers and babies.
3. Normalize breastfeeding in our communities.
4. Be active coalition members by doing community outreach and building support networks.

Success Stories in Minnesota

- **Mewinza Ondaadziike Wiigaming (Beginning Life Beautifully), Bemidji**
 - Host COPE trainings which includes community-based lactation educators (CBLC)
 - Acquired funding and hosted the 2nd EVER Indigenous Breastfeeding Counselor (IBC) Training
 - Host monthly Breastfeeding Circle lunches for breastfeeding mothers
 - Hosted fall gathering to celebrate pregnant and breastfeeding mothers and their families
 - Host cultural classes; making regalia, ribbons skirts, herbs to use during pregnancy

Success Continues!

■ **Red Lake Indian Health Services**

- 2018 Recognized as Breastfeeding Friendly Workplace by MDH
- 2018 Recognized as Bronze Level Breastfeeding Friendly Health Department by MDH
- Breastfeeding rates at 2 months of age have increased from 4.8% in 2017 to 16.7% in 2018!
- New pediatrician, Dr. Tatum, is a lactation counselor!
- Adopted breastfeeding and safe-sleep education into prenatal visit curriculum
- Have lactation supplies available: double electric breast pump, manual breast pump, soothies, nipple shields, nipple shells, pump membranes, reusable breast pads, hands-free pump bra & Lanolin cream

Say yes to success!!!

■ **Boise Forte**

- Family Spirit Home Visitor has built a relationship so that the hospital calls her to come see patients/clients in the hospital
- Upholding community champions: one mother in particular nurses her baby everywhere, and when she has a baby the whole community's breastfeeding rates increase
- Increased community education efforts by talking about and **NORMALIZING** breastfeeding
- Breastfeeding initiation rates are 95% right now!

Heck yes, success!!!

■ White Earth Indian Health Services

- Developed really good rapport with Essentia in Detroit Lakes so that IHS is seeing the in the clinic at 3 days post-partum!
- Highlight Nurse Champion who has educated the providers on breastfeeding while on the methadone program (White Earth MOMS), so moms are able to breastfeeding in the hospital

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■ Twin Cities

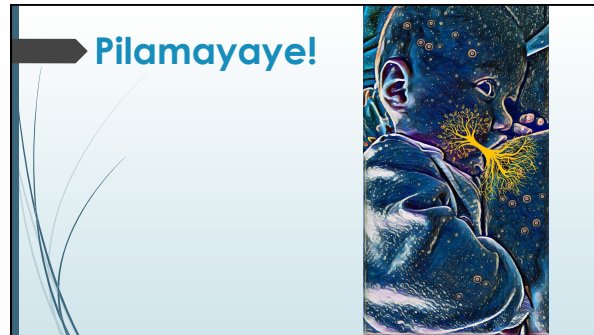
- Advocated for the inclusion of breastfeeding into the Native American Nutrition Conference
- Ensure there's a lactation space, encourage, and welcome breastfeeding at all events
- (Statewide) Cross trainings: Community Health Workers, Peer Recovery Workers, Home Visitors, Doulas and Indigenous Breastfeeding Counselors so that more community-based and peer educators have the tools necessary to help breastfeeding families

What can you do?

- Be our ally
- Refer to appropriate people or organizations
- Focus on relationship building with your patients/clients/customers/colleagues
- Take a cultural awareness training (or two, or three)
- Practice trauma-informed care
- Fund our efforts (to any funders in the room ☺)

Questions?

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Resources

- <https://www.americanindiancancer.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Breastfeeding-infographic-final4r.pdf>
- <http://www.mewintha.com/>
- <http://www.marchofdimes.org/catalog/product.aspx?productid=5139&categoryid=3&productcode=09-7398-08>
- <https://www.wbreastfeeding.com/>
- <http://www.changingwomaninitiative.com/>
- <https://www.mphi.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Breastfeeding-Following-Tradition-Works-for-Working-Women.pdf>
- <http://www.cheobaybreastfeeding.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/12/traditional-breastfeeding-practices-of-the-ajibwe-of-northern-minnesota.pdf>
- MDH WIC – American Indian Breastfeeding Women Posters
- Camie Joe Goldhammer, MSW, LICSW, IBCLC, (Sisseton-Wahpeton) – hear her speak!