

Module #1

The Intersectionality of Colonial Systems in the US

This set of curriculum begins with the conversation of systemic inequality and violence that past and present leaders of the United States implemented in these lands in order to gain power over the Indigenous Peoples of the North American continent (a.k.a. Turtle Island). Specifically, this module identifies some of the core structures that enact and uphold systemic violence, as well as how these structures interact with each other to compound on the displacement, assimilation, and erasure forced upon Indigenous communities by settler imperialism. It is important that we begin our curriculum with a foundational knowledge of these systems and their effects, because it must be understood that while Indigenous communities hold their own distinctive ways of life, the goal of colonization has remained the same for centuries.

Learning Objectives

- To lay a foundation of knowledge regarding core colonial systems and their combined influences on Indigenous communities.
- To build a contextual understanding of historical intersections of said systems, which have led to climate emergencies.
- To identify the ways in which these systems interact against climate justice during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Initial Discussions and Reflections

Before engaging with the core content, we must first acknowledge that in 1492, the population of Indigenous Peoples throughout North and South America was estimated to have been around [112 million people](#). The continents were entirely stewarded by Indigenous Peoples. Through purposeful pandemics, forced removal, brutality, and other genocidal actions committed by European settlers, it is estimated that the population of Indigenous Peoples had decreased by 90 percent in the first 108 years of contact. Today, Native Americans make up about [2.09 percent of the US population](#). Globally, about [20 percent](#) of the world's lands are owned by Indigenous communities, and those

lands contain 80 percent of the world's remaining biodiversity. The violence is still felt in today's generation of Indigenous Peoples, just as much as the drive and the heart to care for our planet. Thus, it is important that you, as a learner of emergency response, reflect on and discuss the following prompts:

- Why do you do this work?
- Why is this work important to you?
- When you imagine yourself in the field, what values do you think are important to remember and practice?

These questions are important to keep in mind as we discuss the “*Consumer Mentality*.” In this context, the phrase “consumer mentality” has been coined to describe the behaviors or beliefs of an individual that function to prioritize consumption, or in other words, to focus on what the individual can gain from an experience, service, or good. While this mentality is not a fixed trait, it can be easily adopted, especially when individuals view materials of vulnerability about a population or community with which they are unfamiliar or unassociated.

Addressing and Combatting the Consumer Mentality

When individuals from groups of privilege or dominance *only* hear about the sad, traumatic experiences marginalized groups encounter, they can become highly susceptible to the following behaviors that contribute the consumer mentality:

- The Savior Complex
 - This is best described as, “A psychological construct which makes a person feel the need to save other people. This person has a strong tendency to seek people who desperately need help and to assist them” ([Benton 2017](#)).
 - In the relationship between the United State and Indigenous Peoples, this complex is usually called the “White Savior Complex” to emphasize the role that race and white supremacy play into the (inaccurate) narrative and belief that Indigenous communities need help or saving.
- American Paternalism
 - This theory and practice closely relates with the White Savior Complex, but specifically alludes to the perspective that the United States should act as a guardian or father figure to Indigenous Peoples, who need “guidance” or “civilizing.” An explicit example of this perspective’s prevalence in history can be seen in a cartoon called “[Great White Father](#)” that depicts the late Pres. Andrew Jackson as a father figure to Native Peoples who are depicted as small children.

- An Addiction or Fascination with “Trauma Porn”
 - Trauma Porn has become more popular as our modes of communication and news sharing has become faster than ever imagined. This term is meant to feel unsettling in order to spark a more critical analysis of why we give attention to sad stories. As a writer for the “Incite” journal, Chloé Meley describes [trauma porn](#) as, “the perverse fascination with other people’s misfortune; a phenomenon which has become increasingly pervasive in a digital era where pain is commodified, and upsetting portrayals of it stripped of their emotional impact as they sink into the depths of content overload.” Thinking of the “Consumer Mentality,” trauma porn especially demonstrates the prioritization of consumption by transforming trauma into entertainment for those with the privilege to avoid personally experiencing marginalization.

These behaviors and beliefs are harmful to Indigenous Peoples and justice efforts, because they promote the white supremacist (and again, inaccurate) narratives that Indigenous Peoples need saving or guidance from themselves, are entirely incapable of acting for themselves, and therefore needed to be “saved” or “salvaged,” among other harmful stereotypes.

During your and your students’ engagement with the following material, it will be crucial for you all to reflect, not only for the sake of combatting this consumption mentality, but also for your own well-being, as you may experience a sort of vicarious trauma (see ‘Trauma Statement’). Suggestions for thoughts, exercises, or reflections to keep in mind include:

- Take breaks when you need it. Take the time to decompress and explore some content showcasing Indigenous *joy*.
- Revisit the discussion about your motivations. Continue to respond to the question, “Why are you doing this work?”
- Think critically about the modern manifestations of colonization. What are you missing? Of course, it’s impossible to know *everything*, but research can still continue.
- Assess your privilege and reflect on how you use these privileges, or how you could use them, to uplift Indigenous efforts. Don’t be afraid to research tools for understanding privilege!

To the Indigenous learners engaging with these modules, the material included will most likely impact you in a much heavier way than your peers. It is especially important for you to be intentional about caring for your mind, body, and spirit. There may be moments where you’ll feel overwhelmed. In these times, I highly encourage you to reach out to your mentors, your family, and your loved-ones for care and support. Educators should be especially lenient to Indigenous learners, because this will likely open generational wounds and impact your student’s capacity for engaging with this material.

“Intersectionality” In the Context of Colonial Systems

While there is a given definition of intersectionality at the beginning of this curriculum, the usage of the term in the discussion of colonial systems means to highlight the ways in which the societal structures implemented by settler colonists interact in order to bolster American/colonial dominance and to extinguish and/or marginalize Indigenous communities. For instance, nutrition in Indigenous communities is impacted by access to well-paying jobs (economic structure), arable lands (governance structure), common medicines and treatments (healthcare structure), and nutrition education (education structure).

Activity: Understanding Systemic Racism

While a main motive to uphold these harmful structures could be described as maintaining settler status quo (and the benefits settlers reap from it), another main motive has to do with beliefs that are deeply-entrenched in white supremacy. By embedding racist ideologies into the structures meant to organize a society, harm can be committed without a clear culprit. This is systemic racism. For this activity, review the article below to gain a further understanding of how systemic racism can be manifested in both implicit and explicit ways.

[10 Things You Should Know About Systemic Racism](#)

This activity can also be seen as a framework for understanding the process of colonization. The next slides (8-9) will consist of a review of this process, as well as the two pillars that uphold it: Imperialism and Capitalism. During these slides, it is best to recall the previous conversations around the consumption mentality.

Learning Moment: Exploring Federal/State Laws

Another component to be factored into the perpetuation of colonization in the US is the drafting and enacting of state and federal laws that uplift settler colonial ideologies while simultaneously alienating Indigenous communities and practices. For this activity, students should pick one US-based law or policy and write a summary of understanding to be shared with the rest of the class. The objective is to compile these summaries for students to access, without having to read and summarize every anti-Indigenous law or policy. Here are some suggestions:

- The Indian Removal Act of 1830
- The Code of Indian Offenses of 1883
- The Civilization Fund Act of 1819
- The Dawes Act of 1887

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- Public Law 280
- The Establishment of the Bureau of Indian Affairs in 1824
- The House Concurrent Resolution 108 of 1953
- Public Law 115-97

These are just a few pieces of legislation that have enacted violence against Indigenous Peoples, so with larger classes, I encourage learners to research other (potentially state or local) laws and policies that have had harmful impacts on Indigenous communities whose lands you may be occupying without their permission.

Manifestations of Colonization

This slide (11) introduces the sections that are included in this module. The most renowned human right proclaimed in the US Constitution is the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. The sections included in this module mean to describe how colonization has impeded on Indigenous Peoples' access to this basic right. One of the most insidious ways of denying Indigenous Peoples this right was to deny citizenship status until [June 2nd, 1924](#).

Nutrition

This section discusses the transformation of Indigenous diets at the onset of settler imposition and the last impacts of this change of Indigenous sustenance, food access, and health.

Forced Transformations of Diet: From Tradition to Commodity

Since time immemorial, Indigenous Peoples have relied heavily on their relationships and understanding of their homelands for sustenance. Prior to European contact, this meant that Indigenous diets were mostly place-based, with some influence from regional trades. For instance, in the traditional territory of the Cherokee, diets included corn, squash, beans, greens, fruits, berries, game, and other local foods. With Alaska's multitude of climates, Indigenous diets could consist of seafood, game, marine mammals, greens, berries, and birds, among other available foods. In Hawai'i, diets included fish and other seafood, pigs, kalo, coconut, berries and greens, and other foods either on the islands or that were brought via canoe. If your region was not listed, I encourage you to briefly research the traditional diets of the local tribes or nations.

Traditional diets were incredibly rich in the nutrients needed not only to survive as humans, but also to survive in the climates of the regions they were found. For instance, stinging nettle is a traditional medicine and tea in the Coast Salish region, and it is a great resource for B vitamins, which

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increases energy. This is especially important in the winter as days shorten, temperatures drop, and energy levels decrease.

However, when Europeans and early “Americans” began to colonize and settle in Indigenous territories, traditional ways of life and food production were deeply disrupted along with the communities who held those practices. Settlers uprooted Indigenous communities, imposed unsustainable farming practices, destroyed populations of game and other wild animals, and harvested old-growth forests without regard. Thus, Indigenous diets were forced to shift to what became available, or were faced with starvation. Conditions had become so bleak, in fact, that anthropologists of the day began to practice “Salvage Anthropology,” which is the practice of observing cultures before they go extinct. Starvation and malnutrition in Indigenous communities became a great concern on the federal level in the 1950s and 60s. From this concern, the “Commodity Diet” was created, which is officially known as the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR). The food boxes distributed as a part of this program generally consisted of commodity items, such as canned meats, soups, juices, corn syrup, flour, vegetable oil, evaporated milk, and cheese – foods that are commonly known for causing allergic reactions and chronic diseases like diabetes, heart disease, and obesity.

Recommended Reading: Chino, M., Haff, D. R., & Francis, C. D. (2009). Patterns of Commodity Food Use among American Indians. *Pimatisiwin: A Journal of Aboriginal and Indigenous Community Health*, 7(2), 279–289.

https://digitalscholarship.unlv.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1050&context=env_occ_health_fac_articles.

“Welty (1991) notes that, as recently as 1967, malnutrition was a serious problem and many American Indian children lagged behind their non-Indian peers in height and weight. Efforts to feed the hungry in America in the 1960s brought additional food supplements, in particular commodities (canned meats, soups, and juices; pasta; cereal; rice; cheese; peanut butter; corn syrup; flour; dry, evaporated milk; and vegetable oil), to American Indian families. These food programs created food security where it didn’t exist with foods that were higher in fat and calories and lower in fiber than American Indian traditional foods. Within a generation, the problem of malnutrition was replaced by the problem of obesity. The use of the term “Comod-Bod” in tribal communities captured the essence of the changes that occurred. The addition of commodities to American Indian diets was part of a group of changes that together have influenced current health problems.

Another critical change was the decline in farming and ranching. Downing (1985) describes the decline in American Indian farming in the past 50 years, from a high of 68% in 1940 to less than 6% in 1980. The combination of marginally productive farm and range lands and the rising costs of farming made the availability of food subsidies an important consideration. The decline in farming and other traditional activities have also led to increased sedentary behaviour and less physical activity, creating a high risk for obesity and related diseases” (282).

Food Deserts

Diets are entirely dependent on the foods readily available to individuals. However, due to factors such as decreased farming and drastic changes in climate, Indigenous communities have begun to encounter a problem of access that was entirely unknown prior to contact: Food Deserts. According to the National Indian Council on Aging, a food desert is “a census tract void of fresh fruit, vegetables, and other healthful whole foods” (NICOA 2019). This is not anomalous, as in 2017, Partnership with Native Americans reported that “At least 60 reservations in the United States grapple[d] with food insecurity ... These food deserts offer more convenience stores and fast-food restaurants than supermarkets and grocery stores –thus contributing to communities of people with poor diets and higher levels of obesity and diet-related diseases such as diabetes and heart disease.”

One major example of a food desert is the Navajo Nation. In 2019, residents of the Navajo Nation – over 300,000 people – had access to just 13 grocery stores. It was also reported by [Matilda Kreider](#) with Planet Forward that the average resident has to drive three hours to the nearest grocery store, meaning gas stations with snacks and other commodity foods tend to be more accessible as food sources. Kreider’s article also mentions a program enacted in the nation called the Fruits and Vegetables Prescription Program, in which doctors can prescribe their patients fresh foods. For many, these prescribed vouchers can provide a family a month’s worth of fresh produce, but the program has only reached one percent of residents and does not solve the problem of proximity to food sources.

Although the United States is considered a “developed” country, food deserts are prevalent across the fifty states. Take some time to review the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) map marking these food deserts in the US.

The Lasting Effects of Commodity Products

The distribution of commodities to “aid” malnutrition in Indigenous communities indeed curbed starvation. However, this “band-aid” of a solution led not only to other health-related issues, but also to issues in cultural identity, environmental degradation, and lack of sustainable finances.

Culturally, commodity foods have altered traditional practices of food production and/or gathering, as well as youth perceptions of traditional foods. An example of cultural dietary shifts from tradition to commodity is the renowned frybread. While frybread is often mistaken as a traditional “Native” food, its ingredients list often includes all-purpose flour, milk, vegetable oil, and baking powder – all ingredients that were and are included in FDPIR boxes. Rations such as these accompany a dark history of Indigenous incarceration away from their homelands for the sake of white colonialism. While this will be discussed later in the module, one example of incarceration leading to malnutrition and the provision of unhealthy foods is the displacement of the Diné, Apache, and other

Southwestern tribes to Bosque Redondo (a.k.a. “Hwéeldi” or “The Place of Suffering). Today, efforts to revive traditional food practices also must prepare to be met with resistance from Indigenous families or individuals due a subconscious adoption of settler colonial narratives deeming these foods as unappetizing or even “second class.”

Recommended Reading: Mihesuah, D. (2016). Indigenous Health Initiatives, Frybread, and the Marketing of Nontraditional "Traditional" American Indian Foods. *Native American and Indigenous Studies*, 3(2), 45–69. <https://aihd.ku.edu/documents/Frybread.pdf>.

This article describes not only the history of ration foods, but also the ways that Indigenous perspectives around foods have shifted as a result of colonization. Mihesuah also discusses the complexity of considering a food “traditional.”

Commodity foods also contribute to environmental degradation, as these foods require a great deal of processing, packaging, and transportation. In order to be approved by the Food & Drug Administration while maintaining low production costs, commodity items are often packaged with single-use materials, such as the world-renowned petroleum-based material, *plastic*. Considering the process of commodity distribution, this means that petroleum products are used to power food processing factories and warehouses, to package the foods themselves, and to transport the foods from the production sites to areas in need. Focusing on the packaging alone, in 2014 it was reported by [FoodPrint](#) that more than 63 percent of municipal solid waste created in the US was packaging materials. That is over 162 million tons! Only about 35 percent of packaging materials were recycled or composted. This brings up yet another complexity, as many communities that depend on FDPIR distributions do not have access to reliable infrastructure to handle recyclable or compostable materials. Yet, there are groups that raked in billions in the 2019 fiscal year from food production, such as Pepsi Co., Tyson Foods Inc., and Nestle. These three companies alone have a rap sheet of animal cruelty, the removal of Indigenous peoples from their homelands, and/or exploiting natural resources in Indigenous lands. In the slide (17) that covers the climate impacts of commodity foods, it is highly encouraged to explore the links provided.

The FDPIR Program Today

For decades, the FDPIR boxes were packed with goods to survive starvation, more than goods that were nutrient-rich. These foods are also commonly known for the harmful effects they can have on those with food allergies and intolerances. Today, these products are still included in distributions, but they now accompany traditional foods such as bison meat, catfish, blue cornmeal, wild rice, and wild salmon. While this is a great step in the direction to revive Indigenous relationships with “traditional” foods, there are still caveats. The first is that these foods are only provided when “available,” but there is little information on what determines availability; the second is, whose traditional foods? Considering the relatively short list of these types of foods and the over five hundred tribes and nations in the United States, some traditions have obviously been excluded. This is a common issue with federal programs – in place-based communities, one-size does *not* fit all!

Further Readings

- *Combating Food Insecurity on Native American Reservations*. Partnership with Native Americans. (2017, April). <http://www.nativepartnership.org/site/DocServer/2017-PWNA-NPRA-Food-Insecurity-Project-Grow.pdf?docID=7106>.
- Environmental Protection Agency. (2021, April 13). *US State and Local Waste and Materials Characterization Reports*. EPA. <https://www.epa.gov/facts-and-figures-about-materials-waste-and-recycling/us-state-and-local-waste-and-materials>.
- McLaughlin, S. (2010, October 2). *Traditions and Diabetes Prevention: A Healthy Path for Native Americans*. Diabetes Spectrum. <https://spectrum.diabetesjournals.org/content/23/4/272>.

Healthcare

While medicine and technology as we know them today has saved many lives and contributed greatly to our understanding of the human body, there are three crucial facts of US medicine and its history that must be acknowledged and discussed. The first is that the US healthcare system was built on the erasure and oppression of Indigenous medicines. This created a ripple effect that disrupted both spiritual connections and peoples' accessibility to care. The second is, when medical and biological knowledge falls into white supremacist hands, something meant to restore health can be used to abuse or destroy it, and to sever bloodlines entirely. The third is that, today, Indigenous Peoples still face racial oppression, financial hardships, and other systemic barriers that make limits or severs their access to *quality* healthcare. While this section will not cover the background of health services secured and provided for Indigenous communities in the US, please review the video below to learn more about this history:

- [Indian Health 101: Fulfilling a Promise](#) presented by Christopher D. Chavis

Indian Health Service (IHS)

In July of 1955, Indian Health Services was established in response to the agency transfer of Native American health services from the Bureau of Indian Affairs to Public Health Services. This service comes from the federal government as a manifestation of trust responsibility to provide funding for tribal and Urban Indian health programs. Altogether and including the 28 acute-care hospitals that IHS directly operates, there are estimates that roughly two-thirds of American Indian & Alaska Native (AI/AN) Peoples are served through the programs involved with IHS.

Barriers:

Despite the services that are being provided to Indigenous communities in the US through IHS, there are still a great deal of barriers to accessing quality care. Some commonly known barriers or challenges include:

- **Chronic Underfunding:** In Chavis's presentation on Indian Health, he explains that IHS receives funds from the federal government as a discretionary program, leaving it highly vulnerable to lapses in government funding. He also mentions that the funding IHS receives only covers about 56 percent of need (some estimate the coverage percentage to be even lower), again leaving it vulnerable to a shortage of ability to provide care.
 - **Lack of reliable access to medical technology and procedures:** The consequences of underfunding include shortages of life-saving and/or diagnostic technologies in IHS-funded facilities.
 - In an article for National Public Radio, Misha Friedman writes, “The IHS is chronically underfunded. It receives a set amount of money each year to take care of 2.2 million native people – no matter how much care they may need. On the reservation, IHS facilities often don't have services that people elsewhere expect, such as emergency departments or MRI machines. And those limited facilities can be hours away by car. In town, reaching care is easier, but clinics also don't have enough funding to meet all of the health needs of the community. And people can't get the free medication they are entitled to through the IHS anywhere but an IHS facility” ([2016](#)).
- **Lack of Accessibility:** In some places, AI/AN Peoples trying to access IHS programs and services may face limited to no cell or internet services to make appointments, drives of over an hour to the nearest IHS-funded care facility, overcrowding in those facilities, denied access (if the person does not have health insurance, because IHS is not health insurance), and other accessibility barriers both unique to the Indigenous experience of health and common to the broader US healthcare structure.
- **Historical Distrust:** As previously mentioned, the modern structure of US medicine has been built on the erasure of Indigenous medicines. In fact, it wasn't until August of 1978 that Indigenous Peoples in the US regained the right to practice traditional medicines through the American Indian Religious Freedoms Act. Additionally, medical and biological knowledge *has* been abused in the United States. Today, the United States acknowledges that between 1973 and 1976, the IHS sterilized 3,406 Indigenous Women (Torpy 2000). That's 3,406 bloodlines cut cold. Yet, this is not a thing of the past by any means, as it is alleged that women experiencing detainment in certain US Immigration & Customs Enforcement (ICE) detention centers – women with Indigenous histories – are undergoing surgical sterilization without their consent (Manian 2020). In another fifty years, there may be yet another “acknowledgement” of the atrocities being committed by the United States against those simply crossing a settler-created barrier.

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- Racism in Hospitals or Clinics: These violences that Indigenous Peoples have experienced at the hands of settlers have been motivated by racist views, that Indigenous Peoples are somehow lesser than and deserving as much. While racism can be silent in these processes, it sometimes comes out of medical staff in overt ways. In the Joliette Hospital in Canada, an Atikamekw woman filmed the racist remarks she'd been told by the nurses who were supposed to care for her. During her livestream, she pleads for someone from her community to come see her, because her nurses administered morphine, which she was allergic to. She died soon after livestreaming the seven-minute video. While this traumatic event happened in Canada, it begs the question of just how often this treatment toward Indigenous Peoples, and especially women, goes unchecked and/or unrecorded. This woman left behind seven children, because her nurses thought she was "only good for sex" and "better off dead" (Morin 2020).

Yet Another Pandemic

In the history of genocide in Turtle Island, the most effective mode of quelling entire populations of Indigenous Peoples was to spread foreign diseases. Before the Mayflower had even touched the shores of Patuxet (Plymouth Rock), infectious diseases left by Christopher Columbus and following "explorers" were already doing their damage on Indigenous communities. When Captain Cooke landed in Hawai'i, he may have gained new insights to the world, but he and his crew left incurable, and often deadly diseases. These pandemics have left scars in their wakes, which the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) has reopened.

While this is "yet another pandemic," Indigenous Peoples have once again suffered disproportionately as a result of both systemic racism and poor infrastructure. Due to the lack of proper equipment in many healthcare facilities located on reservations, Indigenous populations were reported to have the highest rates of COVID-19 infection time and time again. This is such a prevalent issue due to the aforementioned and historic underfunding of programs like Indian Health Service. In addition to the underfunding, Indigenous-led healthcare programs that requested personal protective equipment (PPE) from the federal government received either broken PPE or body bags in lieu of PPE too often to call coincidence.

- ['Still killing us'](#): In a six-part series, Dennis Wagner and Wyatt Grantham-Philips give an in-depth review of how underfunding in reservation areas of New Mexico has manifested in disproportionate death rates due to COVID-19. Below are some poignant quotes from the article"
 - "Roughly 74% of [McKinley County's 71,367 residents](#) are non-Hispanic Native American, mostly Navajo and Zuni. The majority of land within the county's borders is part of the Navajo Nation reservation. The Navajos, who call themselves Diné, are descendants of people who outlived colonization, smallpox, massacres and resettlement. They take pride in a history of resilience."

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- “This failure was no accident, experts said. It was the direct result of centuries of systemic racism that has left the county's health care system chronically underfunded, understaffed, ill-equipped and outdated. And all in a community grappling with multigenerational housing, pre-existing medical conditions, substance abuse and poverty, where many live without running water, electricity or enough food for their daily nutritional needs.”
- “During the peak of the pandemic, doctors at the Gallup Indian Medical Center were forced to reuse personal protective equipment. An emergency room and intubation tents were set up in the parking lot.”

Similar to Native American populations, Native Hawaiians and other Pacific Islanders were reported in the Hawai'i Journal of Health and Social Welfare to have also experienced disproportionate rates of infection and death from COVID-19. Alongside a lack of supportive infrastructure, Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders are more vulnerable to severe symptoms due to the prevalence of chronic medical conditions like asthma, obesity, diabetes, heart disease, cancer, and kidney disease.

Further Readings

Begay, K., Gavlak, G., & McIver, L. S. (2015, October). *A Call to Action: Eliminating Diabetes Disparities in Native Communities*. Clinical diabetes : a publication of the American Diabetes Association. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4608273/>.

Collman, A. (2020, May 6). *A Native American health center asked the government for medical supplies. 3 weeks later they received a box of body bags instead*. Business Insider. <https://www.businessinsider.com/coronavirus-native-american-health-center-ppe-tests-body-bags-2020-5>.

Friedman, M. (2016, April 13). *For Native Americans, Health Care Is A Long, Hard Road Away*. NPR. <https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2016/04/13/473848341/health-care-s-hard-realities-on-the-reservation-a-photo-essay>.

Kaholokula, J. K., Samoa, R. A., Miyamoto, R. E. S., Palafox, N., & Daniels, S.-A. (2020, May 1). *COVID-19 Special Column: COVID-19 Hits Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander Communities the Hardest*. Hawai'i journal of health & social welfare. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7226312/>.

McLaughlin, S. (2010, October 2). *Traditions and Diabetes Prevention: A Healthy Path for Native Americans*. Diabetes Spectrum. <https://spectrum.diabetesjournals.org/content/23/4/272>.

Smith, M. (n.d.). *Native Americans: A Crisis in Health Equity*. American Bar Association. https://www.americanbar.org/groups/crsj/publications/human_rights_magazine_home/the-state-of-healthcare-in-the-united-states/native-american-crisis-in-health-equity/.

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Urban Indian Health Commission. (2007) *Invisible Tribes: Urban Indians and Their Health in a Changing World*. Seattle: Urban Indian Health Commission.

<https://nativephilanthropy.issueelab.org/resources/9923/9923.pdf>.

Wagner, D., & Grantham-Philips, W. (2020, October 26). 'Still killing us': The federal government underfunded health care for Indigenous people for centuries. Now they're dying of COVID-19. USA Today. <https://www.usatoday.com/in-depth/news/nation/2020/10/20/native-american-navajo-nation-coronavirus-deaths-underfunded-health-care/5883514002/>.

Indigenous Sovereignty

The political relationships that the United States have with Native American tribes and nations are meant to represent a government-to-government model with the establishment of treaties. In the US Constitution, Article VI, "This Constitution, and the laws of the United States which shall be made in pursuance thereof; and all treaties made, or which shall be made, under the authority of the United States, shall be the supreme law of the land; and the judges in every state shall be bound thereby, anything in the Constitution or laws of any State to the contrary notwithstanding."

While these treaties have protected some rights of treaty tribal members, they have also been used and abused in ways that benefit US imperialism. Of the 368 signed treaties, many were improperly translated so as to intentionally misinform Tribal Nations involved, they were signed by tribal members who were not their community's leaders and therefore unauthorized to sign, and most (if not all) have been violated by the United States in countless and continuous ways.

The Illegal Occupation of the Hawaiian Kingdom

Violating treaties was not the only way in which US leadership bent its own rules in favor of their capitalistic desires. In fact, the only way to describe the statehood of Hawai'i is *illegal*. In 1840, the sovereignty of the Kingdom of Hawai'i was recognized on an international scale. Being in the middle of the Pacific Ocean, Hawai'i quickly became a place of international trade, and it was the partnerships with governments overseas that secured sovereignty for this island nation. However, in the interest of profits, American businessmen imposed themselves time and time again upon the monarchs, leading to the 1887 Bayonet Constitution, which was legally null and void because it was signed under duress (with *bayonets* pointed directly at King David Kalākaua). Then, the process of annexation was legally null and void, because the reigning (and final) monarch, Queen Lili'uokalani did not sign over the sovereignty of the kingdom, but rather sent conditions of amicable to President Grover Cleveland in exchange for restoration and punishment toward the American insurrectionists. This never came, because President McKinley waged the state of the Spanish-American war as an excuse for maintaining military occupation of the Hawaiian Kingdom, and recognized the Provisional Government of Hawai'i, which was not the legally valid authority, as authoritative enough to enter a joint resolution for the annexation of this territory to the US. By doing this, the United States violated international law pertaining to the cession of a sovereign state, as it had already imposed its own authority over an unceded foreign body. Statehood came in 1959 due

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to the systemic barriers imposed in voting processes, which specifically aimed to marginalize Hawaiian voices.

Recommended Reading: Sai, D. K. (2011). *Ua mau ke ea: Sovereignty endures: an overview of the political and legal history of the Hawaiian Islands*. Pū‘ā Foundation.

Imposed Community Disruption

In the next portion of this section, there are some examples of ways that US leadership has tried to erase and marginalize Indigenous Peoples. In terms of broad-scale impacts, structural strategies targeted the non-human relatives, which Indigenous Peoples relied upon for food, clothing, shelter, tool-making, and for shaping the natural environment as members of the vast ecosystems. These strategies also included forcefully removing Indigenous Peoples from their homelands, imposing laws to banish Indigenous cultures and languages, imposing blood quantum as “qualifications” for who could access tribal lands and resources, then imposing a racist “one-drop” rule, and unlawfully arresting treaty tribal members for accessing their treaty rights, among many other strategies. It is incredibly important during the next few slides (26-42) not to get lost in the bullet points, and to engage with the multimedia platforms available and listed below:

- [The Long Walk](#) by TikTok user, Chad Lorenzo (@ashkijosh)
- [The Fish Wars \(1950s-1974\)](#), put together by Hokulani Rivera
 - This is a set of slides that cover a bit of history surrounding treaty tribal members’ rights to fish, hunt, and gather in the Pacific Northwest. An important thing to note is that, while tribal members have secured the legal right to fish without facing unlawful arrests, the annual salmon pulls have dwindled drastically due to water contamination, commercial overfishing, and other factors of “modernity” that are killing fish populations in the Salish Sea.

You are also encouraged to research these historical injustices, referencing the written bullet points as inspiration for key terms to search.

Activity: Debunking Development

The purpose of this activity is to create a bank of information surrounding violations of Indigenous Sovereignty in the frame of “development.” As a capitalist country, the US has a tendency to prioritize the projects that produce value and “capital,” without regard for environmental or cultural justice, nor the legally-binding promises they’ve made with Indigenous Peoples. This makes for unethical decision-making practices and bruised relationships between Indigenous and settler communities. In this activity:

- Find an example of public or private development projects or impositions on Indigenous territories and sovereignty.

- Research the Indigenous perspective(s) having to do with the situation.

Some examples of situations to research include:

- The Dakota Access Pipeline and Keystone XL Pipeline
- The South Dakota governor's response to the Sioux COVID-19 checkpoints
- The Thirty-Meter Telescope Construction Project
- The Trump Administration's reinforcement construction of the US-Mexico "border wall."
- The Trump Administration's opening of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to leases for oil drilling, which the Biden administration has temporarily halted.
- The Rosemont Copper Mine and other mines in the Southwest
- The Trump Administration's efforts to revoke the Mashpee Wampanoag's reservation status.

Through the course of this activity, learners should also focus on the environmental impacts of the development projects. This is especially important as you discuss Indigenous perspectives, because of how deeply entrenched land wellness is in any Indigenous politics. In the slide following this activity (29), there is a very brief list of examples for environmental impacts that can follow unethical development. If there are students who will focus on these examples, feel free to share what is already presented on the slide as a jumping board for further research.

Community Vulnerability: A Result of Climate Neglect

In many cases, the prioritization of development projects that do not include Indigenous voices tend to lead to negative environmental impacts that leave communities and individuals more vulnerable to crises like the global COVID-19 pandemic. One of the greatest examples of this also occurs on the Navajo Nation, as many residents struggle to access clean, running water. This resource, which many Americans take for granted, and which is integral to disinfecting or cleaning, is both limited and potentially tainted with trace amounts of uranium from mineral mines in the Southwest of the United States. With an inability to rely on essential resources such as water, Indigenous communities in this region have faced recurring spikes in contagion, death, and other deficits that the majority of the US have the privilege not to experience. Yet, it must also be recognized that these changes in climate

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have not simply appeared in the last few years. Rather, it has been observed by tribal elders for decades. In the 2015 article by Margaret Hiza Redsteer, Klara B. Kelley, Harris Francis, and Debra Block called “Accounts from Tribal Elders: Increasing Vulnerability of the Navajo People to Drought and Climate Change in the Southwestern United States,” the authors compiled a table of elder responses to the question, “What changes in the weather have you noticed? Changes in rain, snow, wind, heat/cold, etc. How much and when?” Here is the table:

Table 12.1 *Responses by Navajo elders to the questions: What changes in the weather have you noticed? Changes in rain, snow, wind, heat/cold, etc. How much and when?*

Responses	Number of persons
Today there is less rain and snow.	All
In the 1920s and 1930s, it rained a lot.	3
Rain and snow have gotten less since 1931.	2
In the 1930s, it snowed more and deeper [30 to 60 cm] and kept the ground moist down to 1.2–1.5 m.	1
In the 1930s, it would rain for a week at a time.	1
In 1934, there were heavy rains and good crops.	1
In the late 1930s and early 1940s, the climate shifted from wet to dry.	2 [the oldest consultants]
The last heavy rain was in 1937/was in 1938.	2/1
It has gotten drier since 1938.	8
In 1940, it rained a lot.	1
Rained a lot in 1940. All the washes ran, lots of sheep feed, lots of lambs.	2
In the 1940s, it snowed big every year, chest high on horses sometimes.	15
About 50– years ago [1940s], it rained every day, good soaking summer rains, and snowed more – knee deep.	3
In 1942, there were deep snows and sheep starved and died. This was followed by rains and erosive flooding.	1
The climate has gotten drier in the last 57 years [since 1944]. Up until then, it rained in the afternoon every day [during the monsoon season] and snowed big. The ground stayed wet until the 4th of July.	8
In 1946/In 1948, there was heavy snow on the reservation and in Nevada, required National Guard help.	1/2
1950 to 1951: there was a drought that required moving or selling livestock.	1
In the 1950s, there was blowing sand and dust.	1
1954: violent storm of wind and rain.	1
During 1962–1965, 66, 67, there was snow, with little since.	1
In 1967/In 1968, there was deep snow and there were snow drifts [variously estimated at 0.6–1.2 m].	1/1
From 1965 to 1970, the weather shifted from wet to dry.	1
In the 1960s and early 1970s, Jeddito Wash ran all the time with high flows of 4–5 m, and lots of people farmed there.	1
In 1970, there were five days of heavy rain producing floods.	1
Until 1971, there was enough rain and people planted fields all along Jeddito Wash. In 1971, the rain started to decline.	1
Since the 1990s, there is drought and heat.	1
In 1962 and 1999, there were strong windstorms.	1
1999–2000: it is exceptionally dry.	15
Today it's hotter and windier with dust storms.	16

Food Sovereignty

Despite the many obstacles put in the path of Indigenous sovereignty, Indigenous Peoples have engaged with a multitude of ways to preserve traditional practices of place-based stewardship and relationship. One method that has brought many communities back together has been “Food Sovereignty,” which describes the reclaiming of agency of foods that are grown and produced on Indigenous lands, by Indigenous hands, and for Indigenous families. There are a great deal of multimedia resources that have documented the processes and experiences Indigenous leaders have had in establishing this form of sovereignty. I encourage you to explore any resources you can, and below are the links to the two videos included in the module slide (31) on food sovereignty:

- [“Food Sovereignty: Valerie Segrest at TEDxRainier”](#)
- [“GATHER TRAILER 031020”](#)
 - This is the trailer to the documentary [Gather](#), which follows the development of a farm to table program in the White Mountain Apache Nation. To schedule a screening, visit <https://gather.film/>.

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Justice and Imprisonment

When it comes to building political relationships with the Indigenous Peoples of Turtle Island, the United States has continuously left justice off the table. This section will cover a host of Indigenous Rights issues, from tribal jurisdiction, to Indigenous youth incarceration, to the epidemic that is Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and Two-Spirit People (MMIWG2). Yet, this is once again a reminder that this curriculum can really only serve as a jumping off point of understanding, rather than the end-all, be-all resource. The reality of this section is that the statistics of injustice will become outdated within the next two years, if not as soon as this reaches you. Thus, it is your duty as a teacher and/or learner to search for the most recent data.

Tribal Jurisdiction

Since the dawn of treaty establishment between the US and tribal nations, the question of jurisdiction on criminal cases has been long contested. It may follow that on tribal territory, tribal courts should have jurisdiction over all civil and criminal cases, just as one country would hold jurisdiction over all cases involving both citizens and non-citizens. However, the United States has continued to impose its paternalism on these nations, and thus retained jurisdiction over crimes committed by non-Natives, both on and off tribal territory. One of the better known cases that show this over-reach of jurisdiction is the 1978 case, *Oliphant v. Suquamish Indian Tribe*, 435 US 191.

As a brief summary, in 1978, Mark David Oliphant was prosecuted by the Suquamish Tribe for assaulting a Suquamish tribal officer and resisting arrest. This quickly transformed from a question of criminality, to that of jurisdiction. The decision later came that Oliphant could not be prosecuted by a tribal court as a non-Native, for three reasons, as noted by Judith Royster in her 2003 article, “Oliphant and its Discontents: An Essay Introducing the Case for Reargument before the American Indian Nations Supreme Court.” Here are the three “prongs” she mentions:

1. “The first prong was the notion that all three branches of the federal government shared a common historical understanding that tribes could not exercise criminal jurisdiction over non-Indians.
2. “The second prong of the Court’s approach rested on the Suquamish Tribe’s treaty. In the Treaty of Point Elliott, the tribe acknowledged its dependence on the United States, a

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standard treaty provision of the time that the Court interpreted ‘in all probability’ as recognizing exclusive United States criminal jurisdiction over non-Indians.

3. “The third prong, however, was the heart of the Court’s decision.... Indian tribes are, within federal law, ‘quasi-sovereign’ governments dependent upon the United States. They may exercise only those governmental powers not ‘inconsistent with’ that dependent status” (60).

Royster goes on to discuss the negative impacts of this decision, which have lingered even today. To highlight the impacts to law enforcement, she writes, “The law enforcement impacts of *Oliphant* have seriously compromised safety within Indian country. If Indian tribes do not have authority to prosecute non-Indians for crimes committed within Indian country, that task falls either to the state or the federal government. Neither is capable of performing it well” (61). This means that tribal members residing on their home territories can be targeted for crimes by non-Natives, knowing full well the history of failure in state and federal courts when it comes to serving justice to Indigenous Peoples.

For more (and more recent) information on tribal jurisdiction, visit the section titled “Tribal Government: Powers, Rights, and Authorities” on the BIA FAQ page at <https://www.bia.gov/frequently-asked-questions>.

The table included in Slide 35 also organizes data that points to jurisdiction based on the tribal affiliation of the perpetrator and victim. Here it is below as well.

<i>Perpetrator/Victim</i>	<i>Jurisdiction</i> ¹⁰	<i>Source of Authority</i>
<i>Crimes by Indians Against Indians:</i>		
Major Crimes	Federal or Tribal (concurrent) ¹¹	Indian Major Crimes Act, 18 U.S.C. § 1153 (2000)
Non-Major Crimes	Tribal (exclusive)	Inherent Sovereign Authority
<i>Crimes by Indians Against non-Indians:</i>		
Major Crimes	Federal or Tribal (concurrent)	Indian Major Crimes Act
Non-Major Crimes	Federal or Tribal (concurrent)	Indian General Crimes Act, 18 U.S.C. § 1152 (2000) (federal); Inherent Sovereign Authority (tribal)
Victimless Crimes by Indians	Federal or Tribal (federal authorities have jurisdiction over general federal crimes; tribal authorities have jurisdiction over non-federal victimless crimes, such as vandalism or public intoxication)	Inherent Sovereign Authority
Crimes by non-Indians Against Indians	Federal (exclusive)	Indian General Crimes Act (incorporates non-federal state offenses via the Assimilative Crimes Act, 18 U.S.C. § 13 (2000))
Crimes by non-Indians Against non-Indians	State (exclusive)	United States v. McBratney, 104 U.S. 621 (1882)
Victimless Crimes by non-Indians	State (exclusive)	Solem v. Bartlett, 465 U.S. 463 (1984)

Incarceration of Indigenous Peoples in the US

For this section, I want you to think of all the stereotypes you know of that target Indigenous Peoples, whether or not you believe them. You may notice that many have highly derogatory roots, and whether you or anyone around you believes them, they still have very real, insidious impacts. One that has altered the lives of countless Indigenous families is that Indigenous Peoples are dangerous. From this outdated and false stereotype, Indigenous Peoples, both young and old, have been disproportionately targeted for policing and imprisonment. The excerpt from Prison Policy Initiative included in the respective slide (36) talks about the 2010 rates of incarceration among AI/AN Peoples to be 1,291 per 100,000 people, according to the US Census. However, the article goes on to discuss more recent statistics:

“Prisons: In 2016, 19,790 Native men and 2,954 Native women (22,744 total) were incarcerated in US state and federal prisons, according to the Bureau of Justice Statistics’ (BJS) National Prisoner Statistics (NPS) series. The NPS series reports the population of state and federal prisons – but not local jails – by race/ethnicity and sex, but the most recent data available with that level of detail is from 2016. However, other sources supplement these findings:

“Jails: The BJS annual report on jail inmates estimates 9,700 American Indian/Alaskan Native people – or 401 per 100,000 population – were held in local jails across the country as of late June, 2018. That’s almost twice the jail incarceration rates of both white and Hispanic people (187 and 185 per 100,000, respectively). Frustratingly, this data is also not reported by sex.

“Youth: People under the age of 21 make up 42% of American Indian/Alaskan Native populations in the United States, so Native youth confinement is a special concern. With a detention rate of 255 per 100,000 in 2015, Native youth are approximately three times more likely to be confined than white youth (83 per 100,000). In Indian country jails, approximately 6% of the confined population was 17 or younger in 2016; unfortunately, the number of youth held in other adult prisons and jails is not broken down by race/ethnicity. The Census of Juveniles in Residential Placement reports data on Native youth in juvenile justice facilities across the US, most recently for 2017, including details about offense type, facility type, sex, age, and more” (Daniel 2020).

Incarcerating Indigenous Peoples leave fewer experienced hands to do the work needed to preserve age-old cultures and ecosystems. A writer for Our Daily Planet outlines the impacts of mass incarceration in a 2020 article called “The Staggering Interconnectivity of Mass Incarceration and Climate Change”:

“The extractions involved in forcibly removing residents from their neighborhoods to be warehoused in massive, faraway, high-security institutions cause enormous injury to humans and habitats alike.

- These processes undermine the health and well-being of people of color, indigenous people, and migrants—the same groups that are then targeted by the criminal justice system as the state’s favored mode of crisis abatement.

- These same groups will bear the greatest burdens of climate change. In cities, in the neighborhoods with the highest incarceration rates, residential segregation makes it significantly more likely for people of color to live in high-risk heat-island conditions than for White people, who are more likely to benefit from cooling greenery.
- **The result is eco-apartheid: the rich benefit from luxurious adaptation and mitigation while everyone else faces deteriorating environmental and social conditions.**
- Displaced poor and working-class residents end up on the street, incarcerated, or pushed further to the urban periphery” (2020).

Citation: The Staggering Interconnectivity of Mass Incarceration and Climate Change. Our Daily Planet. (2020, September 2). <https://www.ourdailyplanet.com/story/the-staggering-interconnectivity-of-mass-incarceration-and-climate-change/>.

Police Brutality

Police Brutality, while existent since the dawn of police and sheriffs in the US, has gained international attention with the evolution of social media. With this global resource, movements such as Black Lives Matter have gained traction, such that the world has witnessed the violence and injustice African Americans continue to face at the hands of ‘Law & Order.’ I put this in quotations, because this phrase is rooted in white supremacy, and has been used historically to justify brutality against Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color in the US

With that, it must be mentioned that Indigenous Peoples face police brutality at very similar rates by population as African Americans. By “rates,” we are pointing to the statistic of the number of individuals from a racial demographic population who experience excessive or lethal force by law enforcement, compared to the number of individuals in that racial demographic population. Police brutality and lethal force against Indigenous Peoples also go unreported, due to the lack of racial reporting for mixed-race victims and/or victims experiencing homelessness. Thus, the rate of brutality police inflict on Indigenous individuals could be much higher.

According to a CNN reporter named Elise Hansen, “For every 1 million Native Americans, an average of 2.9 of them died annually from 1999 to 2015 as a result of a “legal intervention,” according to a CNN review of CDC data broken down by race. The vast majority of these deaths were police shootings. But a few were attributed to other causes, including manhandling. That mortality rate is 12% higher than for African-Americans and three times the rate of whites” (Hansen 2017). While it may be easy to point out the comparison being made between rates of police-related murders in the Native American community versus the African American community, I challenge you all to remain focused on the true matter at hand, which is that Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color are disproportionately vulnerable to police brutality and death by law enforcement.

Focusing on police brutality against Indigenous Peoples, it must also be reckoned that approximately 1 in 5 murdered Indigenous women were victims of police brutality or lethal neglect, and 12 percent

of these victims were initially unsheltered. This will come in the next sub-section, but in asking what law enforcement does to find justice for missing and murdered Indigenous women, we find that many are part of the problem.

Missing & Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and Two-Spirit Peoples

Revisiting the contention of tribal jurisdiction, one of the most harrowing impacts that have come from tribes lacking authority to prosecute criminal cases is this epidemic of Missing & Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and Two-Spirit Peoples (MMIWG2S). As the structure of justice function currently, many cases of MMIWG2S go unsolved due to a multiple reasons, including a lack of clarity on jurisdiction and a lack of organization in state and federal courts when handling abuse, assault, or murder cases targeting Indigenous women, girls, and two-spirit peoples.

Related Report: “Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women & Girls: A snapshot of data from 71 urban cities in the United States” Generated by the Urban Indian Health Institute in 2018.

This report starts off with a poignant preface that, “Due to Urban Indian Health Institute’s limited resources and the poor data collection by numerous cities, the 506 cases identified in this report are likely an undercount of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women & Girls in Urban Areas” (1). This preface highlights the major problem when it comes to this epidemic – there are no standard protocols or structures when it comes to collecting data related to violent crimes targeting Indigenous Women & Girls, especially in urban areas. The report goes on to note,

“The National Crime Information Center reports that, in 2016, there were 5,712 reports of missing American Indian and Alaska Native women and girls, though the US Department of Justice’s federal missing persons database, NamUs, only logged 116 cases. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention has reported that murder is the third-leading cause of death among American Indian and Alaska Native women and that rates of violence on reservations can be up to ten times higher than the national average. However, no research has been done on rates of such violence among American Indian and Alaska Native women living in urban areas despite the fact that approximately 71% of American Indian and Alaska Natives live in urban areas” (2).

The report does not include data related to crimes targeting two-spirit peoples. This in itself points to a severe lack of true understanding of violent crimes against Indigenous women, girls, and two-spirit peoples on both the institutional and community level. The report goes on to emphasize the barriers to proper data collection, including:

- Underreporting of MMIWG2S.
- Racial misclassification. This can sometimes lead to underreporting, as some cases involving MMIWG2S do not collect racial/ethnic demographic data, or misclassify mixed-race individuals.

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- Mismanaged records and lack of protocol. This again calls upon the overreaching of federal and state jurisdiction involving violent crimes, especially when they are committed by non-Native people and cross state lines.
- Historic distrust between law enforcement and Indigenous communities. Due to the policing of Indigenous cultures since the dawn of white-American settlement, as well as the lack of reparations, relationships have yet to fully heal between Indigenous communities and the structure of authority in America. Therefore, when situations occur involving MMIWG2S, families tend to lean toward tribal support, rather than state and federal law enforcement.

Man Camps

One insidious component to the epidemic of MMIWG2S is the construction and creation of “Man Camps.” Man Camps refer to the creation of housing to accommodate individuals working on construction in remote areas which are usually situated near Indigenous communities. Workers who find housing in these camps are usually male, work for major oil companies like Exxon Mobile, and often live in worker housing for long periods of time. Many accounts of these man camps often refer to rowdy behavior, lack of mental health resources to combat isolation, and rampant misogyny. While the atrocities that have been committed at the hands of workers living in man camps could be listed, the conversation around man camps should specifically focus on the harm they bring to Indigenous women, girls, and two-spirit peoples. That said, in order to solve a problem, one must be aware of it. Thus, with any time, review the 2018 article containing testimonies regarding the man camps below.

Citation: Vierich, H. (2020, May 6). *Man-camps for oil, timber, mining... are "wretched hives of scum and villianry"? Reflections on resource extraction.* Anthroecology.com.

<https://anthroecologycom.wordpress.com/2018/07/07/man-camps-for-oil-timber-mining-are-wretched-hives-of-scum-and-villianry-reflections-on-resource-extraction/>.

As the article notes, these man camps exist because extraction of resources such as timber, oil, and minerals are prioritized over the lives of Indigenous Peoples, especially women, girls, and two-spirit peoples. However, there is a larger atrocity represented, which is the environmental devastation tied to the projects that often establish said man camps. Women, girls, and two-spirit peoples face abuse alongside Mother Earth, and at the hands of a colonial patriarchy that would rather protect capital than people.

This epidemic is becoming better known due to the actions of groups such as Women of All Red Nations (WARN), who rode to raise awareness of MMIWG2S and the multi-layered detriment that would be caused by the construction of pipelines.

Watch a short, informational video of this activist group here:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xqZS_SWIH4w&t=1s

Forced Displacement in Indigenous Histories

While in the modern era, we see the displacement of Indigenous Peoples from their ancestral homelands through institutional processes such as incarceration, detention, and replacement for settler projects, this is not a new phenomenon to Indigenous communities. In fact, forced displacement by settlers is a centuries old trauma. One well-known example of this is the Trail of Tears, executed by Pres. Andrew Jackson as a part of the Indian Removal Act of 1830. Between 1830 and 1850, over 60 thousand Cherokee, Creek, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Seminole, and other tribal peoples were forcibly removed from their homelands in the name of white colonialism. This was just a single event. Other events include:

- The Long Walk to Bosque Redondo: Over a period of 1863 to 1868, over 8,500 Diné and 500 Mescalero Apache Peoples were forced to walk over 350 miles to be detained in the Bosque Redondo Indian Reservation. Those who were imprisoned in Hweeldi (the Diné word for a place of great suffering) faced starvation, deprivation, disease, and death. It is estimated that over 2,000 Native Peoples died during this time, and many were left without sustenance once returned from Hweeldi.
- Native American Boarding Schools: Sometimes run by Christian-denomination churches, these “residential” or “boarding” schools were created to force Native American children away from their families and communities in order to “civilize” them. Children detained in these schools were forced to cut their hair, to change their clothes to fit Western styles, to abandon their traditional languages and practices (including their names), and to adopt a Christian way of life. Children were also exposed to rampant disease, deprivation, physical and sexual abuse, and other atrocities that led to countless child deaths, if not by abuse and exposure, then by suicide later. These schools were open in the US until the late 1960’s, and the children that were stolen from their communities are sometimes referred to as the “Stolen Generation.”
 - Recently (May 2021), the remains of 215 Native American children were found buried on the property of what was once the Kamloops Indian Residential School in Canada. While this was just one uncovering, many residential schools both in Canada and the USA remain uninvestigated, and countless children remain lost and without mourning.
 - Here is a CNN article that speaks on this unbelievable tragedy:
 - Newton, P. (2021, May 29). *'Unthinkable' discovery in Canada as remains of 215 children found buried near residential school*. CNN. <https://www.cnn.com/2021/05/28/world/children-remains-discovered-canada-kamloops-school/index.html>.

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- **Recommended Reading:** Facing History and Ourselves. (2015). *Stolen Lives: The Indigenous Peoples of Canada and the Indian Residential Schools*. https://www.facinghistory.org/sites/default/files/publications/Stolen_Lives_1.pdf.
- This book highlights the white supremacy embedded in an ideology that would assume institutions could do a better job of raising Native children than their own communities. To summarize the atrocities Eshet focuses on Duncan Campbell Scott of Canada. Eshet writes:

“Scott, a civil servant in the Department of Indian Affairs, is widely viewed as the most ardent supporter of the residential schools and the policies associated with them: the removal by consent or by force of tens of thousands of indigenous children from their homes, some as young as two or four years of age; the attempts to deprive these children of any connections with their parents; the institution of an underfunded, willfully neglectful system where thousands of students perished from malnutrition, poor medical care, and diseases; the creation of an education system where child labor was a norm and where academic achievements were severely compromised; and the consistent lack of oversight and accountability in a system where physical and sexual abuse were rampant” (120).

- The Canton Indian Insane Asylum (a.k.a. The Hiawatha Insane Asylum): This asylum was the only one in the US designated for Native American Peoples. It operated for 32 years, confining over 400 individuals for a wide range of reasons, including “mental illness” as Western medicines have pathologized, and practicing traditional medicines and rituals. According to Heather Benson of South Dakota Public Broadcasting, “However, more than half of the residents died of curable diseases” (2019).
 - **Recommended Video:** Listen to the interview recorded in the video cited below and review the video’s caption. In the caption, you will find a list of the individuals who have been buried in the Hiawatha Asylum Cemetery.
 - *Remembering The Hiawatha Insane Asylum for American Indians*. (2016). YouTube. <https://youtu.be/rjfRQyC3Eh4>.

The US strategy of eradicating Indigenous Peoples from these lands included removing tribal peoples from their territorial lands, removing their children, and then removing the medicines meant to protect their spirits. Each bullet point listed in this sub-section could easily be considered acts of either cultural or physical genocide, according to the UN’s current (2021) definition of “genocide”. Yet, Indigenous Peoples have not, and will not quit protecting their communities and territories. While there are too many examples of Indigenous perseverance to list here, one example that received nation-wide attention was the occupation of Alcatraz Island.

Activity: “The Indian Occupation of Alcatraz” Conversation

1. Have students watch the documentary called “The Indian Occupation of Alcatraz” included on Slide 45 of the Module 1 slides (also cited below this activity).

2. Discuss the following questions in the next class session:

- Was this your first time hearing about the American Indian Movement (AIM) and/or the occupation of Alcatraz Island?
- What contemporary policies and government movements were happening that spurred this occupation? How were these policies impacting Indigenous communities? What was the intent?
- What visions did AIM have for Alcatraz Island?
- In this documentary, there is a brief mention of “body and spiritual politics” – how does this context differ from the body politics we see manifest in the nation? How does this affect contemporary Indigenous Peoples?
- What were the US responses to this occupation? What were the intentions behind these responses/strategies?
- Despite the end of the occupation of Alcatraz, what were the ripple effects of this AIM action? What did the occupation restore to Indigenous Peoples?
- As students looking back on this history of students engaging in national politics, what are you taking away from the documentary?
- How do you see Indigenous Peoples in activism today? What similarities do you see? What differences or growth in strategy do you see?
- In whose traditional territories did Alcatraz Island originally belong?

Reference: Fortier, J. and J. Plutte (2014). We Hold the Rock. Golden Gate Recreation Area. <https://youtu.be/gEmae2PsWJI>.

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Education and Income

As previously discussed, the system of education in the United States has caused intentional and intergenerational harm in Indigenous communities since the invasion of missionaries, to the boarding schools, to the modern era of standardized testing. While education today is a thoroughly flawed system, full of structures and standards meant to neglect the needs of students as humans, it also fails Indigenous learners in very acute ways.

First, education today still lacks a decent understanding and recognition of trauma within students, let alone Native students whose parents and/or grandparents experienced education as confinement and abuse. In a 2011 study conducted by Noel Altaha and Sue Kraus called “Kill the Indian, Save the Man: Native American Historical Trauma in College Students,” the authors write in the abstract that “Native American students who experience historical loss have higher levels of

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depression, anxiety, negative feelings toward oneself and lower levels of resilience” (Altaha 2). The report also describes both intergenerational trauma, and how it impacts Native American Peoples today:

“The present traumatized state of American Indian/Alaskan Native (AIAN) peoples seems normal, almost invisible, within families and communities but the consequences of their unresolved pain can be deadly. The experience of historical loss or historical trauma by the indigenous American (AIAN) populations is defined as the collective effects of trauma across the lifespan and generations due to unresolved grief (Cain, 2007; Brave Heart & DeBruyn, 1998). Within AIAN populations, the chronic and acute reactions to colonialism are referred to as a soul wound (Walters & Simoni, 2002). Historical trauma or soul wounds come from the loss of Native American lives, culture, beliefs, practices and land as a result of European invasion and colonization (Morgan & Freeman, 2009). The effects of unresolved grief resulted from centuries of targeted racism, through extermination by disease, violence, and warfare by colonists (Willmon-Haque & Big Foot, 2008). This unresolved grief gets passed down through generations who were affected by historical loss, and can continue to impact generations who did not personally witness the original trauma” (Altaha 3).

With this study, Altaha found that, “AIAN students that think about historical loss more often have lower levels of resilience, lower self-compassion and use less approach-oriented styles of coping. Those struggling with historic trauma also have less positive perceptions of their experiences in college. AIAN students that live or have lived on an Indian reservation think about historical loss more often” (Altaha 7).

While this study collected data regarding the impacts of trauma on Native students’ sense of self, there is more data that points to the lack of support for these students to succeed at the level of their non-Native peers. Specifically, The Red Road reports, “Only 70% of the Native students who start kindergarten will graduate from high school, compared to a national average of 82 percent, according to [NCES](#). Those attending BIE schools have an even lower graduation rate of 53%. Only 17% of Native students attend college, as opposed to the national average of 60%.... A lack of funding and resources coupled with geographic isolation can be a major obstacle for students who want to receive a quality education” (The Red Road).

At the annual Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians (ATNI) in October 2020, the executive director of the Office of Native Education (ONE, a branch of the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction [OSPI]) named Jon Claymore presented the following findings of Native high school students in Washington State in 2019:

	<i>Native High School Student Ranking</i>	<i>% of Native Learners</i>	<i>% of Avg. WA students</i>
Drop-out Rate	1 out of 6	24%	9%

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Success in ELA	6 out of 6	31%	60%
Success in Math	6 out of 6	22%	49%
Success in Science	5 out of 6	24%	47%

What this table points to is the disproportionate ranks and rankings of secondary educational “success” among Native students. As can be observed, Native students were ranked first in dropout rates, where the state average of high school students who dropout of school is nine percent, in comparison to the twenty-four percent of Native high school students who drop out before graduation. In the core subjects (English-Language Arts, Math, and Science), Native students hold the lowest rankings of success (the definition of “success” in the presentation was unclear). In general, Native students are not receiving the support they need to succeed in secondary education, and this can cause major barriers to Indigenous Peoples reaching higher education.

This sequence of educational access is indeed present in collected data of college entrance and degree attainment. According to both the Red Road (previously) and Partnership with Native Americans, while more than 60 percent of high school students go to college nation-wide, only 17 percent of AI/AN students go to college. Postsecondary National Policy Institute also reported in 2019 that 25 percent of AI/AN Peoples over the age of 25 held an associate’s degree or higher, while the national average for degree-holders over the age of 25 was 42 percent. The Red Road also shares how Native learners, both on and off their tribal lands, face a multitude of barriers that students from other racial demographics do not face. These include a lack of access to technology, educational resources, and/or a physical campus. With the implementation of Stay-At-Home orders across reservation communities due to the novel coronavirus, colleges were finally investing in virtual classes. However, the problem of technological access remained, just within the home. Something Indigenous students enrolled in non-tribal colleges and universities also find is a lack of culturally-responsive mental health support, and a prevalence of outward white supremacy in said institutions. Due to the racism that higher education also finds itself founded upon in the United States, there is also a *major* lack of Indigenous faculty, as well as a prevalence of white-supremacist ideals in some fields of study (i.e. Anthropology, Sociology, STEM, etc).

Lasting Economic Impacts of Educational Barriers

While socio-economic circumstances will never quite be the same (or even similar) from one individual to the next, there are some educated predictions regarding an individual’s access to income depending on their educational achievement. In the table provided by Tim Stobierski of Northeastern University, it is shown that in 2019 the median yearly income earned by an individual

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holding a doctorate degree was close to 100 thousand dollars, while the median income earned by someone with less than a high school diploma was roughly 30 thousand dollars. Unemployment rates by educational attainment were inversely related, where the rate of unemployment dropped the higher the degree earned and vice versa.

Thus, if only 25 percent of AI/AN Peoples held degrees in 2019, then 75 percent were likely to earn less than 43 thousand dollars, and more than 3.3 percent likely faced unemployment. Yet, in the previous years, some reservations reported rates of unemployment as high as 85 percent, and rates of poverty at about 28.2 percent. Partnership with Native Americans also reported that, due to a lack of job opportunities, Indigenous Peoples living on reservations were either forced to leave their homes and homelands to find work in urban areas or to look into tribal and federal government listings. Of those Indigenous Peoples who have jobs, approximately 31 to 33 percent will face racial discrimination through pay, consideration for job promotions, or even applying for jobs to begin. This was found in a 2019 study, cited below:

Citation: Findling, M. G., Casey, L. S., Fryberg, S. A., Hafner, S., Blendon, R. J., Benson, J. M., ... Miller, C. (2019). Discrimination in the United States: Experiences of Native Americans. *Health Services Research, 54*(S2), 1431–1441. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1475-6773.13224>.

Unlike other populations in the US, Indigenous Peoples face systemic neglect in education that results in the minimization of future career prospects. Not to mention, the histories their non-Native peers are taught do not reflect the brutality, erasure, and injustice Indigenous Peoples have faced at the hands of settler colonists. Nor will they learn of the enlightenment, the true spirituality, or the general triumph of Indigenous Peoples since time immemorial. This is why it is of utmost importance that Indigenous Peoples have the sovereignty to teach, to learn *relevant* things, and to create their own economic prospects both for themselves as individuals, and as community.

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Where do you stand?

When Indigenous peoples have faced genocide by disease, colonial violence, forced removal, internment and incarceration, forced medical procedures, lack of justice for their own peoples, lack of education access or cultural acceptance, lack of religious freedom, and the construction of systems intended to erase them, it is up to you to position yourself accordingly. As an emergency responder, you have the duty to serve a community's best interest - sometimes this means looking at yourself in the mirror, but with a different lens. As you explore the rest of these modules, consider all that you have learned here. Do not become defensive if you are a non-Native learner, because your feelings can, and if given the power, will distract from your comprehension. Lastly, it is pivotal that you understand the climate crisis we all face, not as an environmental problem, but as a human one. They are one and the same.

Final Activity: Watch “Human Trauma and Climate Trauma As One”

Citation: *Human Trauma and Climate Trauma As One* | Sheila Watt-Cloutier | TEDxYYC. (2016). Youtube. <https://youtu.be/5nn-awZbMVo>.

As you listen to this video, think of each section you have been through in this module. Think of your takeaways, and how this might have changed your perspective of the society, and the nation, you live in. Think of the lands you occupy, and the Peoples who cultivated these lands since the dawn of time. And congratulate yourself on sticking through the thick of this module!

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Module #2

Climate Change, COVID-19 and the Community

Learning Objectives

- To lay a foundation of knowledge regarding the effects of large environmental events on individual and community issues
- To examine the role that individual and community level issues have on properly addressing major events such as climate change and COVID-19
- To better understand the intersections of environmental catastrophe and issues of community health

These learning objectives appear on slide 5 of the presentation.

Pre-lecture Brainstorming Assignment

The following should be completed before class with a facilitated group brainstorming at the beginning of class so that students can share answers with one another.

You are the relief coordinator in charge of responding to an environmental disaster in an Indigenous community with which you have no prior relationship.

- **What are the things you would like to know before you engage with that community to help them recover?**
- **What are the questions you would ask of leadership when helping to respond to that situation?**
- **What are your concerns about how the community and/or leadership might respond to you?**

Introduction (Slide 2)

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In stressed communities, one major event can trigger a number of smaller, related issues that have a lasting impact on the community and can complicate efforts around addressing that event

- Possible examples include Hurricane Katrina, Hurricane Sandy, major droughts and tornados, or other more local events which have had a recent impact on the community

These issues may occur at the individual scale or the community scale

- These effects may also range in immediacy after the event, as well as duration

These issues have the potential to complicate efforts around addressing a major event and should be considered as part of the broader strategy for emergency response.

- Consider the purpose of emergency response. In a place-based culture, one can often see the very obvious disaster that has occurred, but the severity of that disaster, its impact on the community, and the community's ability to "bounce back" varies greatly with socioeconomic factors. The question then becomes, "what is the real emergency?" The ability or inability to create a plan of response to a disaster that takes into account the community's real needs and the true urgency of a complex situation has a direct impact on how well that plan will unfold.
- Understanding the dynamics at play here are crucial in understanding how to respond.

Caution (Slide 3)

While the following are common examples of considerations within Indian Country, it is important to note that every Indigenous community is different and comes with its own unique history, cultural values, and community priorities, and experiences its own unique set of circumstances

- This is a broad overview of some of the issues that an Indigenous community might face, however it is important to understand that what is appropriate in one community may not be appropriate in another.
- Later in the curriculum, you will be introduced to specific place-based cultures in depth and given some examples of how widely Indigenous communities can vary
- Some of the factors which will change according to each Tribe include things like federal recognition versus state recognition, relationship with the surrounding state and local governments, personal history with federal agencies and healthcare, ontological concepts of disaster and planning, the layout and dependencies of local Tribal economies, and many others

- A great amount of literature and effort has been devoted to improving the relationship between federal agencies and Indigenous communities in the United States but what is clear is that while the relationship is improving, there is much more work to be done
- Students are encouraged to consider this a “jumping off” point rather than a comprehensive list that enables the understanding of Indian Country. Activities, discussions and readings are designed to engage the curiosity of participants and introduce them to scholars whose work can better inform them on this complex topic.

Sections (slide 4)

- Poverty
- Housing Insecurity
- Domestic, Gendered and Sexual Violence
- Community Health

Each of these sections will follow a similar format. Students will be provided with context for the issues being discussed, as well as relevant statistics and ways in which particularly vulnerable sections of the community are impacted by disaster. Each section will include at least one case study for students to read and discuss. These case studies are intended to provide a human-centered, realistic example of ways in which Indigenous communities in various settings experience disaster. Students are encouraged to find parallels and differences in their own communities to consider, as well as to consider potential resources in their community that exist to address these issues or areas wherein gaps occur. Each section will also include a review of major takeaways and opportunities for further reading.

Poverty and the Income Gap (Slides: 6 – 19)

Poverty by the Numbers (slide 7)

1 in 4 Native Americans lives in poverty [1]

32% of Native American and Alaskan Native families with children under the age of 5 lives in poverty [2]

Average median household income for Native Americans: \$43,825, compared to \$62,843 in the nation as a whole (2015-2019) [3]

Poverty on Reservations (slide 8)

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While the poverty faced by many reservations is always an issue of concern and hardship, the presence of poverty during a disaster or public health emergency creates a situation whose impacts may remain devastating for years to come.

Poverty and Vulnerability (slide 9)

Elders and other vulnerable populations reliant upon their Tribe and families for assistance may suffer under a necessary reallocation of resources as a Tribal community tries to balance emergency response with long-term services and programs.

Further, income-driven communication gaps may hinder the ability to deliver emergency aid to those who need it most due to a lack of phone and internet service.

Tribes and Federal Assistance (slide 10)

Despite recent improvements to the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, only 228 of the 574 federally-recognized tribes have FEMA-approved hazard mitigation plans. [4]

This is up from 117 in 2015 [5] but still means that more than half of federally-recognized Tribes in the United States cannot access federal funding for much-needed disaster mitigation projects, which are intended to supplement communities in delivering emergency services and which also outlines a plan for cost-sharing for different social programs. While Tribes without plans can access funds as sub-grantees, strained relationships with states may hinder that process.

Much of this stems from the costs of disaster planning as well as the limited technical capacity of smaller Tribes, who may not have dedicated emergency management teams or engineers. Cultural barriers about the nature of disaster planning also may play a part. [6]

Disaster Frequency on Tribal lands (slide 11)

The Emergency Management gap is especially important because between 1976-2016, Tribal areas have been hit by 120 disasters. Those incidents have steadily increased in frequency.

The National Congress of American Indians has testified that the majority of disasters to hit Tribal communities are never designated for federal disaster declaration status.[7]

Activity: Locate a nearby Indigenous community and identify the following information:

- 1) membership numbers and location
- 2) whether or not the Tribe has an official reservation
- 3) any existing vulnerability assessment or hazard mitigation plans it has on file
- 4) whether it has ever declared a state of emergency

Poverty and Climate Change (slide 12)

Individuals in communities stricken by poverty face unique challenges in the event of climate change-related disasters, such as:

A general increase in the exposure to the negative impacts of climate change

An increased susceptibility to the damage caused by climate change

A decreased ability to “bounce back” from the effects of climate change, due to a very small to nonexistent personal safety net [9]

Poverty and Pandemics (slide 13)

During the COVID-19 pandemic, poverty has been a factor in how many Native Americans get sick, as many are forced to work in frontline positions or dwell in overcrowded living situations.

Some who have not gotten sick have been furloughed and have had difficulty putting food on the table.

Unemployment and COVID-19 (slide 14)

Prior to the COVID-19 recession, Native American employment already lagged behind both employment among White and Black employment rates (.81 for White Americans, .75 for Black Americans, and .68 for Native Americans).

After the pandemic hit, the Native American ratio showed the largest drop, falling from .7 in January 2020 to .55 in April 2020

Optional Further Reading: Feir, D. (August 2020). Native employment during COVID-19: Hit hard in April but starting TO REBOUND? Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis.

[https://www.minneapolisfed.org/article/2020/native-employment-during-covid-19-hit-hard-in-april-but-starting-to-rebound.](https://www.minneapolisfed.org/article/2020/native-employment-during-covid-19-hit-hard-in-april-but-starting-to-rebound)

Case Study: Poverty and Elders (slide 15)

Students should read [“Navajo Elders: Alone, Without Food, in Despair” by Sunnie R. Clahchischiligi, Searchlight New Mexico, October 15, 2020](#)

Discussion: Students should reflect upon anything about this article that particularly took their attention. This article may be hard to read for some, and space must be given to reflect upon the source of that discomfort as well as what particular thoughts it brings up.

Do the issues described in the article seem like issues particular to the Navajo Nation or are there things that can be learned from the consideration of this article that translate to one’s own community?

Students are to reflect upon the way elders are treated within their own communities and what, if any, special precautions exist to shelter them from harm as well as how those same issues might manifest in the broader American overculture.

Reliance on Subsistence (slide 16)

As a result of poverty and a continuation of Indigenous ancestral relationships with the land, many Indigenous people rely on subsistence hunting, fishing and gathering to supplement their income and provide for their families

Treaties and Tension (slide 17)

In the case of treaty tribes, these activities are often rights guaranteed to them in perpetuity as well as important cultural practices that strengthen intergenerational relationships

These rights have been the subject of vitriolic and even violent racial tensions between Indigenous people and surrounding non-Native communities

Case Study: Non-Native Fires Gun at Lac du Flambeau Tribal fisherman (slide 18)

In May 2019, Lac du Flambeau tribal members Tyler Chapman and T.J. Maulson were harvesting fish on Gunlock Lake in northern Wisconsin when a non-Native individual fired on them with his gun. Also in the boat was Chapman’s 13-year-old daughter.

The individual who fired on them was a non-Tribal resident who owned a home on Gunlock Lake. This incident was just one of several reported that season, including racial epithets and death threats issued to Tribal members exercising their Treaty rights in the Ceded Territory.

The individual pleaded no contest to charges of interfering with Ojibwe fishing rights and with possessing a firearm while intoxicated, but hate crime charges were subsequently dropped.

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These incidents are not unfamiliar in Wisconsin, which was rife with conflict throughout the 1980s and 90s as treaty rights for the Ojibwe were reaffirmed in the federal court rulings known as the Voigt decision. Similar incidents have occurred in the Pacific Northwest and in Canada.

This incident increases strain and tension on communities hit hardest by COVID-19, who rely on the harvest to get them through economic downturns in already economically disadvantaged communities.

[Article 1](#)

[Article 2](#)

** See "Treaty Rights" section in Module 1**

Discussion:

Treaties and the rights that stem from them, as included in the United States Constitution, are considered the Highest Law of the Land. And yet, they are among the most contested laws in the United States. Why do you think this is?

Despite the dangers and the conflict, rights imparted by Treaties to the Tribes that are party to them are closely guarded, even as grocery stores pop up to provide food, such as fish. Why do you think Tribes and Indigenous communities continue to fight so hard to protect their Treaty rights?

Activity:

Check to see if there are any treaties that apply to the land upon which you live or go to school. What rights do those treaties impart? Who are they between?

Housing Insecurity (Slides 19 - 31)

Housing Insecurity (slide 20)

Native Americans experience homelessness at a rate disproportionate to the general population: as of 2019, they account for approximately 1.5% of North America's population but more than 10% of the national homeless population (Invisible People)

Native Americans are 26 times more likely to experience homelessness than white people (Greater Twin Cities United Way)

Overcrowding affected 16 percent of American Indian and Alaska Native households in tribal areas and 10 percent in urban areas compared with 2 percent of all U.S. households. (HUD User)

Housing Insecurity on the Reservation (slide 21)

Homelessness on reservations is difficult to accurately measure and track, because it often takes the form of “doubling up” – moving from the home of one family member or friend to another to avoid having to literally sleep on the street where they are vulnerable to the elements or further exploitation

This housing gap has been exacerbated on reservations by a combination of socioeconomic factors, drug and alcohol abuse, mental illness and cuts to federal funding allocated for reservation housing

Optional Further Reading: Biess, J. (2017, May 22). Homelessness in Indian country is a hidden, but critical, Problem. Urban Institute. <https://www.urban.org/urban-wire/homelessness-indian-country-hidden-critical-problem>.

Urban Natives and Homelessness (slide 22)

While much of the focus on Indigenous homelessness focuses on the reservation, more than half of self-identified AIAN live in or near cities.

Like many people of color, Indigenous people have historically been subject to discriminatory housing practices, which force them into poorly kept living situations

People of color in general also rent at a higher rate than the general population, making them more vulnerable to eviction. (National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty)

Urban AIAN face great challenges in accessing affordable quality healthcare. Urban AIAN are much more likely to seek treatment at urban Indian Health organizations but only 1% of the Indian Health budget is allocated to urban areas.

Climate Change and Homelessness (slide 23)

Whether in an urban setting or on the reservation, homelessness leaves people vulnerable to the extreme weather of climate change.

Lack of shelter and exposure to the elements, as well as limited capacity to flee to safer ground in the event of emergency, places these individuals on the front lines of climate change no matter where they are.

Housing insecurity places individuals at greater risk for: (slide 24)

- Access to nutritious food

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- Hygiene and sanitation
- General health care

During COVID-19, those without permanent housing may find it more difficult to follow recommended protocols for COVID-19 prevention and care (such as social distancing, mask wearing and hand sanitizing) despite their best efforts

The homeless population is twice as likely to be hospitalized for COVID-19, two to four times as likely to require critical care, and two to three times more likely to die than the general population.

Case Study: The Wall of Forgotten Natives (slide 25)

The Wall of Forgotten Natives (also known as the Franklin Hiawatha encampment) was a makeshift camp near downtown Minneapolis. This camp consisted of several tents covered in tarps, as well as a few tipis and a communal kitchen. At its peak in the summer of 2018, this camp housed an estimated 300 people— mostly Indigenous— including children, elders, and pregnant women.

Many within the camp had been displaced as a result of the opioid epidemic and early on, the camps were subject to predation by drug dealers. The situation changed when a 51-year-old mother overdosed in her dwelling, prompting outrage and a cry for change. Natives Against Heroin, a grassroots organization, which addresses drug use in Indigenous communities, led the camp members in ejecting known drug dealers from the site.

Despite the camp's troubles, many at the Wall came to see the community as a place of comfort and safety for Indigenous people coping with tremendous trauma amidst extreme circumstances. People both within and outside of the camp worked to build an atmosphere of cultural revitalization, offering medicine bags and smudging the members frequently.

While the city initially attempted to find common ground by sending housing liaisons to connect members with social services, the camp was cleared by state patrols and the site barricaded. In Fall 2020, people returned to the campsite, demanding better shelter for the homeless displaced by the disbanding of the Wall and other Minneapolis encampments.

Discussion Questions:

- Why might the residents of the Wall of Forgotten Natives have come to see this encampment as a place of safety?
- What is the city's responsibility to the residents of the Wall of Forgotten Natives, especially in light of the vulnerability that many of them face in light of public health emergencies, inequities in access to resources like housing and healthcare, and historical trauma?

Domestic, Gendered and Sexual Violence (Slides 26 - 31)

When compared to national averages, Indigenous women are: (slide 27)

2 ½ times more likely to be assaulted

2 times more likely to be stalked

5 times more likely to experience interracial violence

10 times more likely to be murdered (on some reservations)

More than 1 in 3 (or 34.1 %) Indigenous women will be raped in her lifetime

6 in 10 Indigenous women will be physically assaulted

-A Primer on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Portland, OR

Video: Sarah Deer: Injustice in Indian Country: Native Women and Violent Crime
(slide 28)

Length: 08 minutes, 08 seconds

From: "How do Race, Ethnicity, and Religion Intersect with Sexual Violence?"

Public Event held at Brandeis University 2018, Goldfarb Library, Rapaport Treasure Hall

brandeis.edu/projects/fse/

Biography: Sarah Deer is a citizen of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation of Oklahoma and a University Distinguished Professor at the University of Kansas. Her 2015 book, *The Beginning and End of Rape: Confronting Sexual Violence in Native America* is the culmination of over 25 years of working with survivors and has received several awards, including the Best First Book award from the Native American Indigenous Studies Association. A lawyer by training but an advocate in practice, Deer's scholarship focuses on the intersection of federal Indian law and victims' rights, using indigenous feminist principles as a framework. Deer is a co-author of four textbooks on tribal law and has been published in a wide variety of law journals, including the *Harvard Journal of Law and Gender*, the *Yale Journal of Law and Feminism*, and the *Columbia Journal of Gender and Law*. Her work to end violence against Native women has received national awards from the American Bar Association and the Department of Justice. She has testified before Congress on four occasions regarding violence against Native women and was appointed by Attorney General Eric Holder to chair a federal advisory committee on sexual violence in Indian country. Professor Deer was named a MacArthur Foundation Fellow in 2014. In 2019, she was inducted into the National Women's Hall of Fame. She currently teaches at the University of Kansas (her alma mater), where she holds a joint appointment in

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Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies and the School of Public Affairs and Administration. Professor Deer is also the Chief Justice for the Prairie Island Indian Community Court of Appeals.

11.2. Education:

J.D., with Tribal Lawyering Certificate, University of Kansas School of Law
B.A., Women's Studies, Philosophy, with Honors, University of Kansas

Climate Change and Violence (slide 29)

Research on the social impacts of climate change around the world have revealed that climate change is one direct cause of gender-based violence

This is especially important in Indigenous communities where the rate of sexual and domestic violence is already staggering

The MMIW (Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women) and MMIP (Murdered and Missing Indigenous People) movements have been a major player in the fight for climate justice, citing the increase of trafficking for “man camps”, temporary camps that house men working in oil and gas drilling operations.

Activity: [Read “Fear Next Door: the Man Camp Connection” by Drew Novak, Native News 2019](#)

Reflection: (to be completed individually) Despite the environmental issues that often arise, oil companies, their partners and supporters often claim that pipeline construction and oil drilling bring necessary jobs to economically depressed areas. Is the trade-off of increased human trafficking and a general feeling of being unsafe for the area’s women and girls a necessary evil for economic prosperity? Why or why not?

Race, Gender and the Climate (slide 30)

Indigenous women and LLGBT people in the United States are vulnerable because their race and gender intersect to create socioeconomic and environmental challenges that affect their climate change resilience.

Rapid environmental change, such as those caused by disasters, has been shown to increase domestic and sexual violence, as well as human trafficking.

Recommended Further Reading: Vinyeta, K., Whyte, K. P., & Lynn, K. Climate change through an intersectional lens: Gendered vulnerability and resilience in indigenous communities in the United States.

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/291523872_Climate_change_through_an_intersectional_lens_Gendered_vulnerability_and_resilience_in_indigenous_communities_in_the_United_States

Domestic Violence and Pandemics (slide 31)

While 1 in 3 women experience incidents of intimate partner violence, Indigenous women experience sexual and domestic violence at even higher rates and are more likely to be hurt by people they know than strangers.

34% of Indigenous women are raped in their lifetime

39% are victims of domestic violence

COVID-19 has increased the occurrence of intimate partner violence, including severe intimate partner violence (link) by trapping women in abusive relationships in desperate situations and in more frequent proximity to their abusers

Optional Further Reading: *Domestic violence*. VAWnet.org. (n.d.). <https://vawnet.org/sc/gender-based-violence-and-intersecting-challenges-impacting-native-american-alaskan-village-0>.

Valera, E. (2020, July 7). When lockdown is not actually safer: Intimate partner violence during covid-19. Harvard Health. <https://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/when-lockdown-is-not-actually-safer-intimate-partner-violence-during-covid-19-2020070720529>.

Community Health (Slides 32 - 40)

Pre-lecture Activity:

Identify and list the Indian Health Services clinics in your state (or region). How many are there? Where are they located? What services do they offer? How large of a population do they serve?

Students should complete this activity before class and come to class prepared to report their findings. If students live in areas where no Indian Health Services are available, they should be invited to discuss how that might impact the Indigenous communities where they live and what alternative avenues might be necessary to address issues of Indigenous health and wellness.

Health in Indigenous Communities (slide 33)

Native Americans are twice as likely as whites to have diabetes

Kidney failure from diabetes was highest among Native Americans (CDC)

Native Americans have higher rates of multiple types of cancer than the general population, including lung (12%), colorectal (36%), cervical (69%), breast (26%), liver (three times higher), and stomach (two times higher) (CDC)

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Native American and Alaskan Native adults are 50% more likely to be obese than non-Hispanic whites. AI/AN youth are 30% more likely to be obese. (HHS)

Defining Community Health (slide 34)

Community health is a medical specialty that focuses on the physical and mental well-being of the people in a specific geographic region. This important subsection of public health includes initiatives to help community members maintain and improve their health, prevent the spread of infectious diseases and prepare for disasters.

“Working at the community level promotes healthy living, helps prevent chronic diseases and brings the greatest health benefits to the greatest number of people in need,” reports the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Pandemics and Pre-existing conditions (slide 35)

The higher prevalence of pre-existing conditions makes Indigenous people more vulnerable to pandemics like COVID-19

COVID-19 has been shown to be more deadly in obese individuals and those with pre-existing health conditions

Adjusted for age, COVID-19 mortality was 1.8 times higher in Indigenous communities than among white persons (CDC)

The Importance of Elders (slide 36)

COVID-19 has been especially devastating to AIAN communities because of the importance of elders and the interconnectedness of community life

Elders are an extremely important part of many Indigenous societies. They are often considered the pillars of the community and are beloved by many even outside of their own families. They are also often highly respected as knowledge-holders, Native language-speakers, leaders (both official and unofficial) and sources of important traditional guidance and wisdom.

The Importance of Elders (slide 37)

During the COVID-19 pandemic, protecting elders, who are especially vulnerable, quickly became the rallying cry of AIAN communities. The loss of these valued community members is widely considered one of the most emotionally and culturally devastating impacts of the pandemic.

Climate change threats to health for already-vulnerable communities (slide 38)

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Air quality: climate change is expected to increase health risks associated with air quality, including Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disorder, asthma and other respiratory illnesses

Water: Rising temperatures and more frequent rains in some areas will exacerbate existing water quality issues, including the prevalence of harmful algae, bacteria and waterborne viruses

Food: Climate change threatens many nutritious and culturally significant foods, exacerbating existing issues around food insecurity, food access (food deserts) and nutritional deficiencies

Further Reading: the United States Environmental Protection Agency. (n.d.). *Climate Change and the Health of Indigenous People*. Retrieved from <https://www.cmu.edu/steinbrenner/EPA%20Factsheets/indigenous-health-climate-change.pdf>

Climate Change Threats to Infrastructure (slide 39)

Climate change threatens roads, bridges and other critical infrastructure through the frequency of intense weather events, such as storms and mudslides

Storms can damage already fragile communications infrastructure, especially in rural communities

Winter storms make it more difficult to reach spread-out communities, putting already vulnerable elders at risk from downed trees and extreme cold

These factors can make it difficult or impossible to get help in an emergency by making it harder to communicate and limiting (or even eliminating) routes to nearby hospitals

Case Study: Winter Storm Evelyn (slide 40)

In April 2018, Winter Storm Evelyn dropped over 30 inches of snow on northcentral Wisconsin, including the Menominee reservation and the community of Middle Village. In addition to heavy snowfall, the storm included sleet, freezing rain and gusty winds. The weight of the snow caused roof collapses throughout the affected area. Winter conditions forced the closure of the Menominee Tribal Clinic and created dangerous travel conditions for even the most experienced drivers.

Snowplows deployed by the Menominee Tribal Emergency Management Department spent days clearing the main roadways and plowing the driveways of elders' homes to assist in emergency response. Power outages were reported, as well as outages in telecommunications. A few weeks later, when the snow melted, the nearby Wolf River was overwhelmed, causing the flooding of downtown Keshena. Community members came together to dig out their homes and check on the elderly and ill.

Closing Activity:

Can be completed as a class or individually.

You are the relief coordinator in charge of responding to an environmental disaster in an Indigenous community with which you have no prior relationship.

- What are the things you would like to know before you engage with that community to help them recover?
- What are the questions you would ask of leadership when helping to respond to that situation?
- What are your concerns about how the community and/or leadership might respond to you?
- Compare these to your answers at the beginning of this module. How have your concerns, attitudes and approaches changed?
- Emergency disaster response often takes place in a very quick timeframe, which leaves little room for the relationship- and trust-building necessary for productive planning. How does this sense of urgency influence your approach to this scenario?

Module #3

Working with Indigenous Sovereignty

Learning Objectives

- To build foundational knowledge of multifaceted solutions led by Indigenous communities to combat climate change, COVID-19 and systemic oppression
- To gain a contextual understanding of Indigenous communities' relationships to place as they inform community practices and decision-making.
- To gain a better appreciation for the integral role of trust in building relationships between oneself and Indigenous communities
- To understand resilience as a community effort within a cultural context
- To identify the ways in which these systems interact against climate justice during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Sections

- 1) Introduction
- 2) Indigenous Actions
- 3) Indigenous Communities & COVID-19

4) Role of the Emergency Responder

Section 1: Introductions

The Rise of a Community

For thousands of years, Indigenous Peoples have cared for and cultivated the lands and waterways of Turtle Island, now known as Canada, the United States, and Mexico. Despite centuries of murder, erasure, and other settler colonial violence, these practices of care for the earth have remained. Not only have these traditions survived in Indigenous communities, they are also being revived to address and reverse the impacts of climate change, as well as to restore our relationships as humans to the earth and our non-human relatives.

In this module, we will start with the introduction of mindful concepts to consider while recognizing the power and value of Indigenous sovereignty and agency. We will then move into a small portion of examples that shed light on Indigenous communities' pre-existing abilities to respond to and mitigate emergency situations and climate change impacts, which emergency responders have the responsibility of understanding and assisting. These examples include:

- Traditional Ecological Knowledge & Language Revitalization,
- Fire Ecology,
- Food Sovereignty,
- Energy Sovereignty, and
- Self-Determination in COVID-19 Response

We will then shift the conversation from the practices Indigenous Peoples use and have used to preserve and/or restore the wellbeing of our non-human relatives, to the roles and responsibilities emergency responders have to Indigenous Peoples when entering their communities. This section of the module will focus on policy documents (usually issued by FEMA), as well as how the protocols introduced by these policies may differ from the values represented in many tribal protocols. During this section, we encourage you to engage in critical thinking and literacy. Some questions to consider when reviewing these policies include:

- What are the intentions of this document? What is it for?
- Who is it intended to serve? (Who is it protecting?)
- What improvements are needed in current Emergency Management policies and plans?

- What can I do to improve the state of relations and response?

Introductory Activity:

Before diving into the content of this module, we invite you to engage in a metacognitive activity. This is meant to be done with multiple people; if you are engaging with this module alone, we encourage you to invite your friends and/or family to engage in this activity with you. While this is a visual exercise, it is not an art contest. There should be no judgments toward the drawings you or anyone creates, even internally. However, you should continue to observe your own thought process as you decide what to draw and where. You are the relief coordinator in charge of responding to an environmental disaster in an Indigenous community with which you have no prior relationship.

First, everyone should grab a blank sheet of paper and a pencil, and make sure to have a flat surface to draw upon.

- At the top of the paper, write “What can you do with this circle?” Without showing anyone, draw a circle on the paper. Do not include your name.

- Set a timer for 5 minutes, and with that time, have everyone draw whatever comes to their mind to do with the circle. When the timer beeps, put down the pencil.

- Collect the papers, shuffle them, and hand them back in a random order. If someone gets their own paper back, have them switch with another person.

- In a circle, discuss what similarities you notice between what you drew and the paper you hold now. Discuss the differences. Find the owner of the paper you hold and return it; then in a group, discuss the thoughts that came to mind while you all were deciding what to do with this circle?

Once this activity has ended, reflect upon the following questions:

- What feelings did you experience when you drew the circle? What feelings did you experience during the 5 minutes of drawing?

- What inspired you to draw what you did in your circle? What does your drawing remind you of?

- Was there a single right way to draw? Was a mathematically “imperfect” circle still a circle?

This activity is meant to shed light on both the constant potential for improvement when it comes to our relationships with the world (and the people) around us, as well as the infinite nuances that come with response. For centuries, the United States has imposed its own

protocols for life and liberty on Indigenous Peoples, which has in turn inflicted centuries of harm. If you are engaging with this learning tool, it means that you are passionate about changing the tide, or rather, the tidal wave that has been “law and order,” policies and legalities, especially concerning the handling of emergency situations. While the United States has drawn its circle, Indigenous communities have drawn and redrawn their circles for thousands and thousands of years. It is necessary that emergency responders begin to recognize the significance of Indigenous practices, beliefs, and solutions before entering these communities.

Mindsets for Productive Relationships

While there are many helpful mindsets to consider prior to working with Indigenous Peoples, two that can be impactful in recognizing Indigenous agency and the potential for positive relational change are *indigenuity* and a *growth mindset*.

Indigenuity: Created by the combination of “Indigenous” or “Indigeneity” and “Ingenuity,” Indigenuity is a framework that focuses on the deep spatial knowledge Indigenous Peoples have collected of their homelands for thousands of years, in order to understand and address the pressing life issues humanity faces today. Unlike many “solutions” to man-made problems, Indigenuity calls upon all of us to consider both the wellbeing and behaviors of all life forms and ecosystems before moving forward with any man-made solutions. As Dr. Dan Wildcat explains, “Indigenuity frames solutions in terms beyond a singular fixation on rights and counterbalances those concerns with a recognition of inalienable responsibilities humankind has to our plant, animal, and other natural relatives with whom we share this planet” ([MONAH](#)). It is essential to recognize Indigenuity when addressing emergency or disaster situations, as Indigenous communities have kept thousands of years of knowledge to inform best practices for such situations. Returning to the circle exercise above, there are infinite nuances to consider when responding to an emergency situation, many of which Indigenous communities have already discovered and incorporated into their own protocols.

Growth Mindset: The “growth mindset” was developed by Dr. Carol Dweck and was popularized in her book *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success*. This mindset has been introduced in many educational institutions to inform teaching practices. To begin, the way Dr. Dweck describes a mindset as “a self-perception or ‘self-theory’ that people hold about themselves” ([2013](#)). For instance, if an individual believes they are a “bad person” or a “good person,” those are examples of mindsets. Taking these simple mindsets a step further, if a person were to believe that they were inherently a “bad” person, and were thus confined to behaviors matching this belief, that would be considered a fixed mindset. A fixed mindset describes an internal belief a person could hold that they have a fixed set of skills, talents, and personality characteristics that will not go through development, as well as that talent alone leads to success.

In comparison, a growth mindset is a belief that while we may have inherent skills and talents, we are also capable of developing new skills and strengthening the talents we already have. As Dr. Dweck writes, “In a growth mindset, people believe that their most basic abilities can be developed through dedication and hard work—brains and talent are just the starting point. This view creates a love of learning and a resilience that is essential for great accomplishment.”

In the context of working alongside Indigenous communities to implement solutions for climate-based and/or emergency situations, it is important to keep a growth mindset in order to hold a loving space for the knowledge exchanged and the growth you experience while in community.

Section 2: Modern Indigenous Practices

Traditional Ecological Knowledge

Many of the examples in this module are examples of the applications of Traditional Ecological Knowledge. Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK), also known as “Indigenous Knowledge” or “Native Sciences” encapsulates all knowledge Indigenous Peoples have learned and retained over tens or hundreds of millennia regarding the physical world and how to live as a part of it. While TEK is involved in all of the following examples of Indigenous practices, we introduce it as one of the many practices due to its survival and revival after centuries of settler-induced erasure and abuse. Although the term was initially coined by Western scientists, Indigenous scholars have come to bring a deeper understanding of both the significance and the expansiveness of TEK. Yet, scholars like Dr. Kyle Powys Whyte (Potawatomi) have created a functional understanding for the term that allows for easier comprehension. In his article, “On the role of traditional ecological knowledge as a collaborative concept: a philosophical study,” Dr. Whyte writes, “[TEK] serves to invite diverse populations to continually learn from one another about how each approaches the very question of ‘knowledge’ in the first place, and how these different approaches can be blended to better steward natural resources and adapt to climate change” (Whyte 2013).

Other Indigenous Scholars have created comprehensive concepts for the functionality of TEK. Specifically, Dr. Dan Wildcat (Yuchi Mvskoke) and Dr. Raymond Pierotti write in their 2000 commentary article, “Traditional Ecological Knowledge: The Third Alternative,” that there are two basic concepts to understand of TEK. They are:

1. “All things are connected, which is conceptually related to Western community ecology,” and
2. “All things are related, which changes the emphasis from the human to the ecological community as the focus of theories concerning nature” ([Pierotti & Wildcat 2000](#)).

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After centuries of colonial disrespect for Indigenous knowledge, TEK as a framework serves to validate these wisdoms and practices. When TEK is used in modern decision- and solution-making, there can be very positive impacts for Indigenous communities, especially for young people. Positive impacts include:

- Promotion of Indigenous sciences and scholarship in white-dominated fields (hence the birth of TEK as terminology);
- Incorporation of spirituality and relation into epistemology and other fields considered “hard science”;
- Encouragement of Indigenous language revitalization in efforts to apply Indigenous terms to ecological phenomena and cultural understandings of them (no language, no culture); and
- Provision of “a practical tool that helps Indigenous communities adapt to climate risks and promotes socio-ecological resilience, which upholds social empowerment and sustainable resource management” ([Hamzah et. al. 2019](#)).

Some of these impacts have been observed in the communities our curriculum team members represent, but we also invite learners to explore more of the literature on Traditional Ecological Knowledge.

Activity: Watch the video called “Traditional Ecological Knowledge & Place-based Learning Communities” ([Humboldt PBLC 2019](#)) and reflect on the following questions:

- How did this video challenge your view of earth sciences?
- What made this video especially impactful to you?
- How can you apply the perspectives shared in the video to the rest of your journey through this curriculum?

Fire Ecology (Slide 11)

Fire ecology is a branch of ecology that focuses on the origins of wildland fire and its relationship to the environment that surrounds it, both living and non-living. A wildland fire is defined as any fire that is burning in a natural environment. Fire ecologists recognize that fire is a natural process, and that it often operates as an integral part of the ecosystem in which it occurs. (Definition from Pacific Biodiversity Institute)

Management by Fire (Slides 12-16)

Slide 12:

One of the most devastating and immediately visible impacts of climate change is the increase of severe wildfires.

The intensity of these wildfires is amplified in part by the steady accumulation of fuels in areas where controlled burning has been prohibited.

Following a series of devastating wildfires, the US Forest Service adopted a policy of automatically extinguishing all wildfires– a policy quickly adopted by other land management agencies at the state and federal level in the interest of saving lives.

This has created a positive feedback loop: adopting a zero tolerance policy on fire (that all fire is bad and needs to be extinguished immediately) leads to a build-up of fuels on the landscape, which in turn makes wildfires more devastating and harder to control. Wildfires release carbon back into the atmosphere, making climate change more intense, which leads to more drought, leading to more dead and dry timberland. Because that dead and dry timber is not burned at a beneficial time, it serves as kindling for the next wildfire, which increases fear about fire, and so on.

Slide 13:

Indigenous people all over the world have long used controlled burning as a land management tool to clear land for camp, create habitat for certain wildlife, and manage culturally-significant, fire-adapted tree and plant species such as high-elevation white pine and several types of eucalyptus.

Slide 14:

Controlled burning also has the effect of mitigating the intensity of wildfires by reducing available fuel loads – dead and dry timber – which act as kindling for fires.

This is achieved through the use of “good fire”– carefully timed, closely monitored fires that are allowed to burn in favorable weather conditions. This important cultural practice is as integral to the identity of some Tribes as it is the landscape.

Slide 15:

Two videos:

“Fire Belongs Here” - Karuk Climate Change Projects, 2:06

Members of the Karuk fire team describe the importance of prescribed burns for the landscape and call for a positive relationship with fire.

“Tishaniik Ceremonial Burn” - Prescribed Fire Training Exchange, 5:30

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Members of the Tishaniik Fire team describe the prescribed fire program and the importance of fire to traditional harvesting as well as the cultural connection of managing land through fire.

Case Study: The Karuk Tribe (Slides 17-18)

Since time immemorial, the Karuk Tribe of California has been using prescribed burns to manage their ancestral homelands. When the zero-tolerance policy on wildfires was instated, it put an end to tens of thousands of years of culturally- and ecologically-crucial burning.

In the 1960s and '70s, the National Park Service and the US Forest Service rolled back their policy, realizing the devastating effect it was having on certain tree species, such as the sequoia. But public fears and political pressure still prohibited controlled burns on certain public lands-- a problem for the Karuk in particular, as many of their ancestral lands were appropriated for the Klamath National Forest.

After many years of intertribal efforts, the Karuk and other California tribes have been given the green light to resume prescribed burns. Indigenous wildland firefighters give gratitude to the fire and to the land and work with agency partners to coordinate the burn.

More information: [\(link\)](#)

Discussion questions:

- Why could fire be considered a management tool?
- Is fire a “natural” process? Meaning: does fire occur naturally in an ecosystem or is it considered a human process?
- Are there other tools that could be used to achieve the same effects as fire but are less dangerous?
- Although the policy of fire suppression has been in place for many years, some foresters blame Smokey the Bear for a negative attitude about fire in the general public that is driven by a lack of scientific understanding. Some, however, have credited Smokey the Bear with a necessary understanding of proper forest safety. What are the pros and cons of popular dialogue around fire suppression? Is it possible for a helpful message about safety to become harmful if the message is too simplistic?

Activity (individual):

While wildfires undoubtedly have the potential to be very disruptive and destructive, there are also species that have become adapted to the use of fire as management. Some, like the Jack Pine, are actually fire-dependent and require fire as part of their life cycle in order to thrive. Identify 3-5 species that have become fire-adapted.

Food Sovereignty

While this terminology has begun to appear more frequently in Indigenous Justice discourse, the idea has remained the same for generations. As it is written in the Declaration of Nyéléni in 2007, “Food sovereignty is the right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems. It puts the aspirations and needs of those who produce, distribute and consume food at the heart of food systems and policies rather than the demands of markets and corporations.” This quote, as well as other information on the growing “movement” of food sovereignty can be found in the resource below:

Resource: *Food Sovereignty*. U.S. Food Sovereignty Alliance. (n.d.).
<http://usfoodsovereigntyalliance.org/what-is-food-sovereignty/>.

Prior to the imposition of Western agricultural practices, Indigenous food systems not only provided plentifully for communities, but also connected peoples to their lands. As one Hawaiian proverb says, “Huli i ka lima i lalo, ola; huli ka lima i luna, make.” This translates to: “When hands are turned down (to the ground), there is life; when hands are turned up (toward the sky), there is death. The idea being that when our hands are faced down, we are working with the land, and it brings us life. However, when we turn our hands upward as if to ask for something to be done, we aren’t being responsible for life-sustaining practices (like food cultivation). Similarly, the National Indian Food Council on Aging has found that food sovereignty in Indigenous communities increases peoples’ relationships to their lands, their cultures, and their community. Practicing food sovereignty also decreases food insecurity and the rates of diet-related illnesses in Indigenous Peoples by prioritizing the cultivation of traditional, organic, and healthier foods. Last, but certainly not least, having sovereignty-based food programs like farm-to-school or farm-to-table decrease the need for shipping, processing, or packaging, and thus decrease the production of environmental pollutants.

The movement of food sovereignty has now taken many forms, from backyard gardens, to opening restaurants that use traditional foods, to changing the way Indigenous children eat in schools. One other key form that has developed is called “Seed Sovereignty.” This not only decreases the market for single-use seeds, but also provides Indigenous Peoples the opportunity to plant things that their ancestors once did, which many may not have otherwise had the chance today.

Activity (Part 1): Watch “Indigenous Seed Keepers Network” (citation below) and consider the following questions:

- In what ways did you see seeds represent community and culture in the video?
- What are your experiences with seeds? Do you plant foods or other gardens?
- Who is served by having seeds be so far removed from a majority of Americans’ tables?

White, R., & Nelson, M. K. (2019). Indigenous Seed Keepers Network.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=looHPLjXi2g>.

Activity (Part 2): Returning to the topic of farm-to-school initiatives, in 1989, the White Earth Land Recovery Project was founded. It focuses on the critical food state of the White Earth Reservation and how to bring traditional foods back into their families’ diets. One way the project has strived to do so is to develop a farm-to-school program and curriculum guide in 2008. As a second part to the activity above, take some time to go over the sections of the following curriculum guide. If this is being taught in a class, it may be helpful to create groups and assign individual chapters to these groups. This way, the class can come together to synthesize what they understood about each facet of the program.

Curriculum Guide:

Jackson, K. (2012). Indigenous Farm to School Programs: A Guide for Creating a Farm to School Program in an Indigenous Community. The White Earth Land Recovery Project.
https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/honorearth/pages/222/attachments/original/1390858099/INDIGENOUS_FARM_TO_SCHOOL_PROGRAMS.pdf?1390858099.

One place in which food sovereignty is desperately needed is Hawai’i. On these occupied Indigenous lands, roughly eighty-five to ninety percent of foods are imported to serve the islands’ residents and visitors. It is estimated that, if imports were to suddenly stop, the current food supply across the islands would most likely last “less than a week” ([Woody 2015](#)). This is a stark example for what a lack of food sovereignty looks like. To raise awareness of this issue, as well as the fact that the islands once served upwards of one million people pre-contact and pre-importation, three high school seniors of Kamehameha Schools - Kapālama Campus embarked on *The Hāloa Challenge*. For ninety days in 2014, these students replaced the staple foods they had been used to consuming with the taro that they had personally harvested, cooked, and prepared in traditional ways. Today, the organization that supported this challenge (Hui Aloha ‘Āina Momona) has repurposed the COVID-19 pandemic into a time for Kanaka ‘Ōiwi to revive their connections to land, one taro stalk at a time. Instead of hosting “Ku‘i at the Capitol” - an annual for Hawaiians to pound taro traditionally -

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Hui Aloha ʻĀina Momona donated thousands of taro stalks to encourage residents to begin backyard taro patches.

There are so many other initiatives having to do with food sovereignty that we highly encourage learners to research the term and the actions taking place in your own community to support local food growth. For now, here is one last activity on the topic of food sovereignty.

Activity: Choose to watch either of the following videos:

- Reader, T., Johnson, T. D., & Paganelli, M. (2012). Harvesting Cholla Buds. YouTube. Tohono O'odham Community Action. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ayDa6CDdwVA>.
- Morales, R. (2013). Traditional Agricultural Practices of the Oneida Nation. YouTube. FastPlants. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hxcZsF_-SMo.

While you're watching, consider all that you have seen of this module so far. Revisit the framework of Indigenuity and how it applies to the actions of these nations. It is also encouraged that you or students take note of the wisdoms that resonate. Don't get caught up in transcribing the video - just sit with it.

Energy Sovereignty (slide 24)

Energy Sovereignty is the application of Indigenous sovereignty principles and concepts to energy generation and use.

Because energy use is integral to everything from business to education to food production, a community's dependence on external energy generation directly relates to that community's independence as a whole.

In light of the debate over renewable energy and fossil fuels, energy use is also an important medium for exercising cultural responsibilities to place and to others, as well as a way to integrate cultural values into the very infrastructure of a community.

****If necessary, refer back to the definitions for sovereignty given throughout this curriculum and in the key terms in the front material****

Energy Use on Tribal Lands (slide 25)

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While American Indian land only comprises 2% of total US land, the National Renewable Energy Laboratory estimates that Indian lands contain 5% of all renewable energy resource potential.

For example, the map on this slide from the National Renewable Energy Laboratory illustrates the direct normal solar irradiance. Direct Normal Irradiation (DNI) is the amount of solar radiation received per unit area by a surface that is always held perpendicular (or normal) to the rays that come in a straight line from the direction of the sun at its current position in the sky. This number is of particular importance to concentrated solar thermal installations. One will notice that areas of the Southwest, where there are prevalent numbers of Native Americans and Native lands, offer great potential for such systems.

Renewable Energy Potential (slide 26)

This map, also from the National Renewable Energy Laboratory, shows the potential for many different types of renewable energy generation. North Dakota, site of extensive conflict over oil pipeline construction, shows excellent potential for wind turbines while other areas with high Native populations show potential for biomass and geothermal energy.

Despite this potential, AIAN communities are among the most energy-underserved communities in the country, coping with outdated infrastructure, inadequate electrical and heating systems, and high costs for service when services are actually available. The Navajo Nation alone, located in an area with high solar potential, has an estimated 15,000 families who do not have electricity in their homes.

- Article, “Did You Know That There Are 60,000 US Citizens Who Lack Access to Electricity?” October 2020 - Power Magazine, link here: <https://www.powermag.com/did-you-know-there-are-60000-u-s-citizens-who-lack-access-to-electricity/>

With this in mind, many Tribal communities have turned to renewable energy to meet their growing needs.

Energy and Community Resilience (slide 27)

In addition to promoting cultural values, energy sovereignty (especially that which focuses on renewable energy) promotes resilience in a community economically.

Renewable energy programs create skilled jobs and can be a great source of employment when paired with skills training. Greater economic stability is often directly correlated with a community's ability to recover from a major disaster.

The comparable independence of renewable energy sources like solar also equips a community to have functioning energy within hours of a disaster, mitigating the immediate impacts to heat, water safety, and telecommunication during the recovery phase.

Case Study: Blue Lake Rancheria (slides 28-30)

Video: Blue Lake Rancheria Microgrid: <https://youtu.be/15uKkmJmQ64>

In 2017, the Blue Lake Rancheria, a reservation in Northern California, launched its new low-carbon microgrid. In non-disaster times, this microgrid helps to power both governmental offices and Tribal businesses in its 100 acre service area.

In October 2019, in the midst of devastating wildfires, Pacific Gas and Electric (PG&E) made the decision to shut off power to millions of customers. The decision was made to prevent further wildfires from power equipment throwing off sparks and igniting brush. Millions of Californians across 30 counties were impacted.

The Blue Lake Rancheria microgrid went into “island mode”, which allows the microgrid to function on a Tesla battery without risk to electrical workers. During the blackout, they were one of the only places in Northern California with power.

When COVID-19 hit, there was concern that the shut-down of local businesses would cause an overload for the Blue Lake microgrid. However, thanks to an innovative design for its model-based adaptive controller, the microgrid has continued to function as an invaluable resource to the Tribe. They have used the energy generated to run a pre-packaged meal program for the elderly across a 1,400 square-mile territory.

The microgrid saves the Tribe an estimated \$200,000 in energy costs per year.

Discussion: In this unit, we have learned about two new forms of sovereignty: food sovereignty and energy sovereignty.

- **Why do Indigenous peoples view food systems and energy use as issues of sovereignty?**
 - **Is this different from how non-Indigenous Americans view these topics? How? Why do you think that is?**
- **What other forms might sovereignty take?**

Section 3: Indigenous Communities Through COVID-19 (slides 31-37)

Indigenous Leadership in Action (slides 32-34)

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Indigenous communities and populations faced disproportionate rates of infection and death. This pandemic not only brought the loss of lives, but like all historic

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pandemics, it also caused a severe loss of cultural knowledges and languages. Thus, it was pertinent that tribal leadership acted quickly in determining the best ways to keep communities safe. One way that many tribes in Montana and other Midwestern states maintained health and safety was by implementing mask mandates, even after the rest of their local state governments had removed similar mandates. Specifically, the Blackfeet Nation, the Fort Belknap Indian Community, and the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes continued social distancing, stay-at-home orders, curfews, and other safety practices to decrease the rate of infection, even after the rest of the state had begun experiencing lax safety protocols. As many Indigenous families continue to live in multigenerational households, these protocols were important in protecting elders and the wisdoms they have yet to pass down.

In some nations, these protocols also included supporting and funding free drive-thru testing for COVID-19 ([McFarling 2020](#)), issuing lockdowns ([Navajo Department of Health 2021](#)), and initiating traffic checkpoints for all those traveling through reservation lands ([Fugleberg 2020](#)). Some of these issuances of safety protocols in Indigenous communities, compared to that of state governments, certainly represents the lack of relation between tribal and state governments, as well as the issue of jurisdiction. In South Dakota, the Oglala Sioux and Cheyenne River Sioux Tribes were indeed threatened with a lawsuit by Gov. Kristi Noem for initiating said traffic checkpoints - the case being that these checkpoints were “unlawfully turning people away” ([Fugleberg 2020](#)). These checkpoints were set on state and federal highways, but those highways go directly through a sovereign tribal territory. The Sioux Tribes involved accepted the threat of suit, and thus demonstrated the importance of community safety over commercial demands.

Vaccine Distribution: Once COVID-19 vaccines became available to Indigenous communities, many tribal leaders led the country in distribution. In fact, in Lummi Nation, the rate of administered vaccines had passed even that of the surrounding Whatcom County in February 2021, such that the sovereign nation had begun sharing their supply of vaccines with members of the Ferndale School District (mostly non-tribal). It is because of their generosity that as of June 2021, 67 percent of Whatcom County residents aged 16 and up have been fully vaccinated.

Nationwide, Indian Health Service received 68,400 vaccines in December 2020, all of which went to the frontline health workers in Indigenous communities. Once larger quantities of the vaccine reached tribes, some leaders also made the decision to vaccinate Indigenous language keepers first. In January 2021, the Standing Rock Sioux Tribal leaders made a decision like this, the tribal chairman Mike Faith stating, “It’s something we have to pass on to our loved ones, our history, our culture, our language. We don’t have it black and white, we tell stories. That’s why it’s so important” ([AP News 2021](#)). Faith also explained that, of the residents on the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation (approximately eight thousand people), only about three hundred are fluent in a Dakota or Lakota language. It is so important for these language keepers to be vaccinated because, as is believed in many Indigenous communities, without language, there is no culture.

Last, but most certainly not least, some leaders in Indigenous education also made the call to offer free or reduced tuition to students attending a Tribal College or University. Two examples include the

free tuition for Tribally-enrolled (or Native Hawaiian) students offered by Tohono O’odham Community College, and the fifty percent reduction to tuition costs offered by Northwest Indian College. During the hardships families and students were facing in the COVID-19 pandemic, these colleges improved the accessibility of education by removing all or some of the financial barriers.

Indigenuity as People (slides 35-36)

In this portion of the module, there will not be many sources due to the fact that many of our scholars on this curriculum team witnessed and participated in these amazing emergences in community-based indigenuity. However, we still encourage you to use some key terms to learn more about the ways Indigenous communities stayed connected despite lockdowns, social distancing, event cancellations, and other pandemic-related precautions.

The Social Distance Powwow: When it became clear that the pandemic would last longer than the two weeks that had initially been introduced, many powwow goers began to miss these events that not only celebrated the culture of powwow (specifically the regalia, the dances, drumming, and singing), but also brought communities together and allowed local vendors to sell their products from beaded jewelry, to food, to medicines and salves. Thus, Native Facebook users across the United States and Canada came together when Dan Simonds, Stephanie Hebert, and Whitney Rencountre created the Social Distance Powwow (SDP) and SDP Marketplace groups. Every weekend, dancers, drummers, and singers were encouraged to post videos of their dances, sometimes even for cash prizes. While videos were posted throughout the week, posts on the powwow weekends gained upwards of two to three thousand reactions, and the group has been followed by almost 250,000 Facebook Users, including Indigenous and non-Indigenous.

This was also a place for ceremony, celebration (especially for Indigenous graduates), and awareness. There have been multiple red jingle special events to honor and remember the missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls, and two-spirit peoples (MMIWG2S), as well as prayer and song offerings. The marketplace group has also hosted clothing designers and artists who have created masks, t-shirts, and other items to raise awareness for MMIWG2S and the children who were murdered or abused to death in residential schools. Through these groups, Indigenous Peoples have been able to access a virtual space of healing, connection, and culture, while non-Indigenous people have had the privilege of learning more about contemporary Indigenous experiences.

From groups like these, even more virtual spaces were created for Indigenous learning, and particularly Indigenous language learning. One Instagram page in particular began to celebrate and share Hawaiian language, called “E Ho‘opili Mai.” Today, the creator John Solatorio hosts weekly Zoom sessions for beginning, intermediate, and advanced learners, and posts regular videos with new words and phrases. Other Indigenous language pages have been created as well, making language learning more accessible from the home. Indigenous-led conferences and speaker series have arisen from the switch from in-person to online spaces, and many organizers have removed the cost for attending these events. In June 2021, the [Women are Sacred Conference](#) was hosted solely online, and the organizers decided to waive the registration fee for those under the age of 24, thus

giving access to students. While the dilemma exists of using white-owned platforms, Indigenous communities have been proactive in using virtual spaces for connection and continued learning.

Offline and during the stay-at-home orders, many Indigenous Peoples also found the time to learn and/or practice traditional ways of hunting, gathering, and farming. Due to a lack of human-commercial impact, many ecosystems began to experience repair. Waters were clearing, air pollutants around the world dissipated in urban areas, and some endangered species even experienced an uptick in population growth. Backyard gardens became more popular with the extra time spent at home, and families were spending more time together. While the pandemic brought innumerable tragedies, it also granted many the opportunity to reconnect with their homelands and the non-human relatives around them.

Activity: Discussion and Reflection (slide 37)

In this section, there are many instances of Indigenous resilience even in the face of an international crisis. However, we encourage you all to think deeper about resilience as something that can have a positive impact, as well as something that can confine a community to stoicism without healing, which can leave lasting negative impacts. Before moving on to the next section of the module, consider and discuss the following questions:

- What does 'resilience' mean to you?
- While resilience can be meaningful, how can we create more room for healing within ourselves and our communities?
- How has COVID-19 impacted your relationship with place and our non-human relatives? Do you notice more connection with the outside world or less?
- What fears do you have when it comes to mitigating between tribal communities and public institutions (universities, federal departments and agencies, etc.)?

Section 4: The Role of the Emergency Responder (slides 38-46)

The Necessity of Relationships (slide 39)

More so than non-Indigenous societies, the importance of relationships in Tribal communities cannot be overstated.

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Historical breaches of trust and accountability have permanently colored the interactions between Tribes and non-Tribal entities.

Federal agencies engaging with Tribes need to understand trust as an ongoing process, as well as the disproportionate risk* that Tribes carry in these interactions.

*Some of these risks include things like loss of data sovereignty, inappropriate use and proliferation of traditional knowledge, exploitation by outside entities seeking to capitalize on recent tragedies, and the encroachment of the non-Native public into sacred sites and into gathering sites for traditional medicines.

Mindful Practices in Relationship Building (slide 40)

Here we would like to recall the “7 R’s” published by Michelle Montgomery and Paulette Blanchard to talk about ethical practices as emergency responders, educators, and overall, relationship builders. Please take the time to review this additional component once again, as well as the original article published in the Solutions Journal, called “Testing Justice: New Ways to Address Environmental Inequality” ([Montgomery and Blanchard 2021](#)).

Below is a copy of the 7 R’s chart from the introduction to this curriculum guide (originally published in Montgomery and Blanchard, 2021) related to ethical relationships:

<i>7 R's of Indigenous Research</i>		
Respect	RESPECT OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES CULTURAL INTEGRITY. Respect, not just as individuals, but more fundamentally as a people. We/they are expected to leave the cultural predispositions from their world at the door and assume the trappings of a new form of reality, a reality which is often substantially different from their own. While this seems simple, many non-Native people are unaware of the vast differences between cultures, political relationships, and social constructs between them and many Indigenous Peoples. Tribes are land-based people who each have nation-to-nation relationships with the federal, states, and other tribes. Most use traditional knowledges and science along with western sciences and technologies. They have histories that predate “America” by thousands of years. It is important to have humility and be respectful of the Peoples and the more-than-human	Sovereign nations spirituality place connectedness histories culture protocols/etiquettes language land individual & communal sovereign

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	<p>relatives and the relationships of place. Leaders and communities must have trust, consent, and input on all work done in service to peoples and places.</p>	<p>gender fluidity differ from other tribes consent/trust</p>
<p>Relevance</p>	<p>Eber Hampton, a Chickasaw originally from Oklahoma has tried to identify some of the qualities that he considers important in constructing an "Indian theory of education." (Hampton, 1988, p. 19) which also applies to other engagements with Indigenous communities and places. He lists the following as twelve "standards" on which to judge any such effort that can be applied to working with Tribes generally: * Spirituality - an appreciation for spiritual relationships. * Service - the purpose of education is to contribute to the people, * Diversity - Indian education must meet the standards of diverse tribes and communities. * Culture - the importance of culturally determined ways of thinking, communicating and living. * Tradition - continuity with tradition. * Respect - the relationship between the individual and the group recognized as mutually empowering. * History - appreciation of the facts of Indian history, including the loss of the continent and continuing racial and political oppression. * Relentlessness - commitment to the struggle for good schools for Indian children, * Vitality - recognition of the strength of Indian people and culture, * Conflict - understanding the dynamics and consequences of oppression * Place - the importance of 'sense of place, land and territory, * Transformation - commitment to personal and societal change. Is the work or research inclusive and of value to the Peoples and places? How will they benefit? What is the commitment to the People? How does your work and interest support and strengthen their sovereignty and self-determination? Is the work engaging the needs of the community and place the people live, work, and play?</p>	<p>there must be purpose of what is studied and learned To community To people To place To the next generations To the land To the more-than-human beings</p>

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<p>Reciprocity</p>	<p>create reciprocity in ways that are appropriate to each participant's needs or requests, such as contributing my time and labor to assist with community needs</p> <p>What ways does the research give back to the community? How does your work benefit Indigenous People and place? Are they included in the development of the questions, methods, and collection of data? If you are asking for information or access to information, place, or whatever, what are you giving in return? Does your work empower the community and make their lives better? According to who? Who decides? Who owns the data?</p>	<p>Giving back to;</p> <p>Place</p> <p>More-than-human beings</p> <p>Community</p> <p>Families</p> <p>Individuals</p> <p>No extractive research</p>
<p>Responsibility</p>	<p>Knowledge has responsibilities and one extra part of responsibility is accountability. The days of dropping into a community, extracting information and leaving to never return is gone. There is so knowleges not for outsiders and researchers must accept this and support Indigenous rights to their own knowledges. You as the researchers must be accountable and respectful of where you are and be mindful that you are a visitor. You are not allowed to publish whatever you feel like because some information can be detrimental to the people you are working with. You are responsible to empower not hurt and violate Peoples and Places with your research, methods, analysis, and assumptions. If your work doesn't center the community and place needs, why are you doing the work? Who is benefiting?</p>	<p>Not all information and knowledge are for consumption</p> <p>Knowledge is responsibility not power. They are not synonymous</p> <p>Accountability is part of the responsibilities to place and each other</p>
<p>Relatedness</p>	<p>there must be acknowledgment of connectedness to all beings of place and the relationships of reciprocity that exists between all entities of place. What appears to be chaos is often collaboration between species. Systems and patterns are the ways of life everything is dependent on for survival, identities, and especially the important part of the relationship of place by recognizing how all things are connected and related, an interdependence if</p>	<p>All things are related. Things like water and rocks have essences that can be considered life. Energy is life.</p> <p>All things are related, minerals, and other elements of the Earth are shared and necessary for</p>

	you may.	health and all communities to thrive.
Relationships	Western science considers any kind of relationship with research subjects as biases and Indigenous science considers relationships. Like any relationship there is work. Relationships between all beings, human and more-than-human beings require respect, understanding, nurturing, and care. If you care for place, the place cares for you by providing shelter, food, water and other necessities needed for life to thrive. Relationships are interactive and not limited to humans. Animals and plants have relationships of reciprocity or interdependence.	relationships of reciprocity exist between all entities of place. In relationships, there must be purpose, relevance, care, opportunities to thrive and grow
Redistribution	Information learned must be shared so that all in the community can access, understand, and implement what is learned into their lives as it is useful to them. Information must be in a format that is appropriate for them and their systems of knowledge exchange and is transmittable easily across generations and exchangeable with other neighboring communities	Written In their language As art/pictures/painting Song Dance Story/storytelling

Source: Montgomery and Blanchard, 2021

Differences in Tribal Protocol (slide 41)

In addition to the differences in Tribal histories and cultural values, it is important to recognize that there may be stark differences in protocol between one community and another. These include appropriate engagement practices and might govern how an outsider makes the initial approach to a community.

These differences have the potential to make or break a successful relationship between agencies and Tribes as they often represent respect.

Boundary organizations might be helpful in navigating these complexities. Extensive literature has been created on this subject in an attempt to help non-Tribal entities build more meaningful relationships with Tribes but all of this literature is intended as a guideline, not as gospel. When in doubt, ask. Allow yourself to be teachable.

The Importance of Critical Literacy (slide 42)

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While documents such as FEMA policies or treaties may seem black and white, there are many underlying implications in much of the language. To be critically literate is not just to read and comprehend a text, but to ask the following questions:

- Who was involved in the writing of this text? Who was involved in the signing of this text (and, for treaties, did they have the authority to sign)?
- What seems to be the intention of the text? What seems to be the top priority?
- What has been excluded from the text?
- What was the position of the author(s) and contributors of the texts? (What were their roles in society at the time of signing?)
- What power dynamics are present in this text?

Especially in older documents, Indigenous Peoples do not seem to have been consulted or to have had access to a full understanding of the document. Many treaties, in fact, were signed by individuals who did not represent the leadership of the tribe or nation, and/or were not given a translation that was understandable. Yet, these treaties, which act as supreme law of the land (akin to the US Constitution), are also what inform emergency response policy and other government-to-government documents to this day. As an emergency responder in Indigenous communities, it is your responsibility not just to read respective treaties, but to read them with a critical lens.

As each community is different, treaties are correspondingly different and address different needs. However, organizations like FEMA who may have direct contact with and impact on Indigenous Peoples and communities, have singular documents for agents to adhere to nationwide. Here are some of the policies to keep in mind and to, again, read with a critical lens:

FEMA Policy #101-002-02: Consultation (slide 43)

The purpose of this document is to “[guide] how FEMA engages tribal governments in regular and meaningful consultation and collaboration on actions that have tribal implications” (2019). This policy breaks down the protocols for consultation into four steps:

A. Phase 1: Identify

“Outcome: FEMA will identify if an Agency action has tribal implications and will determine if the action requires tribal consultation, or a tribal government may request FEMA to consider tribal consultation on an action by contacting FEMA’s National Tribal Affairs Advisor (NTAA).

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1. If a tribal government requests FEMA to consider tribal consultation on an action, FEMA will work with the tribe to honor the request and determine the method of consultation.
2. Tribal consultation should occur early in the decision-making process to allow tribal governments the opportunity to provide meaningful input and to give FEMA the opportunity to consider the input.”

B. Phase 2: Notify

“Outcome: Once FEMA identifies the need to conduct tribal consultation on an action, FEMA will notify the affected tribal governments.

1. FEMA notifies the tribal officials using various methods to inform them of the decision to consult and consultation period and provides tribal governments with sufficient information to make an informed decision about whether to participate in consultation and how to provide their input.”

C. Phase 3: Input

“Outcome: FEMA determines the process for communication and collaborating with tribal governments to exchange information, receive input, and consider the views of tribes on actions that have tribal implications.

1. For each consultation, FEMA develops a method of consultation, which will include details on a budget for consultation expenses, timeframe, an outreach plan to tribal governments, schedule of consultation opportunities, method of delivery (e.g. via webinar or in-person), and details for how to record input.
2. FEMA provides a tribal official or their appointed designee the opportunity to have FEMA officials listen to their concerns, ask questions, and submit input.
3. This phase continues until FEMA finds that there is sufficient input to make an informed decision about the action.
4. FEMA keeps a record of the input received from tribal officials during the consultation period.”

D. Phase 4: Follow-up

“Outcome: After FEMA consults with tribal officials and their appointed designees, FEMA considers the input received during the consultation period and incorporates that input into the Agency’s decision-making process. FEMA then follows up with all tribal officials who were

engaged in consultation and communicates how tribal input was used to inform the final decision.”

FEMA Tribal Policy #305-111-1

The purpose of this document is to “[establish] how FEMA operates with regard to Tribal Nations and outlines a framework for nation-to-nation relations with Tribal Nations that recognizes tribal sovereignty, self-governance, and upholds the federal government-to-government trust responsibility consistent with applicable authorities listed below under ‘Additional Information’” (2020).

This document covers the meaning of a nation-to-nation relationship, while referring to the policy above (#102-002-02), their own language around consideration for differing circumstances throughout the Tribal Nations, and the outcome of building tribal capacity alongside Tribal Nations. One thing to especially note about the policy is its recognition of the federally recognized tribes. This means that, while there are non-federally recognized Tribal Nations, they can expect not to receive FEMA consultation. This means that the needs of Indigenous Peoples in the United States inherently go unmet in disaster and other situations that would otherwise involve FEMA.

Obstacles of Policies (slide 44)

The barrier of federal recognition leads into the conversation of obstacles that exist in FEMA policies, as well as other federal documents impacting Indigenous communities. Allison Herrera highlights the disparity in treatment of tribal lands in emergency or disaster situations in her 2019 article called “When Disaster Strikes, Indigenous Communities Receive Unequal Recovery Aid.” Here is an excerpt from this article:

Without a FEMA-approved mitigation plan in place, tribes are not able to receive funding for permanent, non-emergency repairs or long-term mitigation measures,... And yet, as of 2018, around 30% of tribal nations had an approved plan.

But even when such a plan is in place, FEMA aid isn’t guaranteed to cover the full cost of recovery. The Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation have experienced four natural disasters in the last 10 years, according to the Center for Public Integrity’s analysis. In 2012, a severe storm, straight-line winds, and flooding damaged communities and left residents without power – and sometimes water – for days....

In 2012, according to then-Chairman Michael O. Finley, the tribe sought aid from FEMA’s technical assistance personnel to help navigate the ‘complex FEMA regulatory scheme.’ But when Chairman Finley testified in an oversight hearing about FEMA recovery efforts in 2013, he noted in his prepared statement that FEMA’s personnel ‘had little experience working with Indian tribes and were not in a position to provide us with prompt answers to our questions.’ Finley added that the paperwork the tribe had to provide presented a ‘significant

workload' that required the efforts of three full-time employees to assemble all the records and complete requests for reimbursement. Even when that paperwork is completed, many tribes experience financial difficulty while waiting to recoup costs they paid out of pocket. (Herrera 2019)

While the respective slide for this section provides two examples of the ways Tribal Nations are treated by federal agencies like FEMA, we also encourage you to look into the ways your local tribes/nations have been treated in emergency situations like the COVID-19 pandemic.

You Are Capable of Change (slide 45)

After the past three modules, we hope that you now have a better understanding of just how much needs changing in the relationship between the United States and Indigenous, Sovereign Peoples. As you occupy the position of an emergency responder, we encourage you to use this role as a beacon for Indigenous rights and communities, especially in disaster situations where communities are most vulnerable. While you occupy the role, we share with you these three needs, and we charge you with the responsibility to remember them in every space in which you find yourself:

1. Approved hazard mitigation plans *must* be created for all tribes and nations, including those that do not have federal recognition. If you find yourself working for a community with no mitigation plan, it is your responsibility to learn why that is and (with the support and involvement of that community) to advocate for the creation of a plan.
2. Urban Native Populations *must* be considered, consulted, and accounted for in disaster situations and response.
3. Treaty rights *must* be considered, and must be pivotal in conversations to establish mitigation plans.

Alu Like (slide 46)

In Hawaiian language (‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i), there are usually many interpretations for a single word, and thus context is key. However, the most common usage of a phrase like “Alu Like” is for it to mean “to cooperate,” to “act together,” and to “work in unity. After having gone through this module, we hope your main takeaway is that none of the Indigenuity can be born without a community working together to support each other, and to share their skills and talents for the betterment of the whole. In a similar spirit, the emergency responder is not there to be an island on their own, but rather to be an addition to the whole, even if for a short period of time. As you encounter the next pieces of this curriculum, in which you will explore specific place-based histories having to do with climate change and disasters, we invite you to listen actively, to reflect regularly, and to appreciate the knowledge being shared with you. It is when we listen first to community needs that we can become active contributors to community growth. E alu, e alu like mai!

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**Note: Resources that appear in both the slides and this module guide are only referenced in the Slide References list.*

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