Acknowledgment/Respect:

Atlu ayukpatce, welcome and hello! I would like to recognize and acknowledge in respect the indigenous people of this land as the traditional stewards of the land and all relations within it and to recognize the working relationship that exists between indigenous peoples and their territories, land, spiritual, plant and animal worlds. It is traditional to acknowledge the Tribe whose land we stand, our connection to the lands, water & environment. I would like to offer the acknowledgement that: 'We shall remain' & to acknowledge the past/present treaties that allow us to reside on these lands.

Regina's Background:

I began working in the health/social work field in 1995. I graduated from the University of Louisiana in 1995 & became a Licensed Social Worker in Louisiana in 2003. I have worked in the USA and Canada in mental health, addictions, and family therapy settings. After many years working in California in 2001, I worked for DCF (OFS) for the next 17 years & was chair of the American Indian Employee Committee before moving into private practice. In 2015, I began a private practice. I am an enrolled member of the Unorganized Tribe (aka Saktie-Uma Ukula or Red Clan) from the Chitimacha, Biloxi, Atakapa, & Miimiq tribes. I currently live in New Orleans, the area originally inhabited by Chitimacha, Biloxi, Atakapa, & Miimiq tribes.

My family - Louisiana Natives:

My family - Louisiana Natives. Photo: Julia Kate Billiot.
In my attempt to provide my thoughts about healing and trauma as it relates to the Native world, I humbly request that any concerns or corrections be offered to me and that I will attempt to share in a way that is respectful to our broad and diverse Indigenous community recognizing that there are many different traditions, narratives, and viewpoints among our many Indigenous communities in North America, South America, and the Pacific Islands. I offer my thoughts in the interest of coming together as Indigenous communities and clinicians in the spirit of healing, intergenerational, and historical trauma in culturally resonant ways.

**Breakdown of traditional family/community:**
- History of slavery: as many as 5 million Native Americans were enslaved.
- Disproportionate-Child Welfare intervention, incarceration, and police brutality.
- Assumed lack of resources: assumption that native families didn’t have what they needed based on white middle/supper class view & lack of communication to clarify understand.
- Code of Indian Offenses: outlawed traditional ceremony and dance until 1879 when American Indian Religious Freedom Act was passed.

**Relocation/Removal Policies:**
- Forced relocation/Indian Removal Act Trail of Tears—removed Southern tribes in exchange for white settlement of their ancestral lands (5/28/1830—signed by President Andrew Jackson).
- Removal: from traditional homelands (plants and animals considered relatives), sacred sites & community.
- The Indian Relocation Act of 1956 (also known as Public Law 94-96 or the Adult Vocational Training Program) was a United States law intended to encourage American Indians to leave Indian reservations and their traditional lands, and to assimilate into the general population in urban areas.

**Assimilation Policies:**
- Boarding Residential School System: abuse in system & betrayal of family unit via forced assimilation and separation.
- Forced Assimilation led to loss of self determination, language, customs & traditional decision making.
- Inferior educational scores (not allowed to attend “white schools”): Segregation led to assimilation to allow opportunities for their children’s survival.
- Micro & macroaggressions, misappropriation of culture, blood quota policies, internalized oppression.

**Historical/Intergenerational Traumas:**
- Health-related oppressions/epidemics:
  - Eugenics & “negative eugenics”/Chemical sterilization—efforts and practices that aimed to promote the genetic quality of a portion of the population as reputed in many parts of the world. It was conducted from 1920 to 1976, all native women were sterilized between 1970-1976 due to the Family Planning, Exclusions, and Population Research Act of 1970.
  - Poor Health: lack of access, personal land/inputs, 66% vs. 5.5 year shorter life expectancy than any other race per 1990-1994 population/health disparities on Native lands.

**Try not to be dissuaded by the voices saying to leave the part of you invisible. Being invisible, staying small, hiding, nursing and assimilating are what your ancestors had to do to survive. The response often comes from internalized oppression (ie. denying oneself in order to stay safe continued on). Native Indigenous have a history of being murdered, shut down, and losing their children and/or family members taken from them. The atrocities and indignities endured are endless, and seldom acknowledged in our society. It is not surprising that the pressure to disacknowledge has continued into modern times, as Black/Brown bodies are still not safe in many ways. Let us come together to heal, to remember, find a voice and rebuild. Regina Fanbrasa, LCSW.

**5/24/22**
Stress and trauma have many effects. 4 domains of symptoms below can be represented in 4 dimensions of the Medicine Wheel.

Medicine Wheel - Our Goal is a return to balance:

The other side of the coin:

There are as many reasons to heal; however, as there are traumas that we are healing from. There are also culturally resonant ways for our indigenous communities to get their healing.

About healing- why our community needs to heal:

- To understand history and how we relate to the historical timeline
- To regain knowledge of culture/traditions/language & understand ourselves better
- To connect with ancestral land, waters, and systems- we feel more alive when we are connect to nature & we should not feel like outsiders on our traditional lands

What do we get out of healing? (continued)

- To increase sense of identity, belonging, resilience
- To allow an opportunity to experience our repair from generational & historical trauma
- To repair and heal the numb, frozen, dissociated parts within that come from trauma
Brainspotting more closely parallels our traditions/ways of knowing & addresses dissociation directly and powerfully:

- The approach reaches deep into the subcortex for processing where it can address dissociation directly - indigenous peoples have had many ways of addressing dissociation via the body/brain connection

- Brainspotting uses a fixed eye position. It is effective even without bilateral stimulation. When used with music it allows more than one mechanism in place for loosening the frozen memory network for processing. Bilateral sound and movement are traditional ways of healing.

How Brainspotting works:

It is an advanced resource model using dual attunement (client holds sense of being in current time while processing historical memory. Therapist remains attuned/focused/present/mindful/empathetic to patient while they are processing.)

Interpersonal neurobiology - creates the climate for healing

Focused activation & focused mindfulness are used simultaneously.

Activation is discharged by the nervous system resulting in inner calm & relaxed system/trauma resolution.

How Brainspotting works:

The eyes and body are keys for allowing direct access to the brain. Eyes have developed from the same tissue as brain in utero & are still considered part of the brain.

Access 3 layers of Superior Colliculi: Visual, Tactile & Sound

Activity occurs in the subcortical brain in response to focused activation & eye position

The process balances/promotes coherence between sympathetic & parasympathetic nervous system
Brainspotting & the Native World: Overlaps

Field of vision is used to access traumatic or resource memory pathways—honoring all senses is key to healing.

Points in the visual field correspond to neural pathways in the brain holding the issues—traditional healing has had many ways to access where trauma is held—visually & through ceremony.

Per David Grand, PhD: “Where you look determines how you feel.” Some Native elders have used this concept before Brainspotting was created.

Brainspotting & the Native World: Overlaps

Dual Attachment Frame: therapist attunes to client relationally & neurobiologically.

Traditional ways of childrearing and community match this concept.

Brainspotting is a powerful, focused treatment method that works by identifying processing and releasing core neurophysiological sources of emotional/physical pain, trauma (Brainspotting.com) using a neuroexperiential process/flow—does traditional healing. Tracing the system’s innate healing capacity is key to healing.

The client is honored as an expert in their own healing process. If a client led/intergenerational healing process as in many traditional ceremonies. Past historical & intergenerational traumas come into awareness & are cleared resulting in healing plus more adaptive feelings toward self & others.

Parallels to indigenous tradition:

Directions/Medicine Wheel can be utilized to correlate with using eye position to find resource place or place where trauma has been held.

Healing of preverbal, generational, historical traumas—7 generations—memories, vision, images become accessible and move into adaptive thought/beliefs.

Values fostered through this process match traditional values of trust, harmony, respect, flexibility, identity, connection, belonging, & attachment. Each value can help bring disenfranchised Native members back and increase healthy interaction with their community and families, due to the match with core indigenous values.

What’s in it for Native People? How does it match our beliefs or parallel with traditional approach?

Brainspotting tends to work more rapidly than talk therapy approaches. It is not necessary for talk to happen for progress or healing to occur.

The individual is getting in touch with a deeper brain process than talk therapy. It allows for a process that is more in touch with intuition, creativity, metaphor, sensations, energy and images for healing. The process is often non-linear.

Insights come from within the person, not led by therapist.

BSP Fosters & or addresses: 7 Directions (N,S,E,W,Up, Down,Center),7 Sacred teachings & 7 Generations (known traditionally even before concept of epigentics before & after us, always with us)
Hawaiian Lokahi- unity, harmony & balance- between body, mind, natural & spiritual worlds

Additional parallels and/or traditional ideas with Brainspotting:

- Healing is obtained through trauma release which leads to accessing self-healing capacity, stability, and healthy insight.
- Mental traumas can be connected with physical sensation, so healing/cleansing through resolving or release can prevent disease.
- Bilateral sound connects mind & body. Sound is one of the oldest therapies. Bilateral sound is similar to bilateral movement such as drumming, canoe rowing, & running which are traditional methods of healing in that they help to balance right & left sides of the body, as well as brain.

Doesn't this sound much like a Dual Attunement Frame?

Additional parallels and/or traditional ideas with Brainspotting:

- Processing through Brainspotting can allow emotion, body sensation, colors, images, and healing thoughts to be part of the process.
- Tradition can be integrated naturally- via client, art, sound, environment, symbols...
- Nature objects like rocks, sticks can be used as a pointer. Eyes are often drawn to nature
- Process is natural, organic, avoid assumption/non-judgemental. Focus is on the present moment.

"This is a source of strong medicine. The horses have something that you can learn. When you are searching for something that you might have lost, the spirit that you might feel is gone. You look in the direction where you think that is, and you just keep looking in that direction and it will come to you.”

Indian Horse Movie quote from elders speaking in the movie:
What if we viewed the healing circle concept as parallel to the concept of the BSP frame?

Concept: Etuaptmunk (Two Eyed Seeing)

Etuaptmunk (Dr. Albert Marshall of the Eskimo First Nations) introduced this traditional concept in the Mi’Kmaq word for seeing through two different lenses. This concept addresses viewing indigenous/native strengths, way of being, seeing, healing, ways of knowledge through one eye & using the other eye to understand Western view & ways of knowing. Using both eyes simultaneously is next encouraged to promote balance between traditional & western science. I would suggest that Two Eyed Seeing could also correspond with the One Eyed Brainspotting concept as it is often the case that each eye can present a different viewpoint or understanding and then we are able to view both eyes together with a healthy more adaptive perspective. It avoids dominance by Eurocentric point of view, & promotes balance, coexisting & collaboration.

Core two eyed seeing concepts: coexistence, interconnectedness, interrelatedness, community are also fostered via Brainspotting.

The possibility of healing is in the Neurobiology

“Brainspotting is a powerful focused treatment method that works by identifying, processing and removing neurobiological sources of emotional/bodily pain, trauma, dissociation and a variety of other challenging symptoms. Brainspotting is a simultaneous form of diagnosis and treatment, enhanced with Neuroplastic neural which is deep, direct, and powerful process and containing” Dr. David Grand

“Hear and feel it together, unite together” (Donald Hebb, 1949)

See are not thinking machines that feel, rather, we are feeling machines that think. Antonio Damasio

We are processes underlying that which we call creativity. We have nothing to do with emotions, and it to

If we look at how the brain generates creativity, we will see it that it is not a rational process at all.

Inability to break out of meaing? Rosch's lines

Traditional quotes with overlap:

“Certain things catch your eye, but pursue only those that capture your heart.”

“It is better to have less thunder in the mouth and more lightning in the hand.” (Apache)

“Give me the eyes to see and the strength to understand.”

“I salute the light within your eyes where the whole universe dwells.”

“The eyes are the window of the soul.”
Traditional quotes with overlap:

Black Elk: “The first peace, which is the most important, is that which comes within the souls of people when they realize their relationship, their oneness with the universe and all its powers, and when they realize that at the center of the universe dwells the Great Spirit, and that this center is really everywhere, it is within each of us.”

“Wellness is balance between all parts of yourself, not just being in balance intellectually or not having negative feelings. It’s a move of being centered and grounded, and connected to everybody and being in harmony with everybody... or not with everybody, but with the way life is... with your surroundings and with your family.”

Nina Desjardins - Cree Métis Psychiatric

Additional Traditional/Indigenous Quotes:

Kihi no ka lana, hele no ka maka. “Where the hands move, there let the eyes follow.” (Hawaiian saying from book: Chole Noenoe)

“You already possess everything you need to become great.” Crow Saying, but sounds like the Tail of the Comet to me.

“Our first teacher is our heart.” Cheyenne

“Ask questions from your heart and you will be answered from the heart.” Oma/Ts

Important concepts/words:

Hoozhoo - Na’vi concept of the power from within that was given by the creator

Navaho/Dine - ceremony, prayer, songs, medicine wheel, codes, words, healing, art, spirituality

Suggested Readings/Resources:


http://www.middlebrook.com/CE5485530d5493b5579a179237238d950a513772782372509a.pdf


Many Thanks & Blessings!