

***IT'S THE MOST
WONDERFUL TIME
OF YEAR...CAUTION!
DEPRESSION AND
SUICIDE IN THE
TWO-SPIRIT
COMMUNITY***



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Webinar for SAMHSA'S Native American Center for Excellence Two Spirit Learning Community,
December 18, 2012

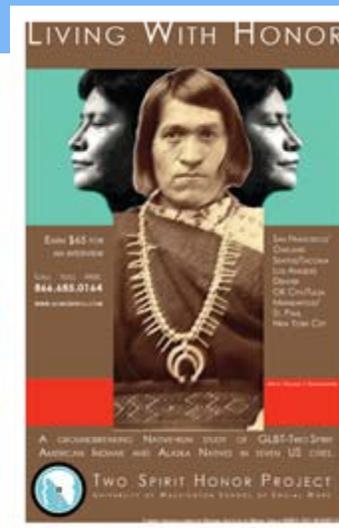
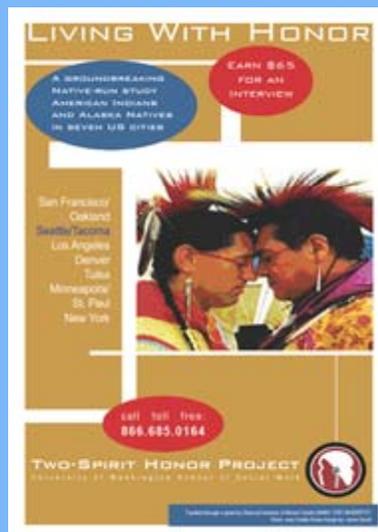


TWO SPIRITS



HONOR PROJECT

- Funded by the NIMH
- 6 sites:
 - ✓ Seattle/Tacoma
 - ✓ San Francisco/Oakland
 - ✓ Los Angeles
 - ✓ Minneapolis/St. Paul
 - ✓ Tulsa/Oklahoma City
 - ✓ New York City
 - ✓ Denver (a few)
- 65 qualitative interviews
- 4 measurement groups
- 452 survey interviews



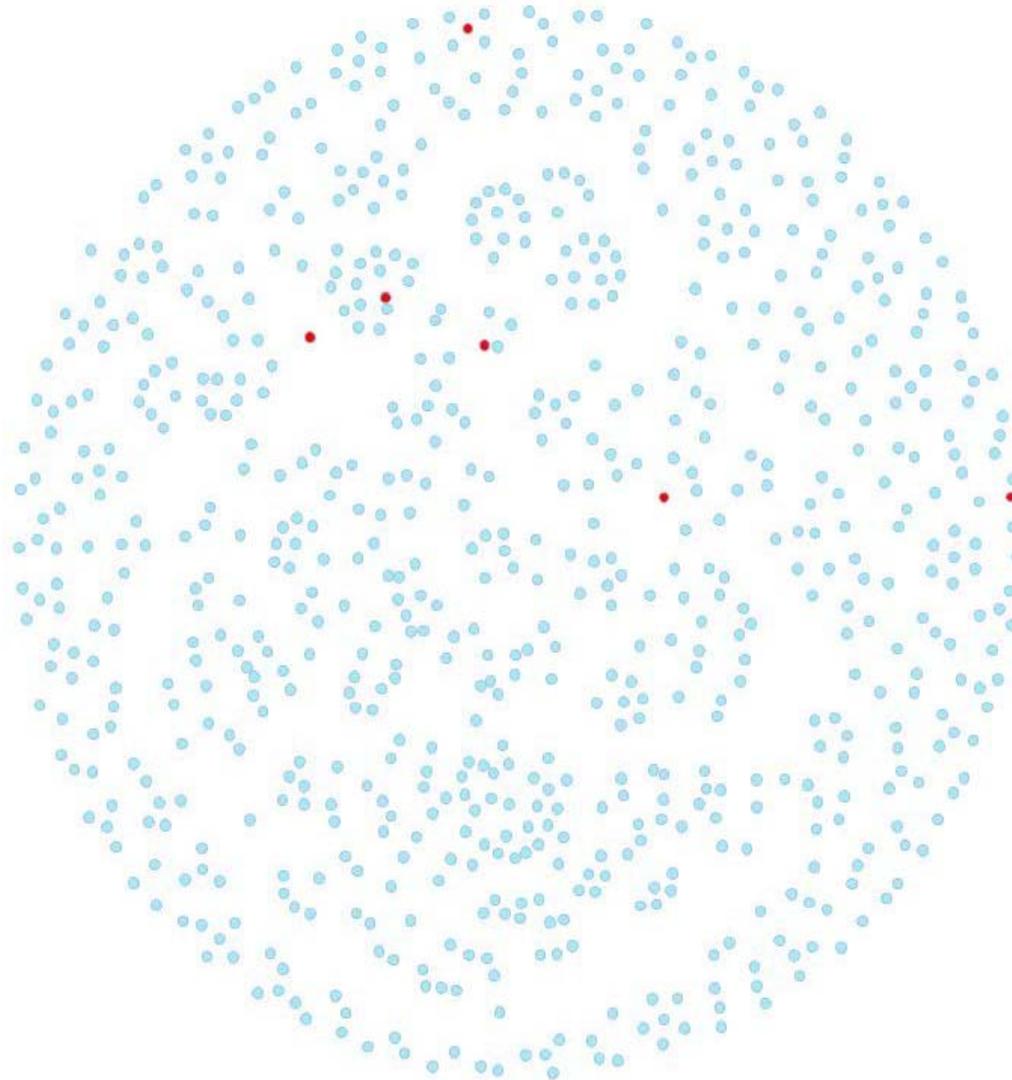
HONOR PROJECT: METHODS

■ Eligible Participants:

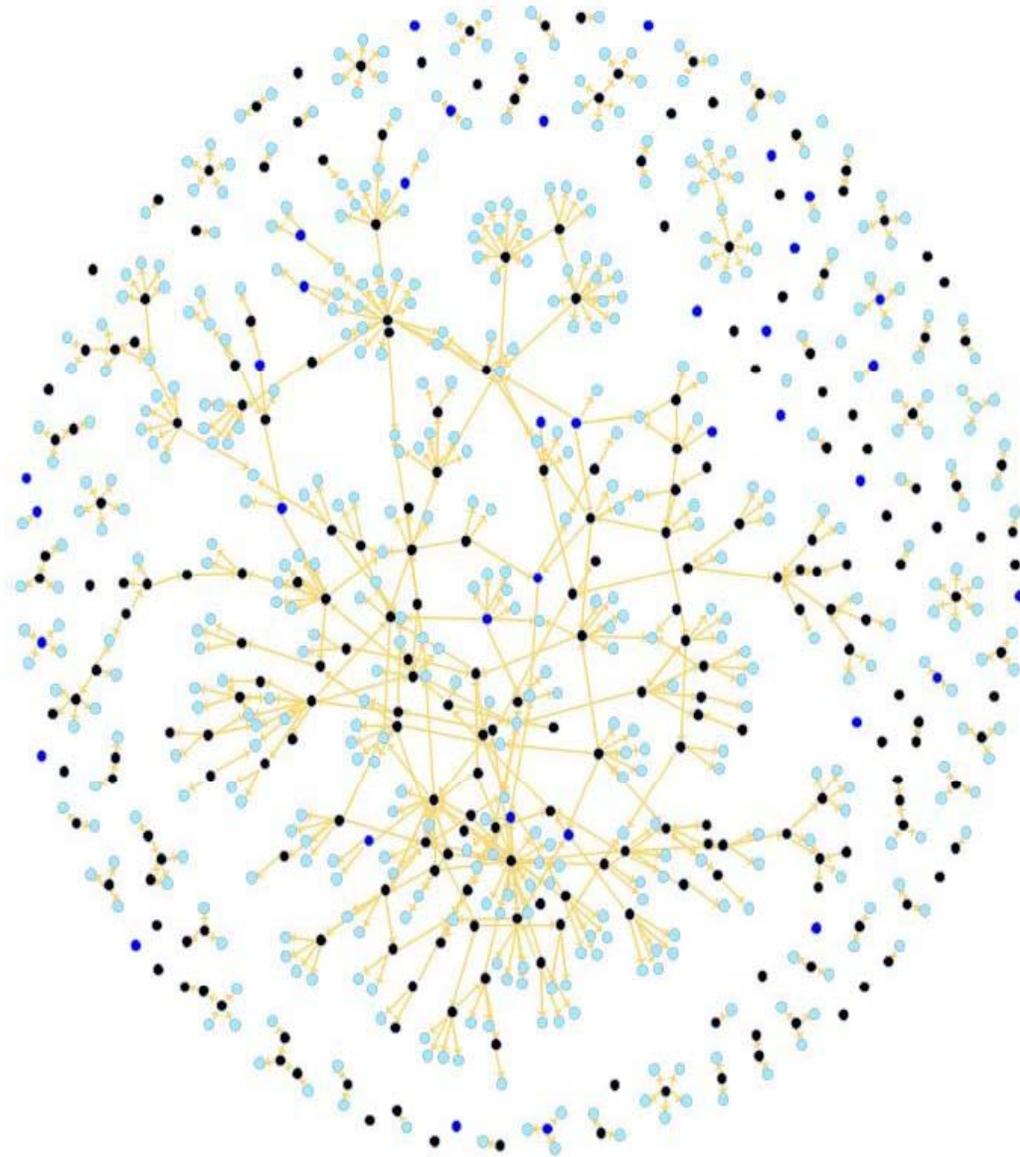
- Self-identified AI, AN, First Nations (or)
- ¼ Blood Quantum (all tribes combined) (or)
- Enrolled or eligible for enrollment in Tribal Nation
- Self-identified as GLBT or Two Spirit (or)
- Heterosexually-identified but same sex behavior within past 12 months
- 18 years or older
- Speak and read English
- Live or work/play in MSA of one of six sites



**FIGURE 1 (SEATTLE SITE) --
STARTED WITH SIX SEEDS (COLORED RED)**



**FIGURE 3 --
AND OF ALL THESE PEOPLE WE MANAGED TO SURVEY ABOUT A THIRD OF THEM
(SHOWN IN BLACK)**

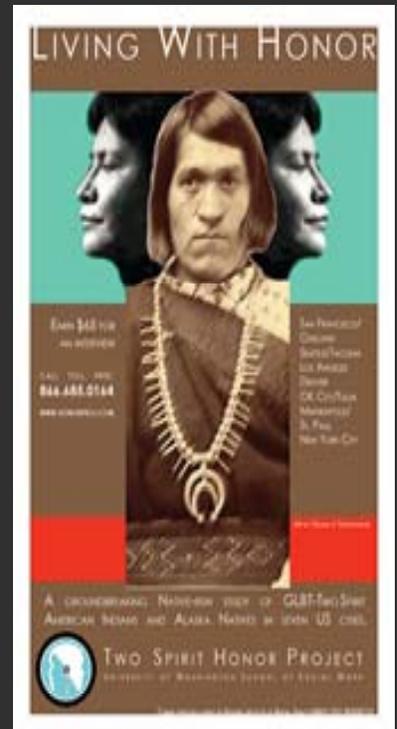


DEMOGRAPHICS (N = 447)

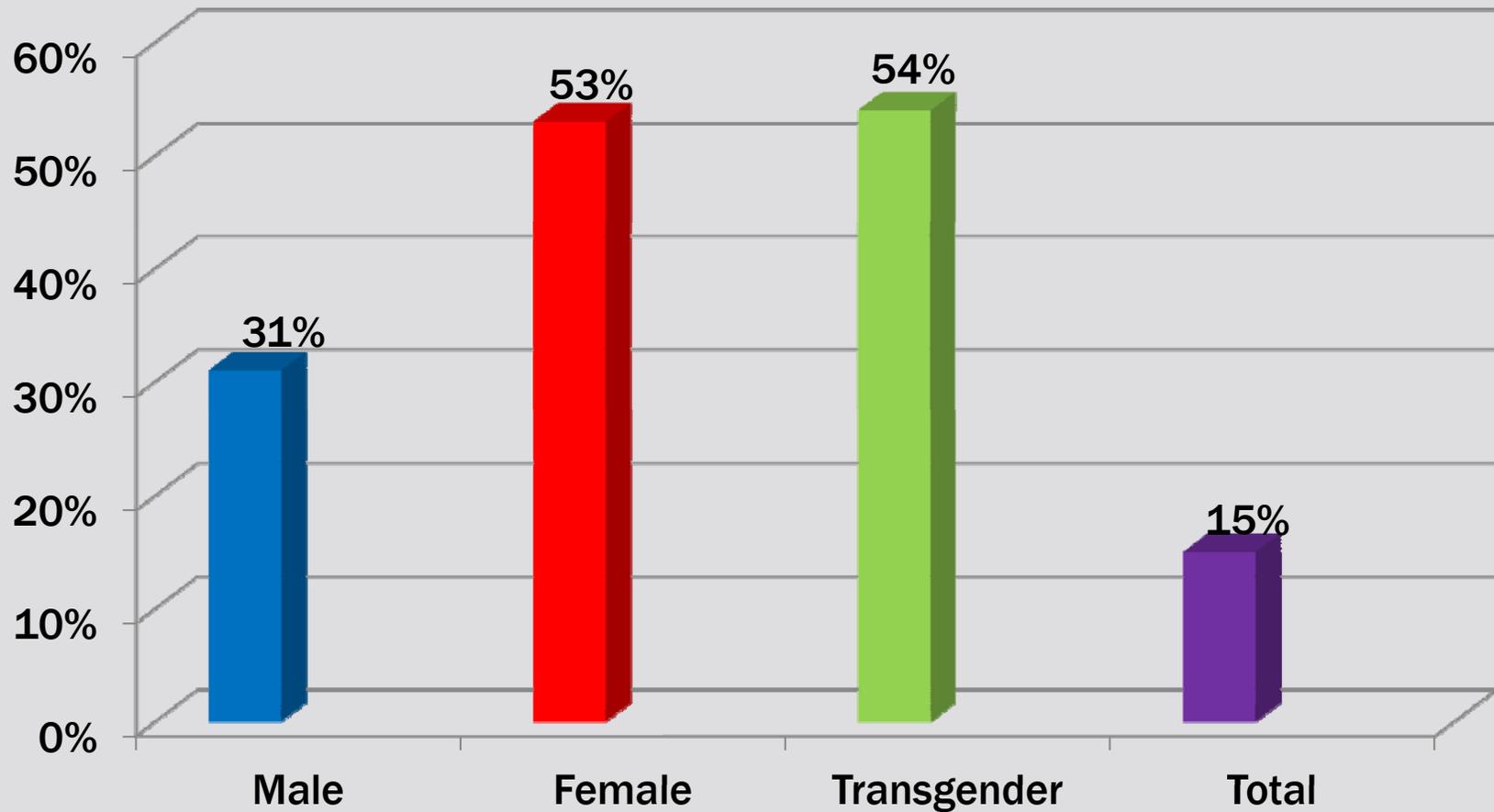
- Where born?
 - 43% urban born
 - 25% rez/tribal
- Age = 39.8
- Education
 - 18% less than high school
 - 29% high school grad
 - 53% more than high school
- Gender assignment and id
 - 51% males (n=227)
 - 41% females (n=185)
 - 7% trans (n=35)
- 73% enrolled in tribe
- 76% more than ½- full-bloods
- Income
 - 75% < \$18,000
 - 12% > \$30,001
- Employment
 - 59% unemployed
 - 19% part time
 - 22% full time



Depression and Suicide Risk Among Two Spirits

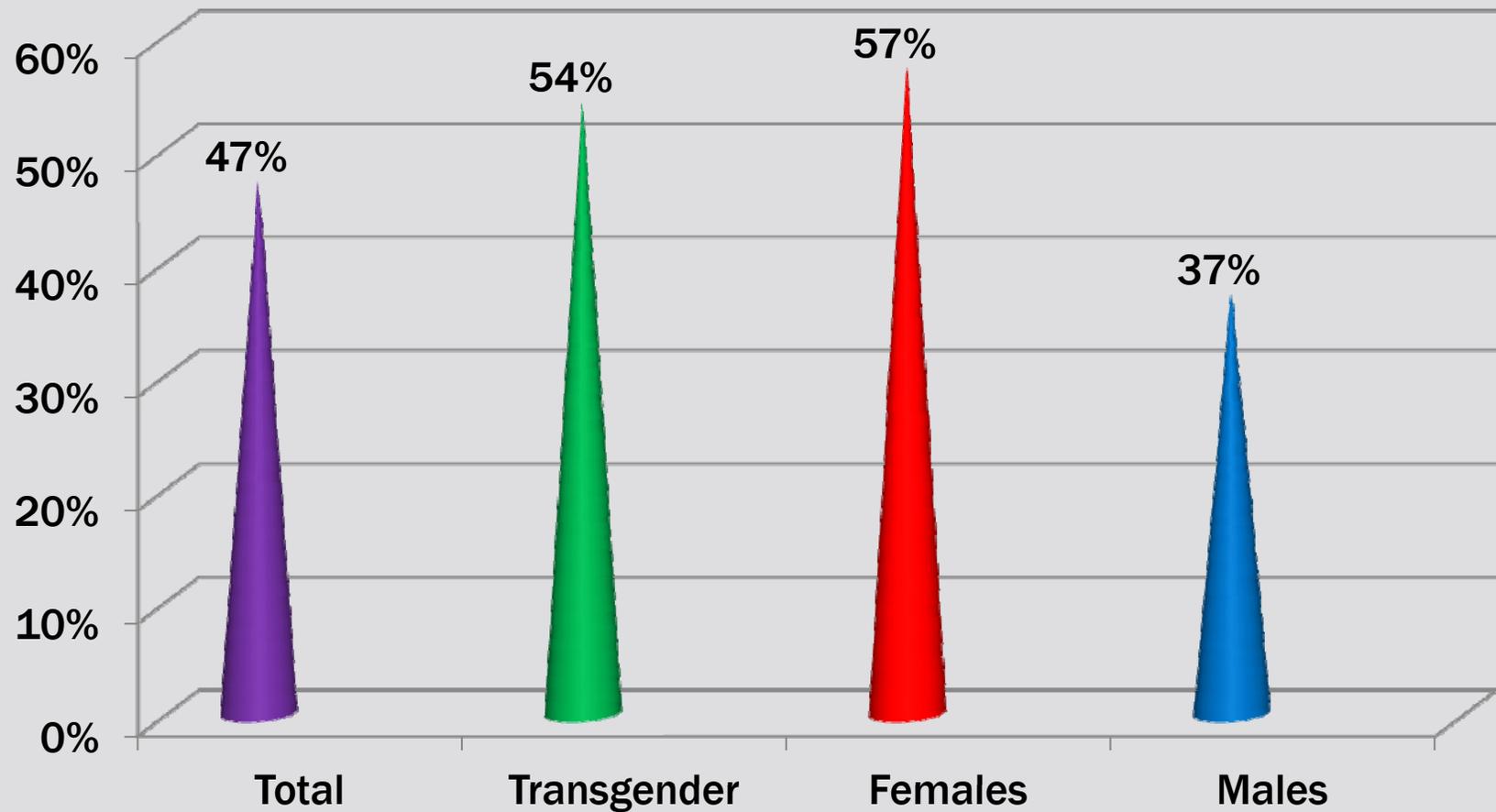


IN LIFETIME- EVER THOUGHT OF HARMING SELF?

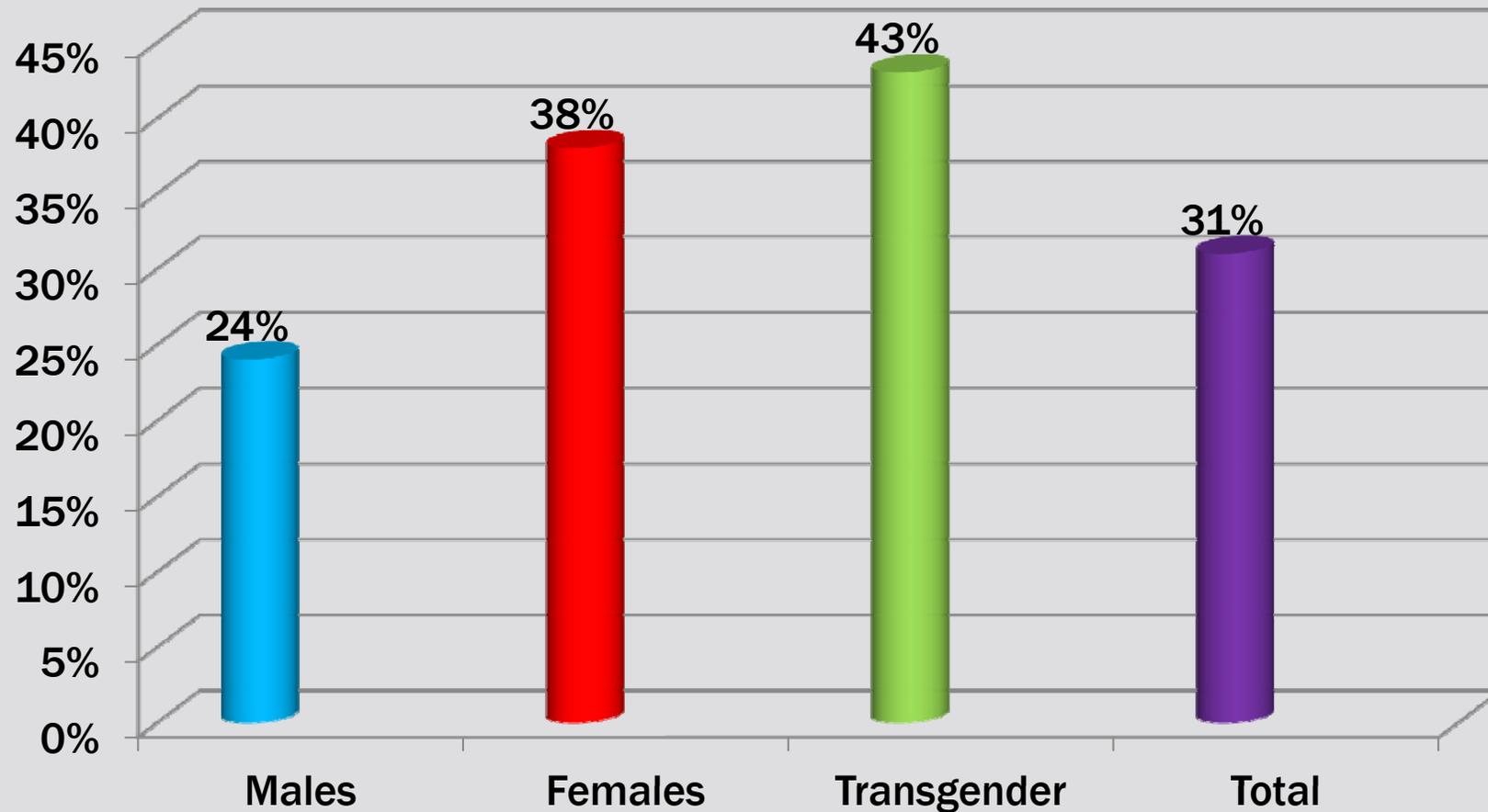


Male and Female= body and gender identity match; transgender= identified as trans regardless of body match

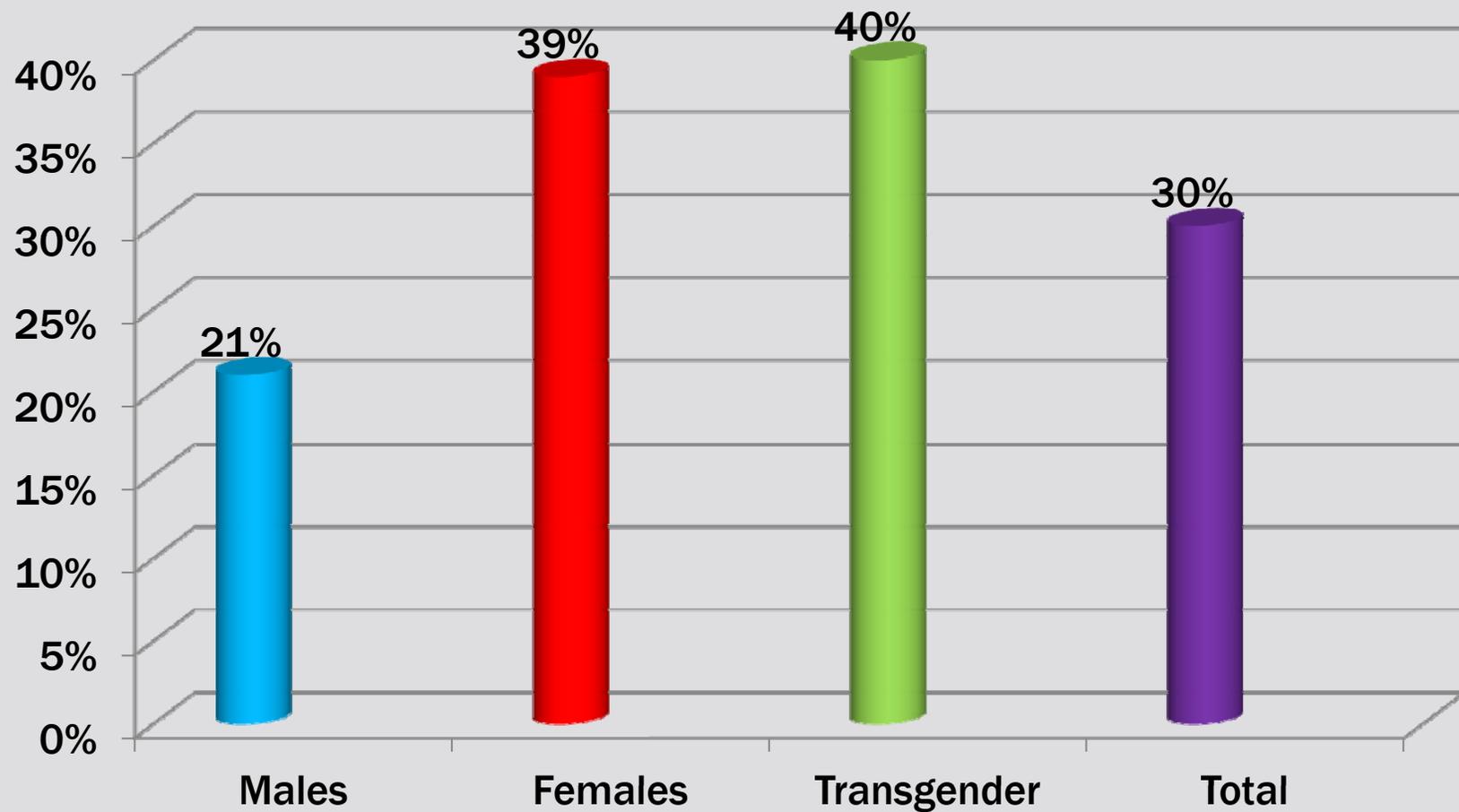
EVER THOUGHT ABOUT SUICIDE?



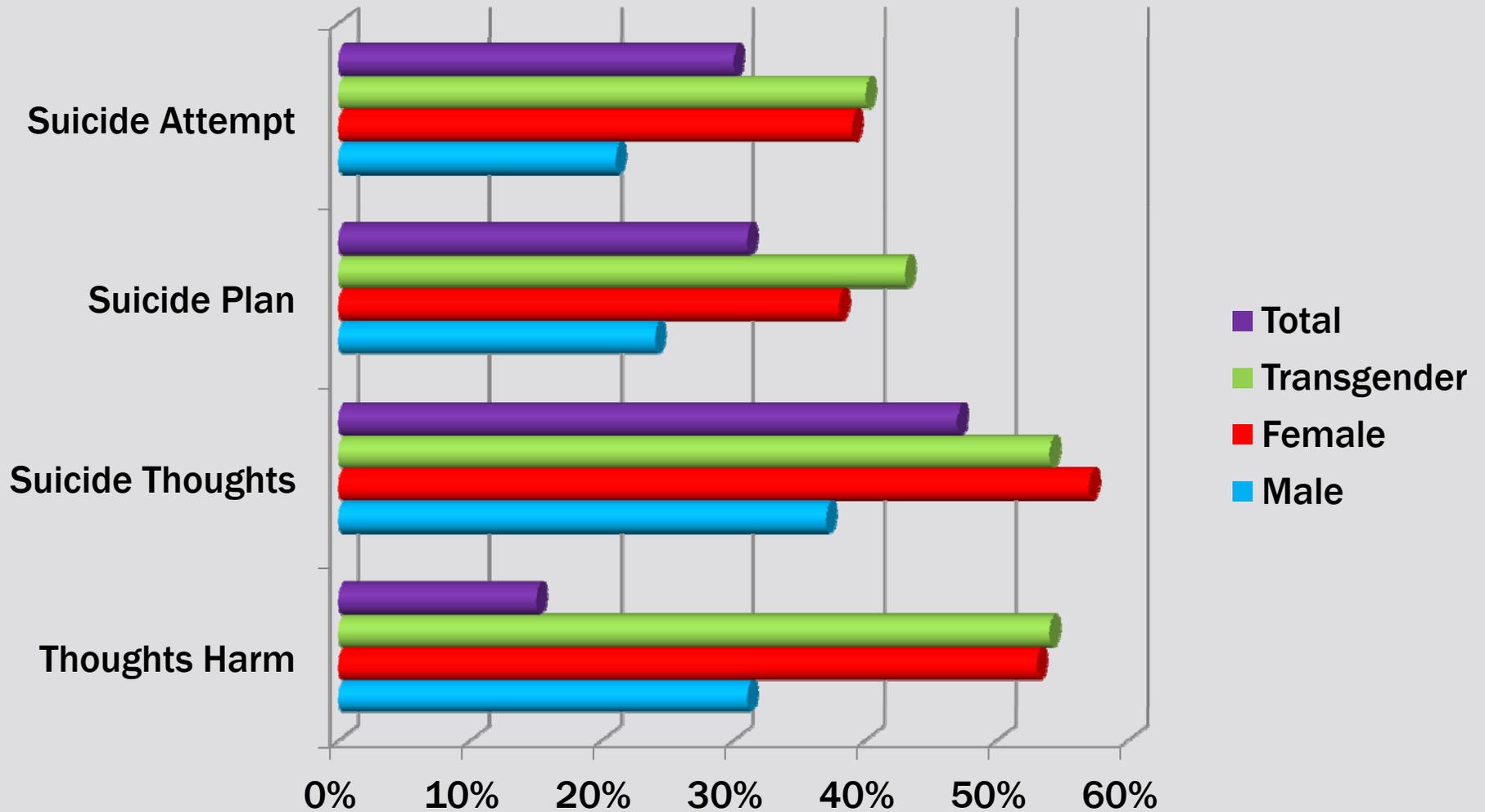
EVER HAD A SUICIDE PLAN?



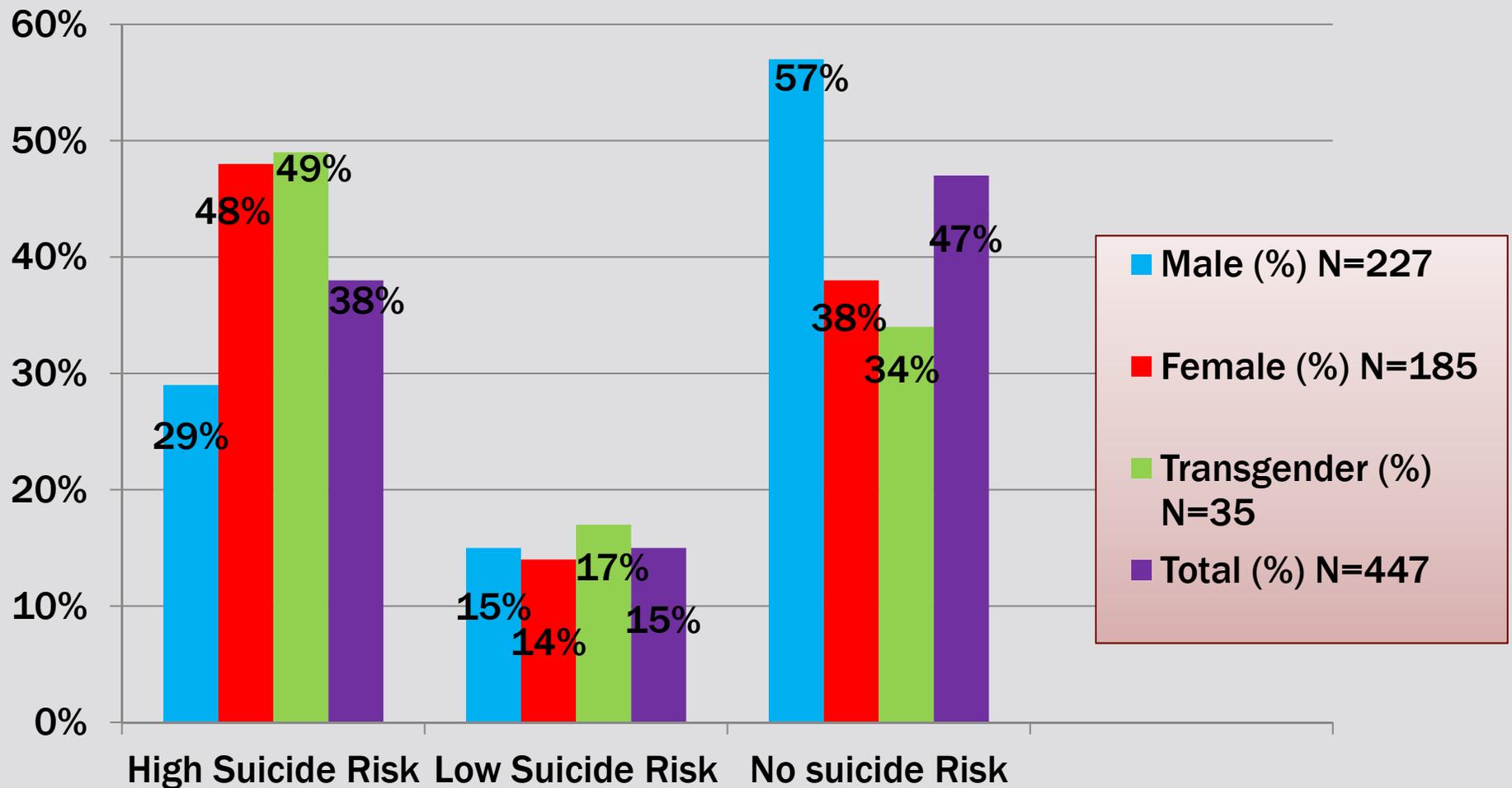
EVER ATTEMPT SUICIDE?



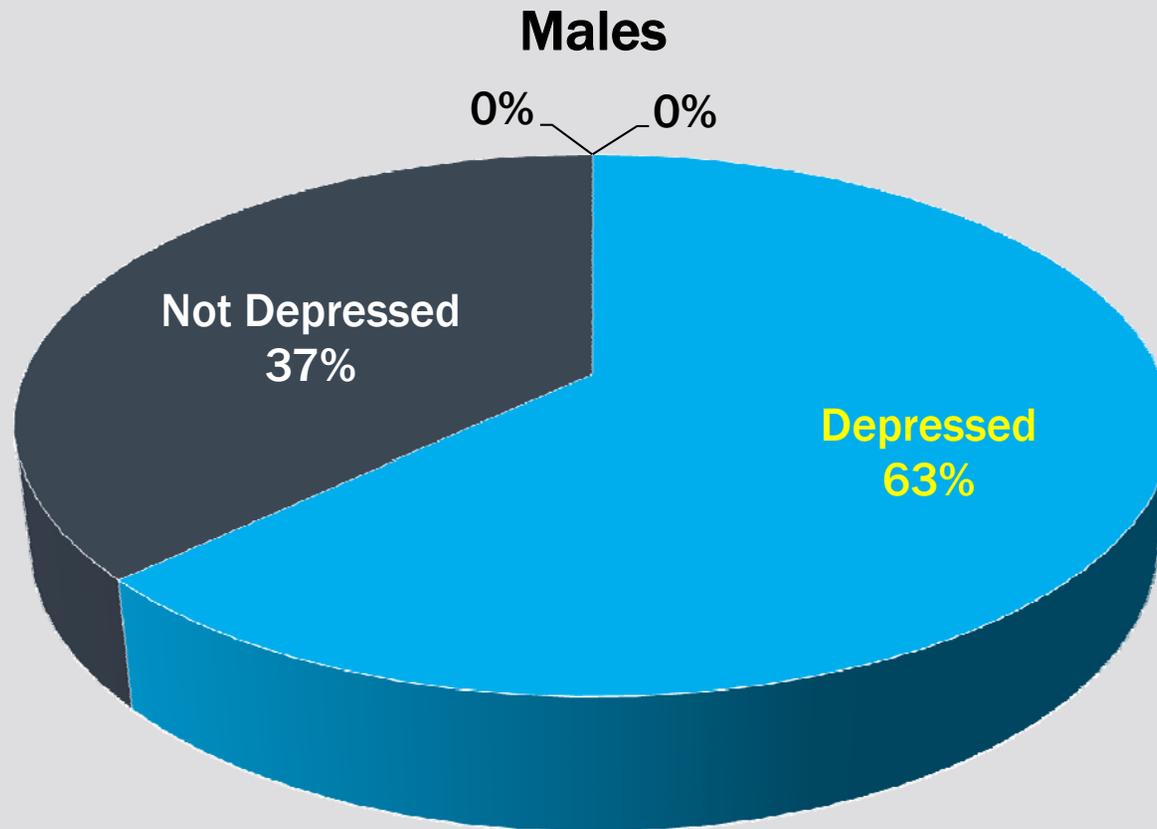
SUICIDE -THOUGHTS TO ACTION AMONG TWO SPIRITS



SUICIDE RISK PROFILES AMONG TWO SPIRITS (N=447)

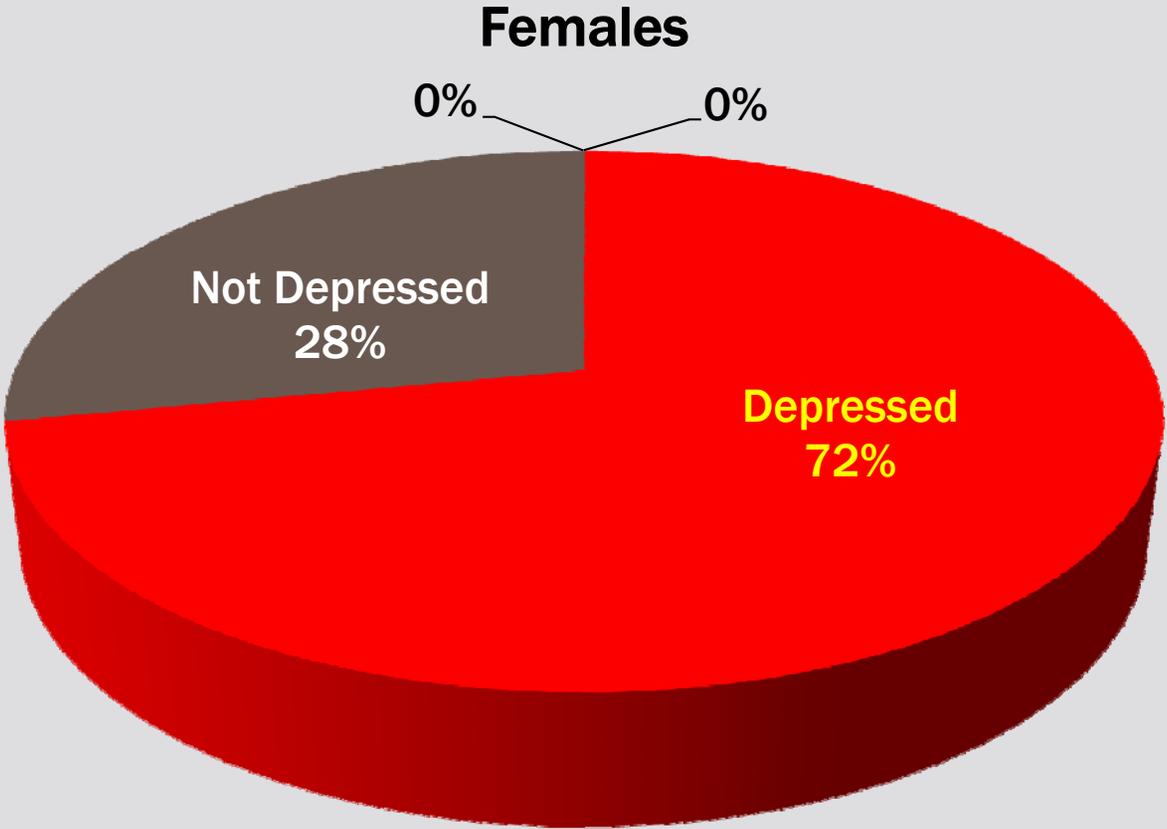


DEPRESSIVE SYMPTOMS IN LAST WEEK TWO SPIRIT MALE BODIED (N=227)

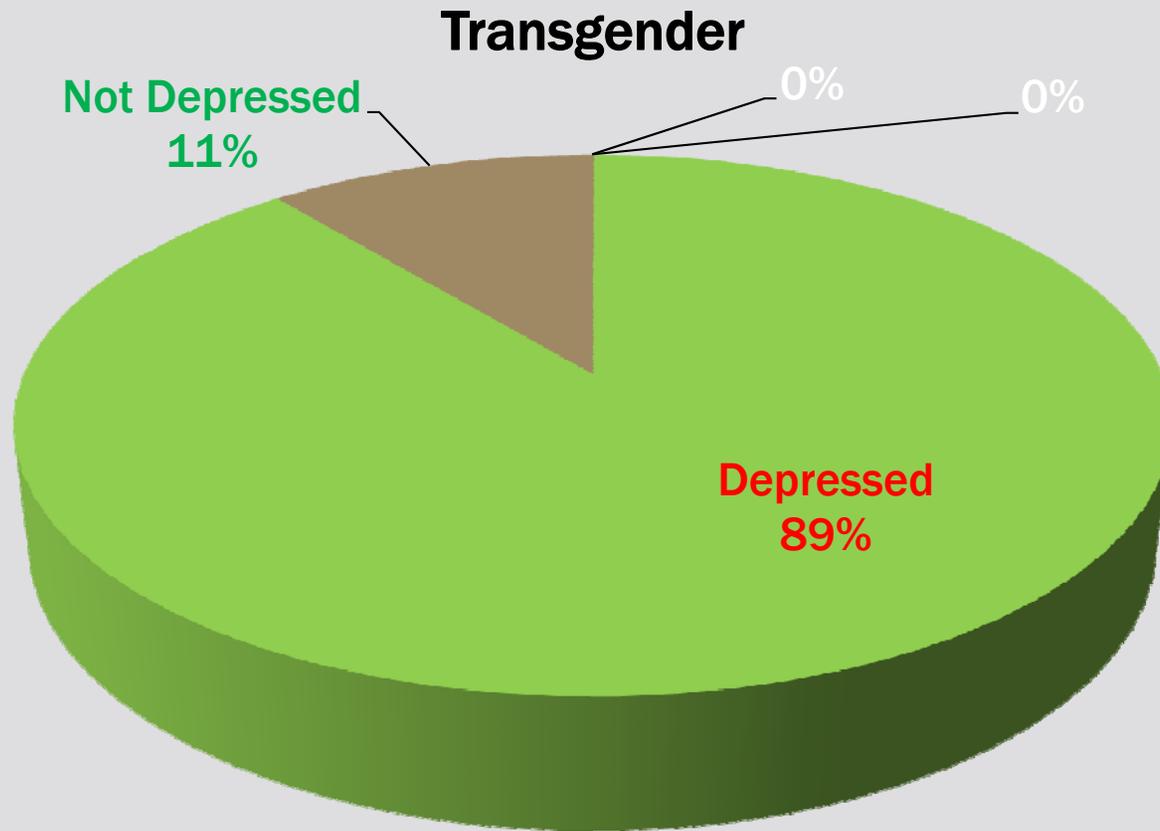


Based on the CES-D scale; Depressed = scored \geq 10

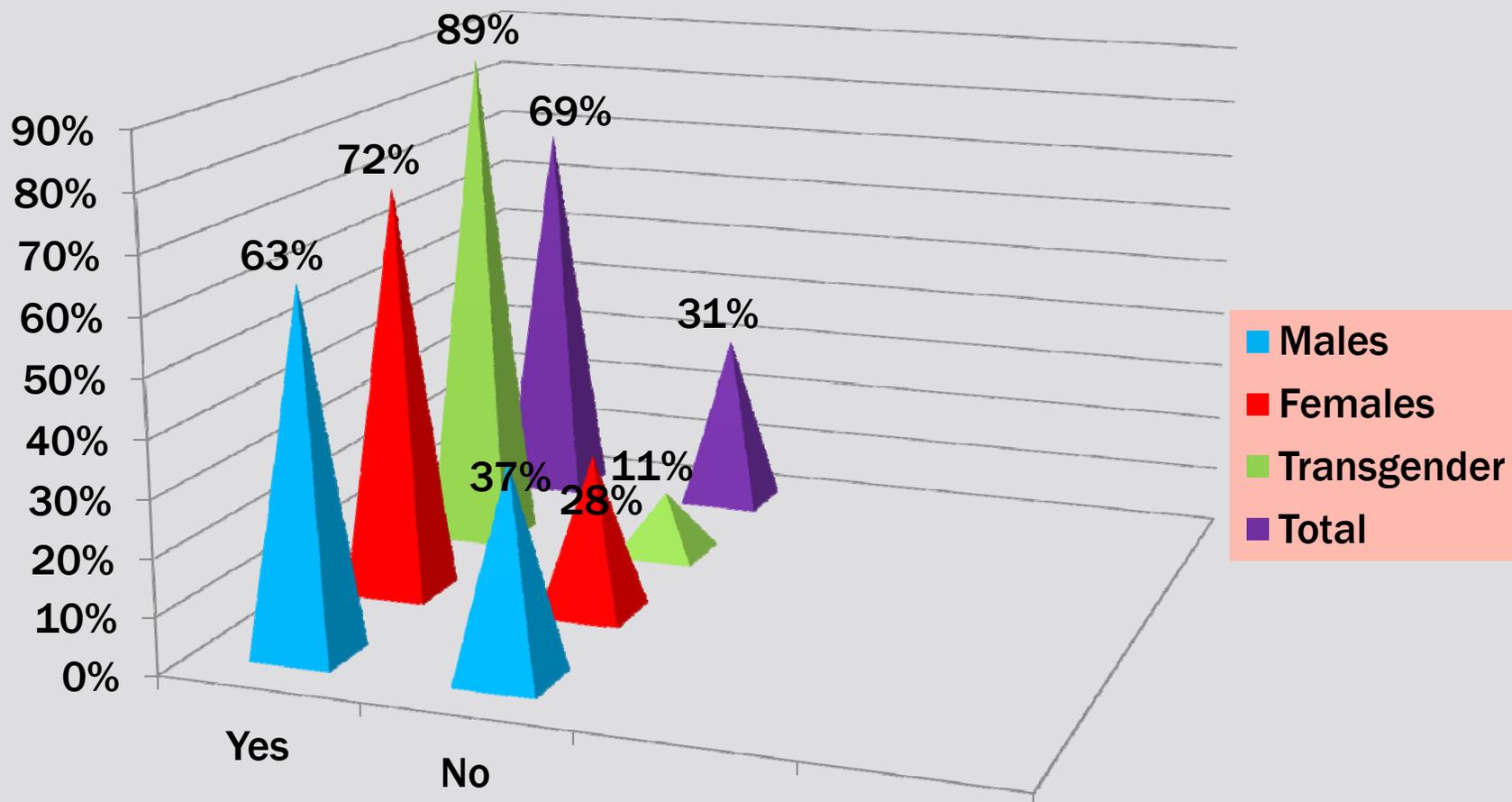
**TWO SPIRIT DEPRESSIVE SYMPTOMS LAST WEEK
TWO SPIRIT FEMALE BODIED (N=185)**



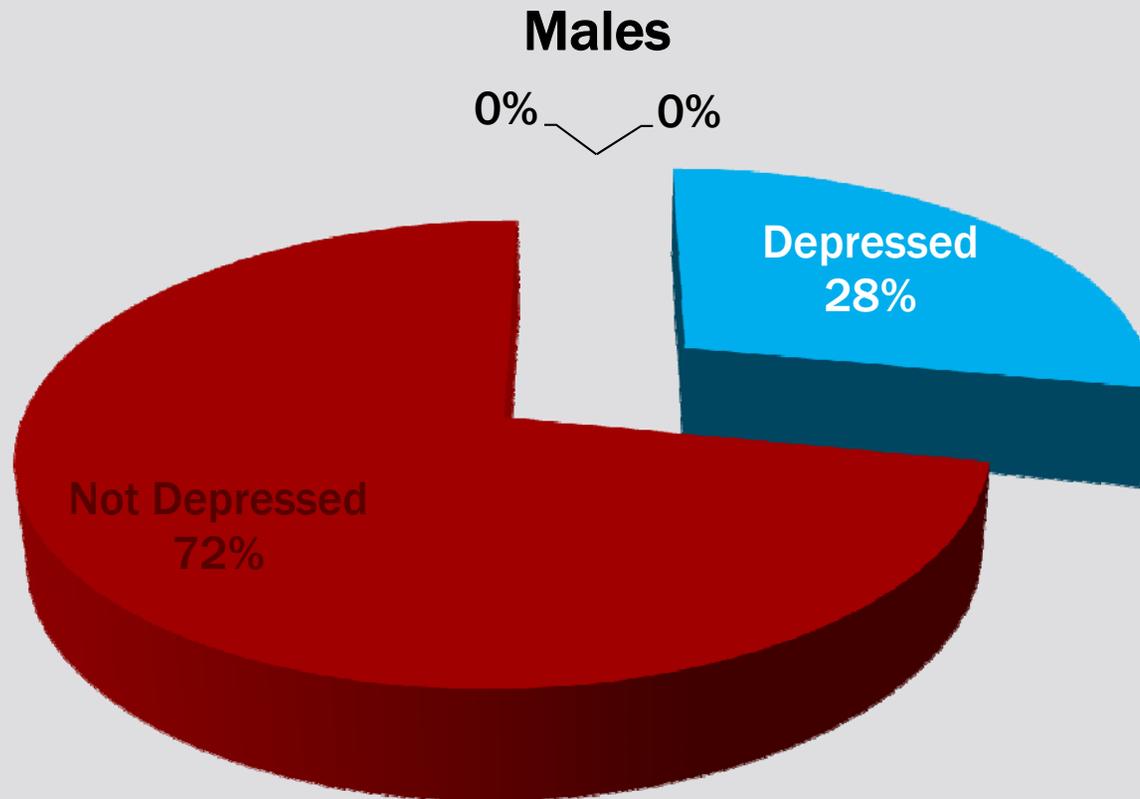
**TWO SPIRIT DEPRESSIVE SYMPTOMS LAST WEEK
TWO SPIRIT SELF IDENTIFIED TRANSGENDER (N=35)**



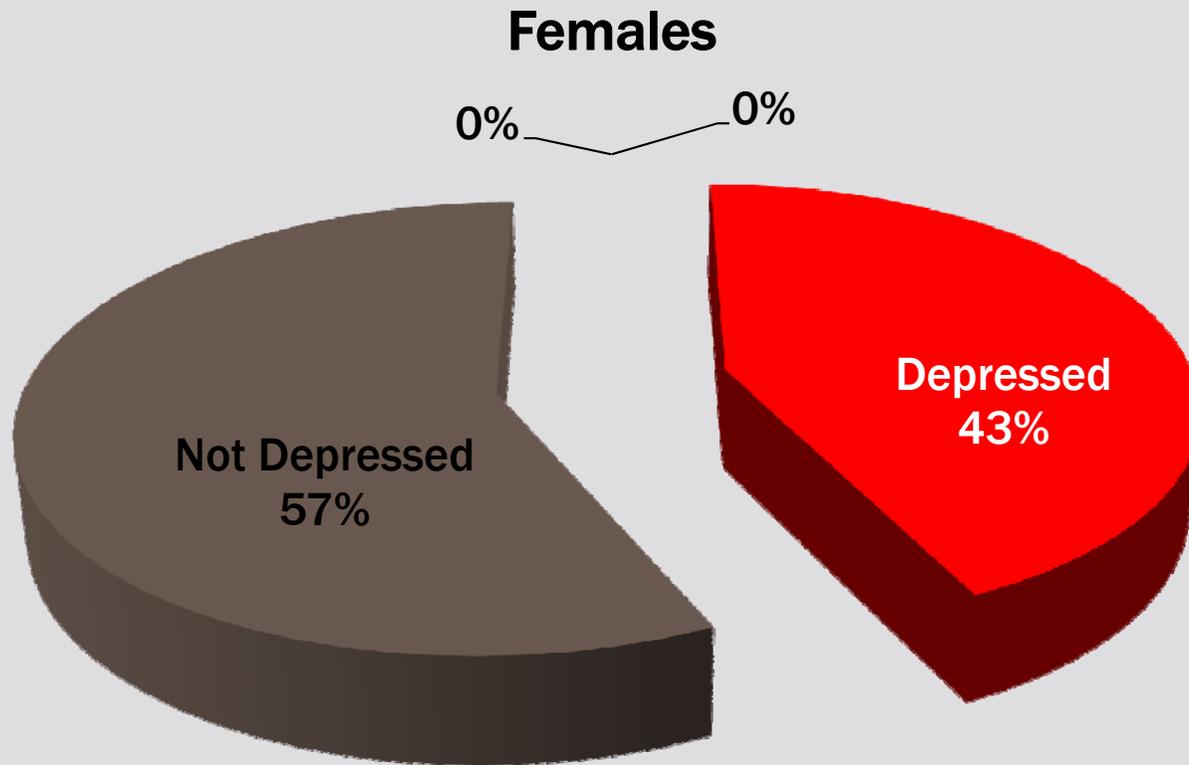
DEPRESSIVE SYMPTOMS IN LAST 7 DAYS



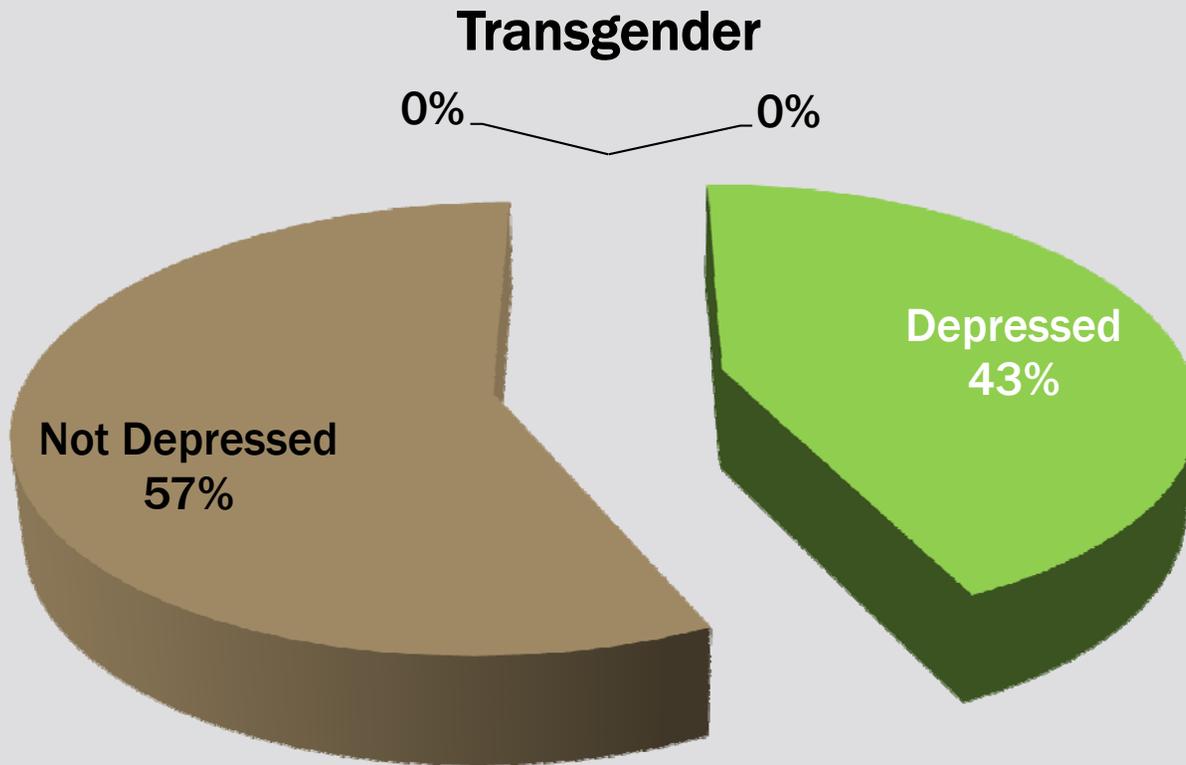
CURRENT MAJOR DEPRESSION DIAGNOSIS TWO SPIRIT MALE BODIED (N =219)



CURRENT MAJOR DEPRESSION DIAGNOSIS TWO SPIRIT FEMALE BODIED (N = 179)



CURRENT MAJOR DEPRESSION DIAGNOSIS TWO SPIRIT TRANSGENDER IDENTIFIED (N =34)



PERCENT DIAGNOSED WITH MAJOR DEPRESSIVE DISORDER OR DYSTHYMIA

	<u>Depression</u>	<u>Dysthymia</u>
■ Two Spirit Male Bodied	28%	4%
■ Two Spirit Female Bodied	43%	3%
■ Transgender Identified	43%	3%
■ Total	36%	3%

MINI psychiatric interview



TRAUMATIC STRESS



Setting the
Context

CONTACT AND COLONIZATION

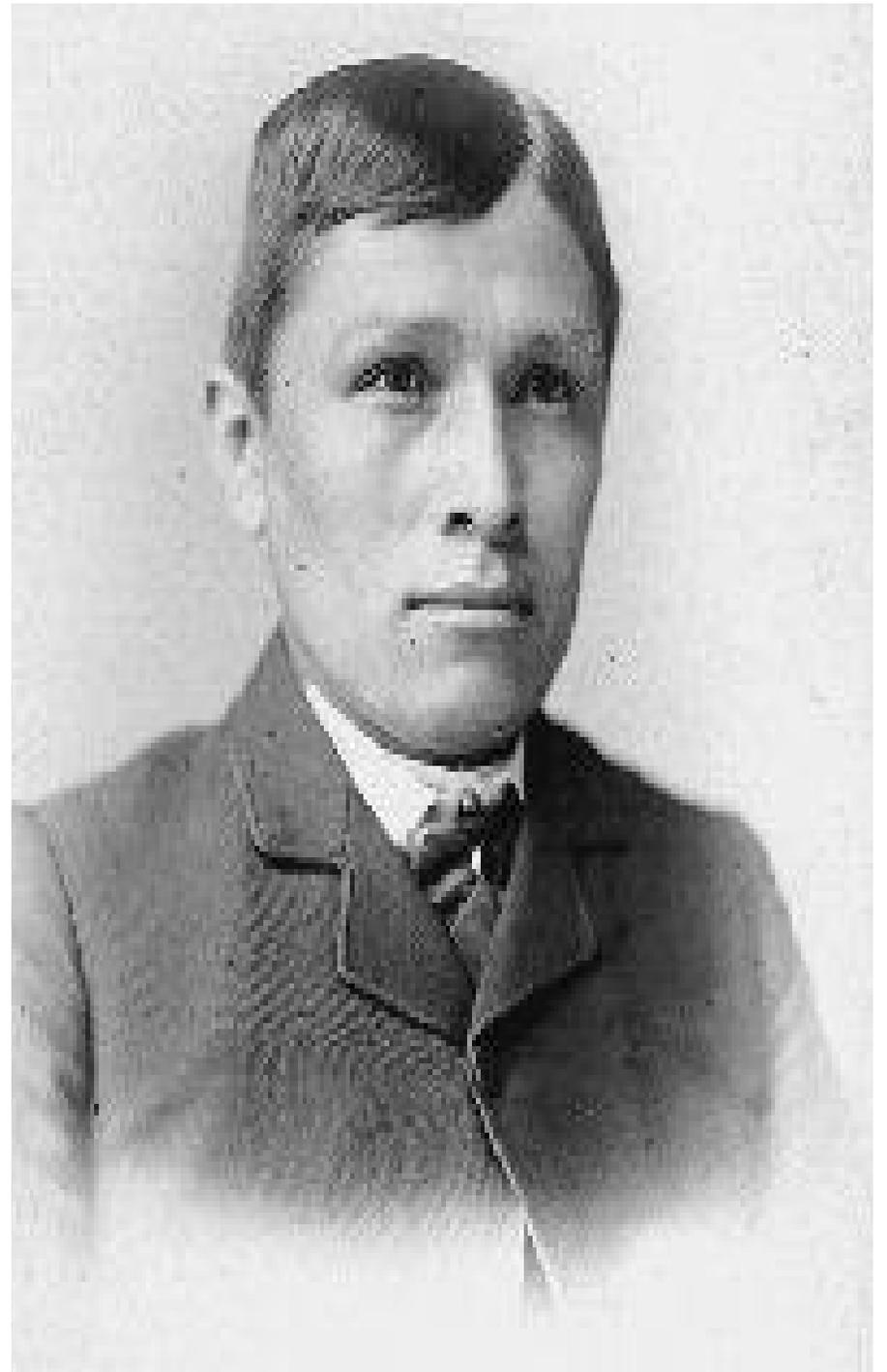
- Since European contact in 1400s on Turtle Island, Native communities have been vilified for their two spirit customs and people
 - Documentation of brutality of Spaniards
- Many communities have gone underground
- During reservation and boarding school eras –enforced strict conformity to Christian and rigid gender roles
- Succeeded in undermining but also denial of histories
- Denial of heritage led to bullying and violent behavior
- Intolerant attitudes have forced two spirits to seek refuge in cities and leave communities
- Distress– related to finding “place” and sense of belonging

HISTORICAL TRAUMA

- Historical trauma can be conceptualized as an event or set of events perpetrated on a group of people (including their environment) who share a specific group identity (e.g., nationality, tribal affiliation, ethnicity, religious affiliation) with genocidal or ethnocidal intent (i.e., annihilation or disruption to traditional lifeways, culture, and identity).
- Individually, each event is profoundly traumatic; taken together they constitute a history of sustained cultural disruption and destruction directed at communities.
- The trauma is held personally and transmitted over generations. Thus, even family members who have not directly experienced the trauma can feel the effects of the event generations later.
- The resulting trauma is often conceptualized as collective, in that it impacts a significant portion of a community, and compounding, as multiple historically traumatic events occurring over generations join in an overarching legacy of assaults
- HT vs. intergenerational trauma

BOARDING SCHOOL PERIOD 1879-1935 +

- Pratt modeled Carlisle and off-reservation boarding schools on school he developed at Fort Marion Prison in Florida from 1872-1875 where Native prisoners of war were held
- 1879 first off-reservation boarding school Carlisle “Kill the Indian, Save the Man” Policy
 - Proposed forced removal at early age with no return until young adults
- By 1909, 25 off-reservation boarding schools
 - More than 100,000 Native children forced to attend these schools
- Attendance mandatory or parents would be imprisoned
 - In 1895, 19 Hopi men were imprisoned at Alcatraz for refusing to send their children to these schools





HISTORICAL TRAUMA & TWO SPIRIT ROLES



ROLES

■ Held in Esteem

- Although Two Spirits were respected in many tribes, they were also at times feared. Because many were medicine people, they were vulnerable to accusations of doing bad medicine or witchcraft which would be met with harsh punishment or death in some communities. Despite the diversity in recognition of special or ritualized statuses across tribes, there are some common themes related to Two Spirit roles.

■ What were different roles?

- Literally embodying Two Spirits, these community members were quite often imbued with abilities to walk in-between worlds. Specifically, they could walk in both male and female worlds, could “see” from multiple points of view, and communicate fluidly between the living and the spirit worlds.
- Two Spirits were namers, mediators, counselors, dreamers, leaders, and healers.

ROLE EXAMPLES

- Two Spirits performed specific funerary rites transitioning the person's spirit to the other side or other ceremonial rites related to their ability to function with the in-between worlds.
- Two Spirits taken to treaty meetings or war councils to observe and provide counsel to the tribal leaders on the trustworthiness of the parties involved. Some tribes believed that Two Spirits brought luck and others thought that because of their keen powers of observation, they could “see” if people were lying.
- Brokered marriages, divorces, settled arguments and fostered lines of communication between the sexes, generations, and mediated disputes between tribes. In some tribes they were the ones that set up camp on the periphery of the encampment to ensure the safety of the community. Relatedly, another common role among Two Spirits was one of caretaker of the children and the family.
- Contemporary Two Spirit activists note that modern day Two Spirits continue to fulfill their ancestral roles as when they become counselors, therapists, healers, and mediators—particularly in the fields of social work, nursing, psychology, law, medicine, education, or other helping-oriented professions.

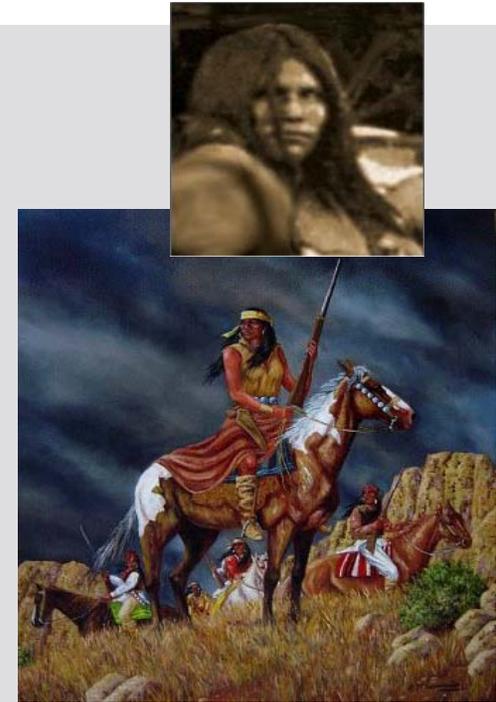
“TWO SPIRIT” NATIVE WOMEN EXAMPLES



Pine Leaf (Crow)
1800s
Dressed as female;
warrior, medicine
4 wives; in circle among
heads of families she
ranked 3rd lodge/160



Running Eagle (Piegan)
1800s
Warrior woman; men's
society; spiritual vision
forbid her marrying a man;
woman partner



Lozen- Apache 1850s-1889
Dressed as male, prophet;
healer, warrior; vision to live as
Man; could detect movement of
enemies

COLONIZATION AND SEXUALITY

- ◆ Ceremonial and social roles deteriorated with intrusion of non-AI/AN belief systems and Christianity
- ◆ Boarding school experience has stripped many Nations from traditional understandings of sexuality and gender roles
- **Sexual, physical, and emotional abuse rampant in boarding schools**
- **In 1987, the FBI found that a teacher, John Boone, at a BIA-run Hopi day school had sexually abused at least 142 boys, but the principal had never investigated the allegations**



IMPACT OF HISTORICAL TRAUMA

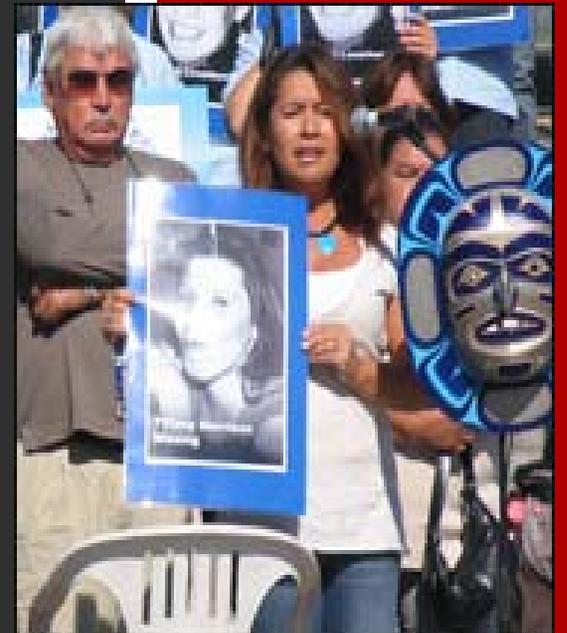
- **Colonial impact**
 - Disruption in our ability to fulfill our original instructions
 - Disruption in our relational ways of being
 - Disruption in our spatial obligations and relationships
 - Break down boundaries: physical, mental, spiritual, land etc.
 - Create systems of dependency on colonial nation state

- **Decolonizing Practices: Instructions, Restoration, Transformation**
 - Original instructions as our foundation, teachings, and restoration
 - Starting from our OI
 - Relational restoration
 - Repair relational ways of being/boundaries; responsibilities to one another
 - Narrative transformation
 - Where did we learn this? Was this part of our OI or is this HT response?



CONTEMPORARY VIOLENCE

Trauma in Indian Country



“EXTREME” CHILDHOOD TRAUMA & GENERAL TRAUMA

	Men	Women	Total*
Sexual Abuse	31%	52%	60%
Emotional Abuse	31%	52%	69%
Physical Abuse	23%	35%	53%
Emotional Neglect	19%	31%	61%
Physical Neglect	10%	25%	58%

* Represents general trauma exposure, not extreme

VIOLENCE AND NATIVE WOMEN

- Natives are victims of violent crimes at 2.5 times the national average (124 per 1,000)
- Native women are *2.5 times more likely to be raped or sexually assaulted than all other women* (5 per 1,000 vs. 2 per 1,000)
- **34.1 per cent, or more than one in three Native women will be raped during their lifetime;** whereas for women as whole it is less than one in five
- Native women are more likely to experience more physical brutality and sustain greater physical injury during rapes and sexual assaults compared to all other U.S. women (50% vs. 30% all women)

Sources: Amnesty International. (2007). *Maze of injustice: The failure to protect indigenous women from violence in the USA.*

CHILDHOOD TRAUMA: TWO SPIRIT WOMEN (N =152)

- **85% (n=128) sexual assault**
 - 74% by a family member or acquaintance
 - 63% by a stranger; 53% by both
- **78% (n =118) physical assault**
 - 70% by family member or acquaintance
 - 67% by a stranger; 59% by both
- **38% had experienced *both* physical and sexual assault by *both* strangers and family members or acquaintances**





MICROAGGRESSIONS

Microaggressions are the chronic, everyday injustices that Natives endure—the interpersonal and environmental messages that are denigrating, demeaning or invalidating. These verbal and non-verbal encounters place the burden of addressing them on the recipient of the encounter—creating stress (Derald Wing Sue, 2007)

Three types:

1. Microinsults

Behaviors that convey rudeness, insensitivity, or reflect unfair treatment or demean identity or heritage (e.g., eye-rolling)

2. Microinvalidations

Communications that nullify the experiential reality or identity of Native persons (e.g., are you a “real Indian?”)

3. Microassaults

Characterized by explicit racial derogatory attacks or purposeful discriminatory actions—intentionality more clear (e.g., “don’t go and do a war whoop now”)

CHRONIC STRESS

- Burden is on recipient to address microaggression
- Intentionality of the perpetrator is weighed
- 4 types of responses if perpetrator is confronted
 - Anger
 - Dismissiveness (lighten up)
 - Mystification (in your head)
 - Privilege Guilt (emotional caretaking)

TURNING REALITY UPSIDE DOWN

- Patricia Hill Collins– controlling images
- Microaggressions serve to:
 - Maintain status quo
 - Cartoonize populations to make them unreal/unrecognizable
 - Render us unidimensional, thus making us more “treatable” and ensure that the perpetrator has the power over
 - Create a fictional representation—literally turning the truth on its head (e.g., “Indian giver”)
 - Last bastion of psychological colonization

Microinvalidations

Communications that nullify the experiential reality or identity of Native persons

How much distressed or bothered by...

being told by non-Natives how they wished they were Indian too

told by non-Natives that they felt a spiritual connection to Indian people

Hearing racist statements such as "Indian giver"

being mistaken by non-Natives as a racial group other than Native

Being told by non-Natives how "lucky" you are to be Indian

Being told by non-Native person that he or she was an Indian in a past life or that their grandmother was a Cherokee princess

Being asked if you are a "real Indian" by a non-Native person

Being told you are "paranoid" by others

Being told that Indians are conquered and should stop trying to live in the past

being told to lighten-up or get a sense of humor about Indian mascots or logos

By having non-Native strangers speak a foreign language to you such as Spanish or Chinese

By anti-Indian statements made to you



Microinvalidation- Colonial Erasure

Characterized by invalidating experiences that erase indianness or indigeneity

How much distressed or bothered by...

Feeling stereotyped or boxed-in to a certain way of being "Native by non-Native persons

Hearing discussion by instructors or persons in authority about Indians is if they no longer exist

Hearing from non-Natives how surprisingly articulate, well read or good your language skills are

Teaching "Indian 101" to non-Natives to make your point or be heard

Non-Natives stating to you that you "don't look or act Indian"

Being asked to change your Native appearance or apparel by your employer or agency (e.g., being asked to cut your hair)



MICROINSULTS

BEHAVIORS THAT CONVEY RUDENESS, INSENSITIVITY, OR REFLECT UNFAIR TREATMENT OR Demean IDENTITY

How much distressed or bothered by...

By unfair treatment from people in helping or social service jobs such as therapist or social worker

By unfair treatment by institutions such as schools, police, social services, or immigration because you are Native

By wanting to verbally respond to someone for being anti-Indian, but didn't

By being accused of not doing your share of the work because you are Native

By unfair treatment by your bosses or supervisors because you are Native

By having to take drastic steps such as quitting job or moving away to deal with some racist thing that was done to you

Bothered by getting into an argument with non-Natives about something they said that was racist towards Native Americans



Microassaults

Characterized by explicit racial derogatory attacks or purposeful discriminatory actions

How much distressed or bothered by...

By being called a racist name like Chief, Wahoo, Squaw or Pocohontas

By being hit, kicked or physically attacked because you are Native

By being trailed or followed in a store because you are Native



MICROINSULT-- COLONIAL AUTHORITY

CHARACTERIZED BY EXPERIENCES WHERE NON-NATIVES ASSERT COLONIAL AUTHORITY TO CONTROL IMAGES, TO INVADE PHYSICAL SPACE OR ASSERT THEIR OWN AUTHORITY OVER ALL THINGS NATIVE

How much distressed or bothered by...

Feeling "invisible to non-Natives"

Being made fun of or picked on because you are Native

Being asked by a stranger if he or she could touch you because you are Native

Being asked to prove your Indianness or authenticity by a non-Native person

Being asked by a non-Native stranger if you could perform a ceremony or contact a medicine person for him or her





‘THE SWEAT LODGE A Way into Deeper Brotherhood’

Enter an alternate world and experience an opening of the heart, deeper brotherhood and a connection to your authentic self. The sweat lodge is a non-sexual cleansing and balancing ceremony.

NOTE: Participation involves nudity
\$15.00 fee to participate

“Sweat Lodge” Offered by LGBT Community Center, LA



Gay Pride Event



Gay pride, Paris, France



Ke\$ha, American Idol, 3/10

MICROAGGRESSIONS

“People will come up to me and say, “Oh, I thought all Indians were dead.” And you look at them and you think, how am I supposed to respond to this? You know, Emily Post doesn’t have an appropriate response for, I thought you were all dead! It’s like, no we’re not all dead!

- Maxine

“So [the nightclub] was loaded with White women. I mean it was so thick, I just freaked—panicked. It’s like I felt I was drowning, because every time I said, “excuse me,” no one would move. People saw me, but they wouldn’t move out of the way—it’s like I’m in THEIR space type of thing...it’s like I’m always in the way, but, in my reality, they’re always in the way [laughs], you know?

-Roberta

“Twenty years later, it’s the same thing, and you know, I think the larger organizations out there want to and just don’t know how to be respectful...I’m just way over that now and I don’t want to be the one to try to teach them that because if they haven’t gotten it by now, a part of me is like, well, what’s the use? I’ve got other things to do. I’ve got a garden to plant.”

-- Sandy

INTERSECTIONALITY

“You know the thing is that still to this day, when people insult me or do things, you know, like if someone calls me a bitch...when someone is rude to me, you know, I go through this thing in my head. Is it because I’m Indian? Is it because I’m poor? Is it because I’m a dyke? What is it that I did this time, you know, to, to have these people be hostile to me?... [I] don’t know sometimes why I’m being attacked. I just know that I’m wrong to a lot of people... I think there’s a lot of hostility to the combination of things I am.”

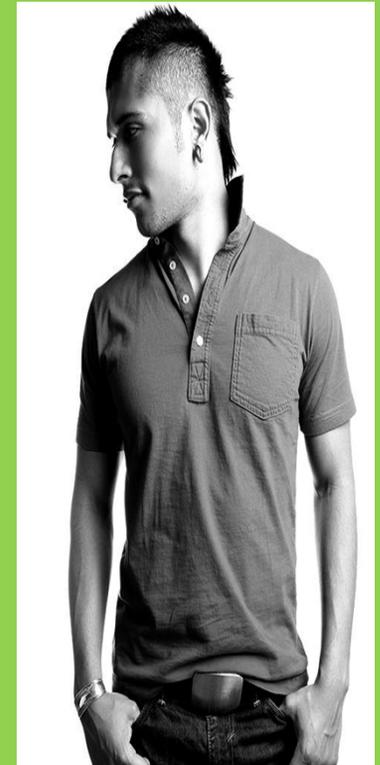
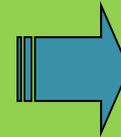
--Maxine

**HOW DO TRAUMATIC STRESSORS
AND EVENTS BECOME EMBODIED IN
OUR PHYSICAL AND MENTAL
HEALTH AS WELL AS IN OUR RISK
BEHAVIORS?**

Tuesday, December 18, 2012



INDIGENIST STRESS-COPING MODEL

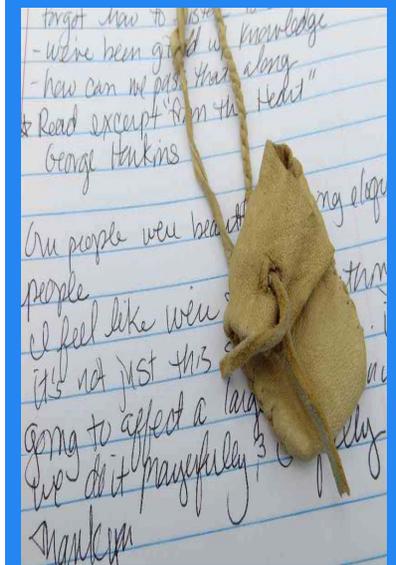


EMBODIMENT*

- Social and historical inequities can become embodied.
- Bodies tell histories and stories just as bones illuminate important information about the everyday lives of our ancestors.
- Our contemporary bodies express stories about our lived experiences whether or not these stories live in our consciousness.
- Studying the embodiment of microaggression distress and HT and corresponding health consequences allows us to determine the forces driving intergenerational patterns of health and disease.
- Debate: HT vs. Contemporary or Lifetime Trauma

PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

Putting It All Together



Historical Trauma Events by Generation

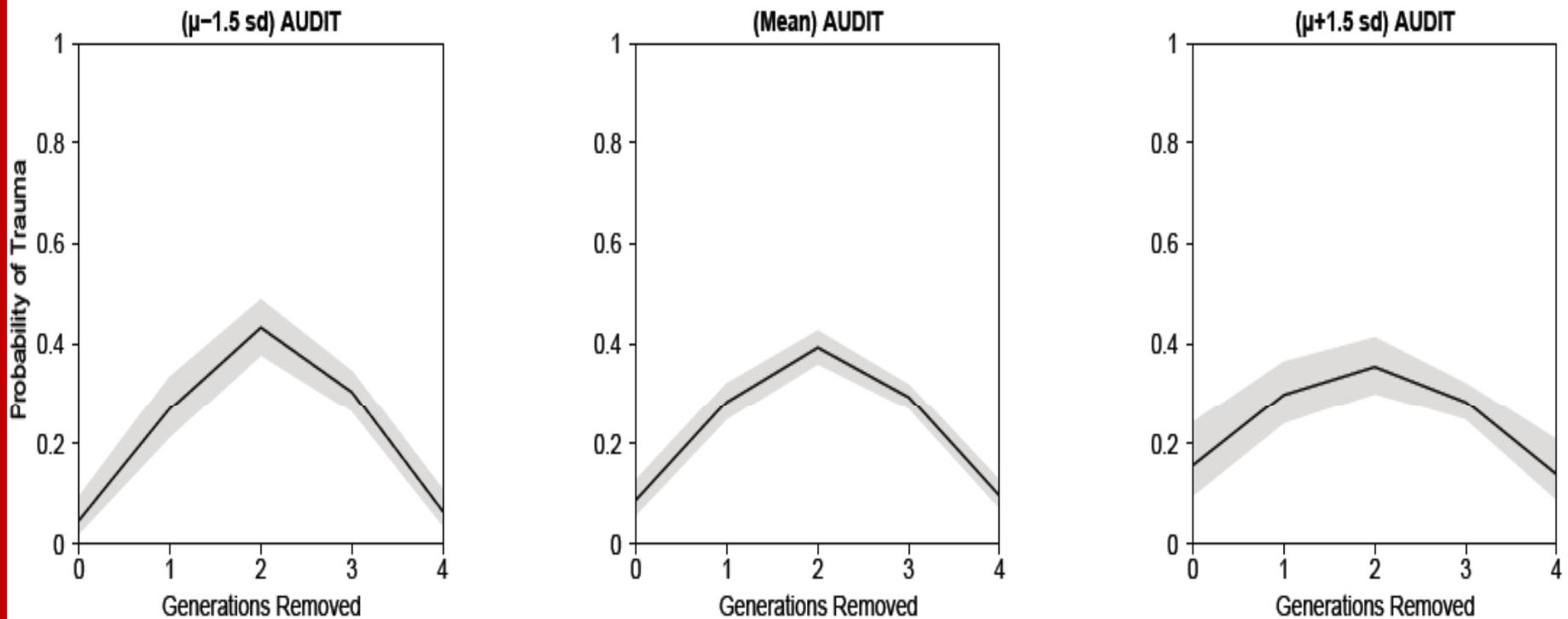
	<i>Current</i>	<i>Parents</i>	<i>Grandparents</i>	<i>G grandparents</i>	<i>G-G grandparents</i>
1. Boarding school	13%	28%	32%	37%	6%
2. Adoption/foster care	19%	13%	11%	57%	6%
3. Prevention of cultural expression	14%	26%	37%	39%	6%
4. Exploitation of homeland	13%	16%	26%	59%	6%
5. BIA relocation program	10%	17%	22%	56%	6%
6. Community massacre	3%	3%	25%	64%	6%
7. Land allotments stolen	9%	14%	38%	50%	5%
8. Medical procedures no consent	6%	6%	14%	73%	6%
9. Forcible Relocation	6%	4%	32%	55%	7%
10. Held hostage or experienced combat	5%	5%	17%	70%	7%
11. Prevention of traditional healing	8%	15%	39%	49%	6%
12. Relative's artifacts/remains stolen	7%	6%	21%	67%	8%
13. Relative's artifacts/remains desecrated	6%	5%	21%	66%	9%
<i>Average sources of trauma: Mean (SD)</i>	1.2 (2.3)	1.6 (2.2)	3.4 (3.6)	7.4 (4.2)	0.8 (2.5)

Historical Trauma Analyses controlling for lifetime physical and sexual violence (Longitudinal regressions)

	Anxiety	PTSD (RE)	PTSD (AV)	PTSD (AR)	CESD
1. Boarding school					✓
2. Adoption/foster care					
3. Prevention of cultural expression	✓				
4. Exploitation of traditional homeland					✓
5. BIA relocation program				✓	✓
6. Community massacre		○		✓	
7. Land allotments stolen		○			
8. Medical procedures w/o proper consent				✓	○
9. Forcible Relocation					○
10. Held hostage or experienced combat		○			
11. Prevention of traditional healing				✓	
12. Relative's artifacts/remains stolen			✓		✓
13. Relative's artifacts/remains desecrated			✓		✓
<i>Across all types of trauma (average total)</i>		○		✓	

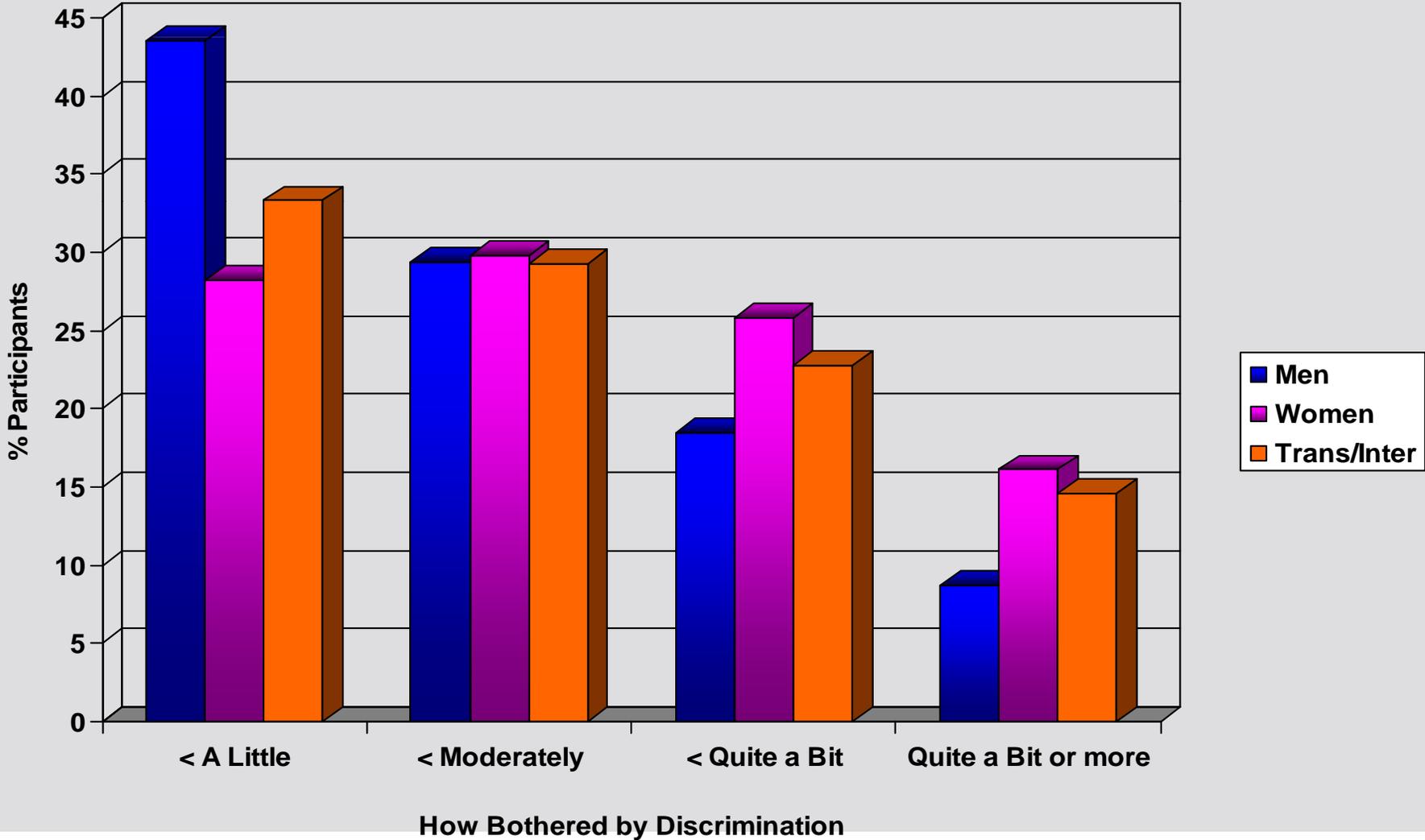
PTSD (1) = Re-experiencing symptoms PTSD (2) = Avoidance symptoms PTSD (3) = Arousal symptoms

Trauma profiles by AUDIT score (Boarding School)



All significant results follow this general pattern where flatter profiles (associated with chronic trauma through the generations) is associated with poorer mental health in the present generation.

MICROAGGRESSION DISTRESS



HISTORICAL LOSS AND PHYSICAL PAIN

	b (SE)
< Yearly	(ref)
Yearly to < Monthly	-0.07 (0.25)
Monthly to < Weekly	0.32 (0.26)
Weekly to < Daily	0.40 (0.28)
Daily or More	0.74 (0.29)*

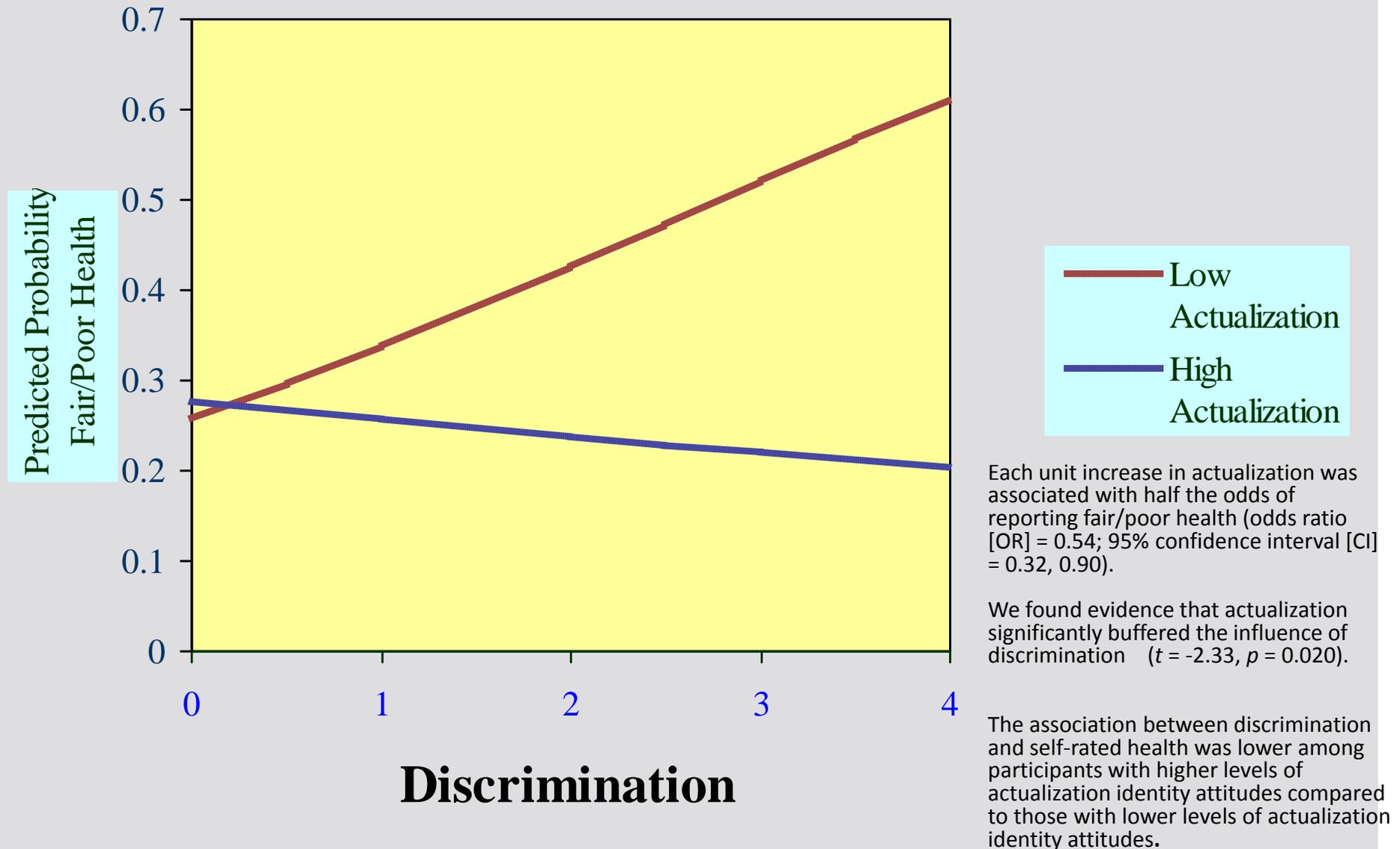
Note: Controlling for gender, age, % Indian blood, sexual orientation, HIV status, current partner status, household income, and education; 22% of variance

DISCRIMINATION AND PHYSICAL PAIN

	b (SE)
< A Little	(ref)
A Little to < Moderately	0.41 (0.16)*
Moderately to < Quite a Bit	0.47 (0.19)*
Quite a Bit or More	0.48 (0.23)*

Note Controlling for gender, age, % Indian blood, sexual orientation, HIV status, current partner status, household income, and education; each unit increase in discrimination was associated with 1.31 times the odds of reporting physical pain/impairment (95% CI= 1.09, 1.56)

Self-reported fair/poor health status by interaction between discrimination and identity among two-spirits



CULTURAL PROTECTIVE FACTORS



RESISTANCE AND RESILIENCE IN TRAVELING METAPHORS

- “When you do accept who you are...you don’t apologize anymore for who you are, you don’t apologize to people, you don’t say you know, well, I wish I weren’t this way or um pretend I’m somebody I’m not... accept me or don’t. I really don’t care... *maybe I really think it comes down to how my heart has been strengthened by having to go take this journey I had to take.* How my belief in my Creator, my relationship to my Creator has been strengthened because I had to take this journey and how I think even more my relationship to my culture has been strengthened because of this journey of growing up in an alcoholic family, the journey of being male...of being poor...or whatever.”
 - Two Spirit Man

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY AS A SOURCE OF STRENGTH: FAMILY SUPPORT IS CRITICAL

“She fully accepted me for who I was and I was her granddaughter, and that was all that mattered. And it didn’t matter what my lifestyle was, as long as I was happy. As long as I was healthy. And so I would say that my grandmother was a major turning point in my life, to fully be accepted by them helped me to continue to look at life and to look at what is healthy.”

--Roberta

DECOLONIZING PRACTICE STRATEGIES

- Community memorialization processes sites of resistance and healing
- Distinguish between CTR and OI-based cultural practices (moon/elder)
- Grow Original Instructions**
 - Incorporate ancestral and spatial understanding to healing (e.g., power now)
- Narrative Transformation**
 - [Re]naming ceremonies (e.g., depression, entities, and relations)
- Relational restoration**
 - Healing of disruptions

COMBAT HOMONORMATIVITY

- There is no one “right” or authentic way to be Two Spirit. It is whatever it means to you. Coming out is a very personal experience and should be done when you are ready.
- Sometimes young Two Spirits might feel pressure to be accepted among Two Spirit peers or LGBT friends and adopt behaviors that are not comfortable culturally.
- Sometimes Two Spirits feel pressure from straight friends and family to act or behave in ways that does not fit comfortably either.
- It is important that you find your own way of expressing your identity and know that you are not alone and that there is a history. Search your own tribal history for possible role models and seek counsel from Two Spirit women if you know of any in your community.

ADDRESS INSTITUTIONALIZED DISCRIMINATION

- Laws still forbid LGBT-TS from marrying each other in most states.
- Few states protect LGBT-TS from job discrimination or count hate crimes based on sexual orientation or gender identity. Because of this hostile climate, some two spirits may choose to hide their sexual orientation.
- Most tribal courts do not protect Two Spirits from discrimination or hate crimes and some tribal Two Spirits choose to hide their orientation or function under a “don’t ask, don’t tell” approach to surviving in their respective communities.
- Discrimination, bullying, and outright violence directed at Two Spirits as well as few role models can lead to increased stress and corresponding risk behaviors. If healthy outlets for the stress and emotional and spiritual supports are lacking, you will need to seek support from family and friends to buffer against societal and tribal discrimination.
- More subtle forms of oppression happen when other Natives question our Native identity because we are Two Spirit or question our allegiance to our tribe or community. It is important to remember that we have always been a part of our communities--we belong and should have a place in the circle of our Nation. Also, just because we recognize the diversity of who we are, does not mean that it takes away from our commitment to fighting the injustices we experience as Native people nor does it diminish our identity as Native women.

FAMILY SUPPORTS

- Native Two Spirits who are loved and supported by at least one extended family member for being who they are- are much less likely to have problems in the community and less likely to suffer from depression. They are also better prepared to take on the authenticity tests noted above and consolidate a positive Native and Two Spirit identity.
- If you are a relative to a two spirit person in your extended family (it is highly likely there is a Two Spirit person in your family) it is important that you reach out to her and give her unconditional love and regard.
- You will likely be the “rock” and the one who will buffer the stress she experiences in the community.
- Finally, you can help to make your community a safer place for other Two Spirits by not tolerating bullying or anti-LGBT attitudes.
- Quite often, if a Native woman elder stands up and says leave someone alone, most will listen! Once Two Spirit women and girls have a place at the table and in the community, they can focus on the Native concerns and issues for the betterment of the whole community.

RELATIVE SUPPORTS

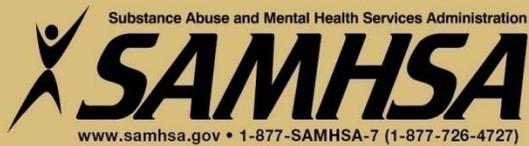
- *What if I am a parent, grandparent, auntie, or other relative who wants to help or better understand my Two Spirit relative?*
- Sometimes your first reaction to learning that your daughter, sister, mother, auntie or relative is Two Spirit can range across an array of emotions such as grief, guilt, anger, sadness, fear, worry, hurt, confusion, acceptance, and everything in between.
- This range of emotions is normal as you process this information. It is important to remember that you are not alone. Approximately 1 out of 4 families has an immediate family member who is LGBT, and it is likely that you have at least one Two Spirit person in your extended family.
- Whatever your reaction, remember that your loved one is ultimately the same person as yesterday, you just have added information. Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) is an organization of mostly parents of LGBT children who provide ongoing meetings for mutual support, education, and advocacy (they have over 500 chapters across the country).
- Find the local Two Spirit organizations in your nearest region or city!

RELATIVE SUPPORTS

- *Some parents and relatives wonder how Two Spirits “know” they are Two Spirit.*
- **By the time you realize or your Two Spirit person recognizes that they are Two Spirit, they have “known” for quite awhile.**
- **Fortunately, for our Native Two Spirits and LGBT youth, there is finally a more accepting world with more positive images of LGBT people—thus, it is becoming easier for people to identify their feelings and come out at earlier ages and it is slowly becoming safer for them to simply be who they are.**
- **Also, just like for heterosexual people, Two Spirit people don't have to be sexually active to know their sexual orientation. Sometimes they delay in telling you or others important to them because they worry they will be rejected or hurt.**
- **It is important to accept what they have to share and be emotionally present with them. If you had not expected or suspected their orientation and this is new information for you, be sure to let them know you love and support them no matter what, but that you need some time to let the information digest.**
- **Go to other support systems to get your emotional support, sense of loss, grief, anger or disbelief worked through. Do not put those feelings back on your relative to hold or work through for you. This is your journey to go through and you need to create other supports or access places to work through difficult feelings.**

RELATIVE SUPPORTS

- *Some parents and relatives worry that their religious convictions conflict with Two Spirits.*
- Learning that a loved one is Two Spirit can be a challenge if you feel it is at odds with your faith tradition.
- However, being Two Spirit does not impact a person's ability to be moral and spiritual any more than being heterosexual does.
- Many Two Spirit people are religious and active in their own faith communities or spiritually active in traditional ceremonies. It is up to you to explore, question and make choices in order to reconcile your religion with homosexuality and gender variance.
- Also, it might be helpful to seek counseling from a traditional elder from your tribal nation who might know something about the spiritual issues and histories of Two Spirits.



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Within 1 hour following this Webinar you will receive an email from "**gotowebinar**" with a request for your participation in a brief survey.

Please take a moment to complete and submit the evaluation. THANK YOU!



THANK YOU

- To the Two-Spirit women who have risked their lives to help pave the way for a new generation and have shared their stories with us
- Northeast Two Spirit Society, Harlan Pruden, and SAMHSA
- To Honor Project Partners:
 - Northwest Two Spirit Society, WA
 - American Indian Community House and Northeast Two Spirit Society, NYC
 - John Cocks' and IHCR, OK for the qualitative portion of the study
 - Indigenous Peoples Task Force, MN
 - Urban American Indian Involvement, LA
 - National Native American AIDS Prevention Center, San Fran./Oakland
 - BAITS, San Francisco
 - Site coordinators: Sharon Day, Rose Clark, Raven Heavy Runner, Alison Whitmore, Jay Macedo, Elton Naswood, Dennis Manuelito, Laura Oropeza, Don Little, Kent Lebsack-transcriptionist, among many others and all the interviewers on the project!!
 - And many others too numerous to list here for their support, guidance, and stories
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