

Strengthening Our Roots: One Region's Experience with Traditional Medicine and Healthcare Settings

Terry Maresca, M.D.

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Objectives

- Review elements that may comprise Traditional Indian Medicine (TIM)
- Consider approaches you might take as a clinician to support community-driven methods that incorporate TIM in either reservation or urban healthcare settings

What is traditional medicine?

- The sum total of knowledge, skills, & practices indigenous to different cultures, whether explicable or not, used in the maintenance of health as well as in the prevention, diagnosis, improvement of treatment of physical and mental illness

World Health Organization

<http://www.who.int/medicines/areas/traditional/en/index.html>

What is Traditional Indian Medicine?

- An approach to wellness, preventive, and illness care
- Goal is holistic balance: mind, body, emotions, spirit
- Involves individuals in the context of family, community, world, & culture
 - Community & natural world often ignored in our approaches

What is Traditional Indian Medicine?

- Components vary by tribe and region
- May incorporate concepts of:
 - Circle symbolism
 - Respect
 - Honor
 - Restoring harmonious relationships

Why are these practices important?

They are part of our national mandate within the Indian Health system

Traditional Cultural Advocacy Program, 1994

“It is the policy of the IHS to facilitate the right of American Indian and Alaska Native people to their beliefs and health practices as defined by the tribe’s or village’s traditional culture”.

Some elements of traditional medicine

- Relationship to land & season
- Indigenous language
- Food & drink
- Herbs
- Spiritual practices
 - Fasting
 - Purification
 - Offerings
 - Prayer



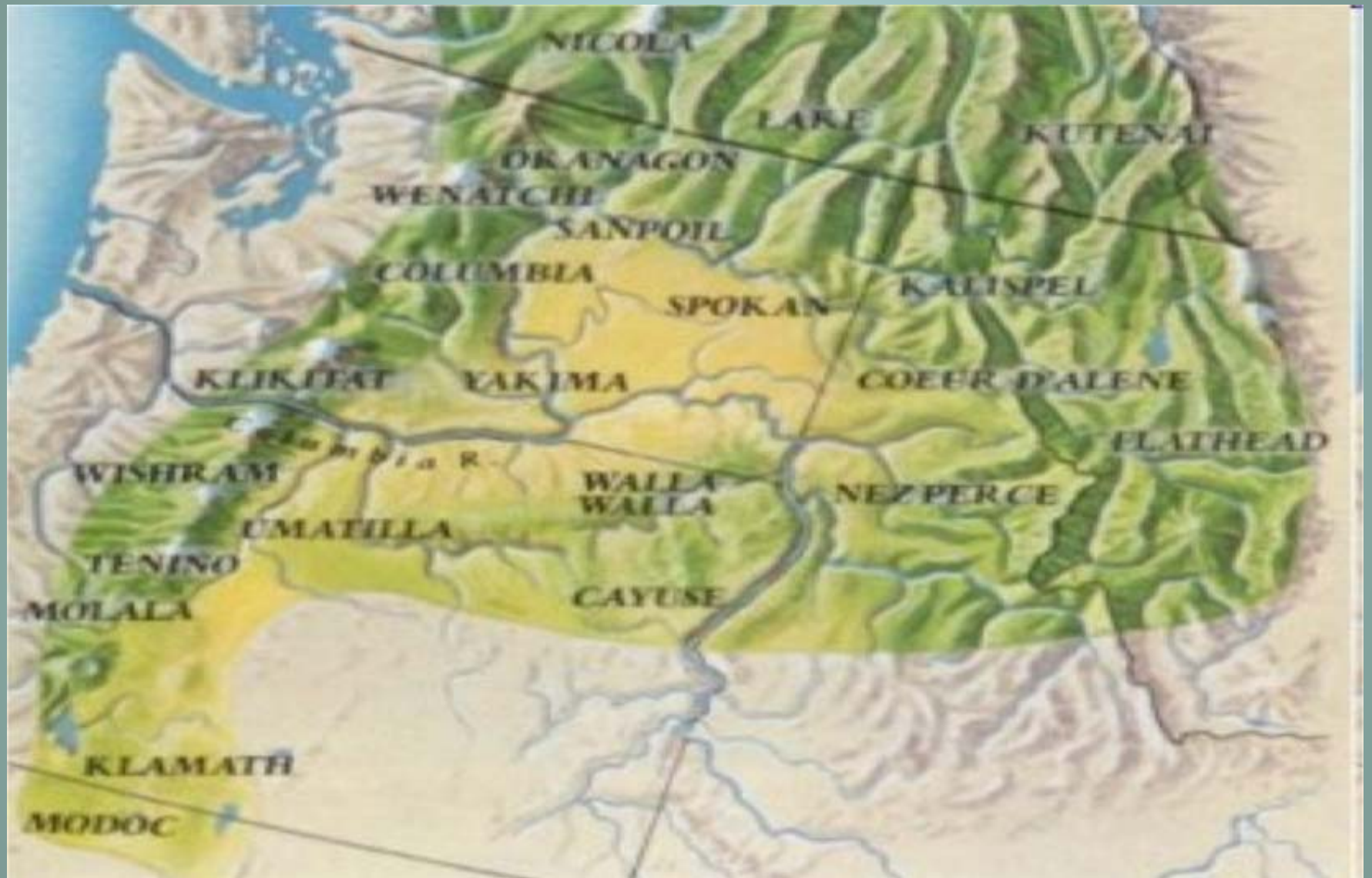
Some elements of traditional medicine

- Mental attitude towards life
- Storytelling
- Song
- Dances
- Responsibility for sacred items
- Healers & elders
- Ceremony



How do we make space for culture and history in Indian health care?

Mim Dixon and Pamela E. Iron. Strategies for Cultural Competency in Indian Health Care. Washington, DC: American Public Health Association, 2006.



One Region's Approach

- Healing & protecting land & water
- Access to traditional foods
- Access to traditional medicines
- Access to healers as health professional mentors
- Intertribal healing



The art of healing comes from nature, not from the physician. Therefore, the physician must start from nature, with an open mind.

Philippus Aureolus Paracelsus
1493-1541

Dix dx?uGusaA ti?e? swatixted
“The earth is our first teacher”

- Vi Hilbert, Upper Skagit Tribe

- Interdependence: human health with earth
- Native law tells us to stay connected to & care for our place
 - Strengthen well-being of our communities
 - Reverse impact of colonization
- Requires ecologic & spiritual approaches

We need to get out of our offices



Land & Water Restoration

- Watersheds
 - Snoqualmie Tribe (WA)
- Estuaries
 - Swinomish Tribe (WA)
 - Salmon habitat
- Health personnel involvement



Protecting Land

- Stillaguamish Tribe (WA) enterprise
- Native plants for restoration work
- Medicinal plants

[http://stillaguamish.com/
banksavers.asp](http://stillaguamish.com/banksavers.asp)





Comprehensive Ecologic Preservation

- Confederated Tribes of Umatilla (OR)
- Following their law: “original instructions”
- Protecting men and women’s traditional foods
 - From salmon & elk to roots & huckleberries
- “Eat the landscape, not a pyramid”
 - Supports a way of life

<http://www.umatilla.nsn.us/dnr.html>

Access to Traditional Foods

- Puget Sound Traditional Food and Diabetes Project
 - Tulalip Tribes, Muckleshoot Tribe, King County (WA), and Burke Museum (Seattle)
 - Assessing therapeutic value of native food diets in treatment & prevention
 - Involves archeologists, health professionals, & tribal members

<http://faculty.washington.edu/plape/tradfoods/tradfood.htm>

Research: Pre-Columbian Diet in the Pacific Northwest

- Lape & Kopperl study, University of Washington, 2007
- Puget Sound middens 2000-5000 years old
 - Over 80 types of shellfish
 - 70 fish, shallow to deep sea
 - 50 mammals: marine & terrestrial
 - 20 berries, 5 roots, 10 medicine plants

Accessing Traditional Foods

- Regional Consortia
 - State and Federal land managers (WA) with tribes
 - Conferences
 - Uphold treaty rights for gathering, hunting, fishing
- National conferences
 - Society for Applied Anthropology, 2011



Role of Tribal Colleges

- Northwest Indian College (Bellingham, WA)
- Diabetes Prevention Through Traditional Plants project
 - Monthly meetings in tribal communities state-wide
 - Protecting the knowledge; elders/healers attend
 - I/T/U health professionals invited
- Practical medicine making & traditional food harvesting & preparation

Text useful to
clinicians:

Wild Rose and
Western Red
Cedar: The Gift of
Northwest Plants
Elise Krohn, 2007

Training tribal cooks
in traditional food
prep



Access to plant medicines: Northwest Indian Treatment Center

- Squaxin Island Tribe: Elma, WA
- Medicine wheel herb & food garden on site
- Cared for by inpatient clients
- “Self-medication” with safer alternatives
- Empowerment, cultural reconnection
- “Eating the seasons”

<http://www.squaxinisoland.org/government/north-west-indian-treatment-center/>

Access to plant medicines

- Medicinal plant garden at Snoqualmie Tribal Health Services
 - Adjacent to clinic; reflects traditional health concepts
 - Promotes TIM discussions with patients & medical staff
 - Dispensing
 - Liaison with healers





Other Model Gardens

- Nisqually Tribal Cultural Center (WA)
 - Basketry, food, medicine
- Skokomish Tribe (WA)
- Makah Tribe (WA)
 - Ethno-botanical trail

Cultural Resource Preservation

- Field Guides
 - Colville Confederated Tribes (WA)
- Medicinal Plant Class
 - Salish Kootenai Tribal College (MT)
 - Intellectual property protection



Access to healers & elders as health professional mentors

From childhood education to post-graduate level

“Don’ t leave your elders behind”

-Peter Jacob (Yupik)

Alaska Rural Behavioral Health Training Academy

- Indigenous Elders on core teaching faculty
- Active guidance
 - In classroom at U of AK Fairbanks
 - Distance learning via teleconference
 - Out-of-state meetings with diploma faculty

<http://www.uaf.edu/arbhta/>

Pathways Into Health

www.PathwaysIntoHealth.org

- Collaboration of 150+ individuals & organizations
- Tribal, academic and I/T/U
- Interdisciplinary
- Focus on health care & health education pipeline for AI/ANs
- Cultural attunement strategies



Traditional Healers as Mentors

- University of Washington School of Medicine, Indian Health Pathway Curriculum
 - Began 1992, All 5 WWAMI states
- Traditional Indian Medicine Clerkship
 - Year 4 students
 - Integrates culture and medicine

<https://catalyst.uw.edu/workspace/dacosta/9651/47950>

Medical Education

- University of British Columbia Family Medicine Residency Program
- Expanded SOAP model for outpatient assessments
 - Includes 4 medicine wheel elements
 - Spiritual & cultural factors addressed

<http://www.familymed.ubc.ca/carms/sites/aboriginal.htm>

On-the-Job Mentoring

- Puyallup Tribal Health Authority (WA)
- Required TIM orientation
- Cultural competency in performance eval
- Ongoing quarterly all-staff meetings on TIM topics
 - Visiting healers from various tribal traditions



On-the-Job Mentoring

- Seattle Indian Health Board (WA)
 - Traditional Health Liaison
 - Credentialing for healers
- Monthly intercultural community traditional medicine gatherings
 - Target audience is health professionals
- Traditional tobacco pow-wows
- Regular clinic smudging in some tribal facilities



Mentoring IHS Staff

Apsáalooke Health Advocate Project (MT)

- Montana State University & Crow Tribe partnership with IHS
- Community-based 1:1 partnership with community mentor & medical staff
 - Meet twice a month to build trust
 - Tribal-specific cultural education

<http://www.montana.edu/messengers/advprgm.html>



Returning to Our Roots: Canoe Journey

- 22nd annual gathering in 2011
 - Over 10,000 attend; 2-3 weeks long
- All Salish Sea tribes, U.S. & Canada
- Canoe families, Host nation
 - Youth involvement; sobriety mandatory
- Protocols
 - Song, dance, language revitalization
 - Cultural exchange

Canoe Journey

- Power of group healing from intergenerational trauma
- Ceremony
- Medical support
 - Herbal first aid
 - Traveling clinician helpers



“We are lifting each other up”

Connie McCloud

Puyallup Tribe cultural coordinator
& canoe skipper

Coast Salish Gathering

- Western Washington & British Columbia First Nations Chiefs policy group
- Restore & protect natural resources of Salish Sea
- Health of traditional foods a priority
- Water sample monitoring internationally during Canoe Journey
 - Seafood focus

<http://www.coastsalishgathering.com>

Storytelling

- Wisdom of the Elders, Inc.
 - 501(c)(3) non-profit, Portland, OR
 - Record & preserve oral traditions
 - NW Indian Storytellers Association
 - Annual gathering
- “Discovering Our Story”
 - 12 culturally tailored multimedia web modules
 - Mental health, addictions, DM2, domestic violence

<http://discoveringourstory.org/home>

Native Youth Enrichment Program



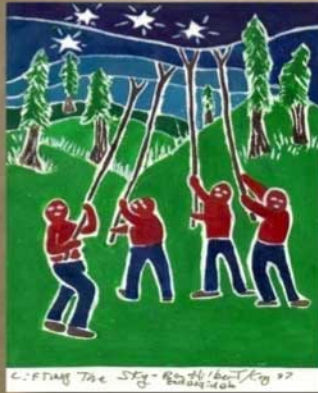
Native Youth Enrichment Program
UNIVERSITY of WASHINGTON

- Culturally based urban program to promote youth in science, technology, engineering, & math
- Digital storytelling used
- “Lessons of Traditional foods” focus
 - Elder interviews

<http://www.iwri.org/nyep>

Language

- Lushootseed classes
- Regular invitations to all tribal employees of Snoqualmie
- Free
- “Reawakening language of the land”



Lushootseed Research Presents
Yahow!
Lifting the Language
2nd Annual Lushootseed Language Conference
Saturday, April 30, 2011
8:30 am - 5:00
Hosted by
Seattle University

Lushootseed Research, founded in 1983 by Vi "taq"šablu" Hilbert invites you to join us for our 2nd Lushootseed Language Conference hosted by Seattle University

This one-day conference will feature

- * Language & Research Resources
- * Language Immersion Programs
- * National & Local Tribal Presenters
- * And Much More!

Registration

\$40 Early Bird	\$50 At the Door
\$20 Students and Elders	

Registration includes lunch provided by Seattle University's Office of the President

For more information visit us at www.lushootseed.org or contact Tami Chock @ 360-392-4259 tchock@nwic.edu
CEU's and clock hours available

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Lushootseed Research
a Non-profit Organization

Sponsored by
Northwest Indian College, Cooperative Extension & Seattle University, Office of the President

NORTHWEST INDIAN COLLEGE
Xw'lemi Elh>Tal>Nexw Squi

SEATTLE UNIVERSITY

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What can you do to support TIM as a clinician?

- Broaden your definition of health
 - And your SOAP assessments
- Show up at community events
 - Beyond health fairs
- Learn more about culture in your area
 - Environmental & traditional food related activities
 - Plant medicine
- Find elders & healers as mentors
 - “Where are your elders?”
 - Connect to tribal colleges

What can you do to support TIM as a clinician?

- Support those who support preservation of natural & cultural resources
 - Foods served at clinic functions?
 - Reinforce TIM concepts learned elsewhere
 - “Eating the landscape”; storytelling web modules
- Create cultural in-services
 - How do you give input as to your needs?
- Consider resources outside the usual medical box
 - Interdisciplinary, Web based

Returning to Our Roots

- Improves outcomes for our communities
- Keeps us grounded in Indigenous core values
- “We need to get out of our offices”

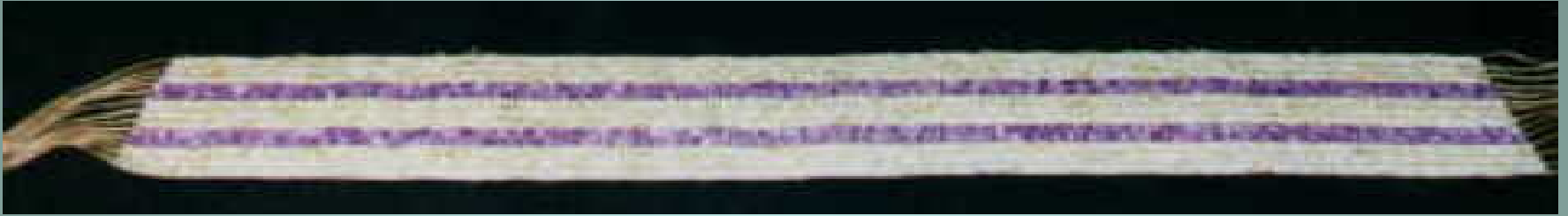


“I hope and I pray we can get a connection... together, we can save lives”

Isadore Tom

*Traditional healer, Tulalip Tribes, WA
to a group of health professions students,
2009*

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Terry Maresca, M.D.

tmaresca@u.washington.edu

Seattle Indian Health Board Family Medicine
Residency Program

Snoqualmie Tribal Health Services

425-333-6924