



**Indian Health Service**  
**2012 NATIONAL BEHAVIORAL**  
**HEALTH CONFERENCE**

**Welcome**

**Healing Through Hip Hop**

**Dr. Martina Whelshula and Rickey “Deekon” Jones**



*Mobilizing Partnerships to Promote Wellness*





# House Keeping

- Please be sure to sign in and out on the Sign In Sheets located near the entrance to this room.
- Please complete the evaluation at the end of this presentation.
- For more information on Continuing Education Units (CEUs), please visit the Registration Desk



# Comfort Room

- To promote wellness and self-care, a Comfort Room is available in Room XXX for your use.
- If you need further assistance, please visit the Indian Health Service Division of Behavioral Health booth.



# The Healing Lodge of the Seven Nations

Seven Sovereign Tribal Nations came together in 1988 to create the Healing Lodge for their youth. It is one of thirteen Native American youth regional treatment centers around the country and is funded primarily through Indian Health Services and the State of Washington. The Healing Lodge provides inpatient services for adolescents ages 13 to 18 who need a 90 to 120 day treatment program. We are licensed for 45 beds.





# Shift in Paradigms

- In 2009, the Healing Lodge shifted from a punitive level system to a more therapeutic treatment environment. The #1 reason for discharge under the punitive level system was “rule violation.” Under the new approach, no child would be discharged for rule violation; rather, most needed a higher level of care of which we were not qualified to support.
- Our new approach was grounded in and guided by traditional tribal values such as; respect, family/community, generosity, service, and humor.
- The shift made a huge difference; however, we still fell short of our desired goals for engagement.



# Go to Where the Kids Are At

When asked, “What do you need on any given day in order to get more fully engaged in treatment?” The residents’ most common response...Music! It was at this point where Deekon provided residents beats he had created himself and instructed them to write lyrics to the beats. All of the residents returned the next day with songs. They wanted MORE. It was at this point that we realized how instrumental music would be in improving resident engagement in treatment.





# Why Hip Hop?

The favorite music genre at that time was Hip Hop. One unintended outcome was the relative safety of rapping as opposed to “singing” which would require a “beautiful” singing voice. Those residents who felt that they couldn’t sing quickly discovered that they could rap the song. This realization catapulted the program into a powerful medium for residents who would normally choose not to engage due to insecurities about their abilities to sing.





# Lyrics of the Soul

Through their songs, youth revealed trauma that was not disclosed in conventional one on one counseling sessions with their counselors.

The songs acknowledged the trauma but they also allowed the youth to articulate a hope for change.

*“I was 2 years old that’s when my dad got locked up so I had to grow up on my own...feeling all grown. Then I hit 13 that’s when everything changed, I started slangin, started bangin, growin up in the hood thinkin it was all good, but it wasn’t, goin in and out of jail. Feelin like I was in hell, sittin in a cell, thinkin bout the things that I did, but the past is the past and I’m on the right path.”*





# We began to wonder....

If drugs hijacked the brain...could music help in building new neural pathways?



# Dopamine Release With Music

Music, an abstract stimulus, can arouse feelings of euphoria and craving, similar to tangible rewards that involve the striatal dopaminergic system.



Salimpoor, V., Benovoy, M., Larcher, K., Dagher, A., and Zatorre R. 2011. *Anatomically distinct dopamine release during anticipation and experience of peak emotion to music*. Nature Neuroscience. 14, 257-262





# Dopamine Release in Anticipation of Abstract Reward

“Dopamine is pivotal for establishing and maintaining behavior. If music-induced emotional states can lead to dopamine release, as our findings indicate, it may begin to explain why musical experiences are so valued. These results further speak to why music can be effectively used in rituals, marketing or film to manipulate hedonic states. Our findings provide neurochemical evidence that intense emotional response to music involve ancient reward circuitry and serve as a starting point for more detailed investigations of the biological substrates that underlie abstract forms of pleasure.”

Salimpoor, V., Benovoy, M., Larcher, K., Dagher, A., and Zatorre R. 2011. *Anatomically distinct dopamine release during anticipation and experience of peak emotion to music*. Nature Neuroscience. 14, 257-262





## “Using Music Interchangeably with Drugs”

“Many addicts talk about ‘using’ music interchangeably with drugs, listening obsessively to music during periods of abstinence. Music fills the emotional vacuum they feel without drugs, drowns out overwhelming thoughts and emotions, eases their passage into sleep and energizes them on waking up in the morning. Clients also talk about using music to avoid feeling – when faced with emotional conflict. Relying on drugs for these capacities, for so many years, they are unable to cope without external help, and music fills that need.”



Horesh, T. 2003. Dangerous Music – Working with the Destructive and Healing Powers of Popular Music in the Treatment of Substance Abusers. *Music Therapy Today* (online). Vol. IV (3) June 2003



# The Brain on Music...

- Many youth who come to us struggling from meth and opiate addictions have extremely low levels of Dopamine and Serotonin, the body's natural opiates, as well as those who come depressed.
- Soothing musical notes help increase the Dopamine and Serotonin levels of the brain, thus alleviating mental depression.
- The same neurotransmitters triggered during drug use are also stimulated in the presence of music.
- Music also helps with concentration and memory which is many times compromised by drug and alcohol abuse.



## Another Side to Making Music

“Our brains are wired to learn. When a reward is fully predictable, learning does not occur. Learning is at its maximum when a particular rewarding outcome is deemed the *most* uncertain. Some dopamine cells are uniquely activated by uncertainty. Thus, if a particular cue in the environment predicts that a morsel of food will be available only *some* of the time, these cells release dopamine into the reward pathway. These cells are the most active when there is the most uncertainty. As the reward becomes more predictable—or as the uncertainty decreases—the activity of these cells also decreases.” *Lidstone, 2010*





# Risk and the Reward Pathway

- Is uncertainty (or risk) inherently rewarding? If we never took risks (i.e., if we did not derive some kind of pleasure from doing so), we could never move forward.
- In order to make strides, we need to be prepared to take certain risks. It appears as if our brains are designed to seek out the things that we do not know in an effort to continue to advance. *Lidstone, 2010*



# Making Music is Risky Business

Most adolescents exposed to trauma suffer from toxic shame. Performance, of any kind, can be an agonizingly challenging process. In those moments they contemplate the act of sharing their lyrics, or try to sing a few verses, or when they actually sing in front of another person they are at their most vulnerable. The desire to perform is so strong that they will risk their vulnerable egos and try. When they do and perceive their attempt as a success....

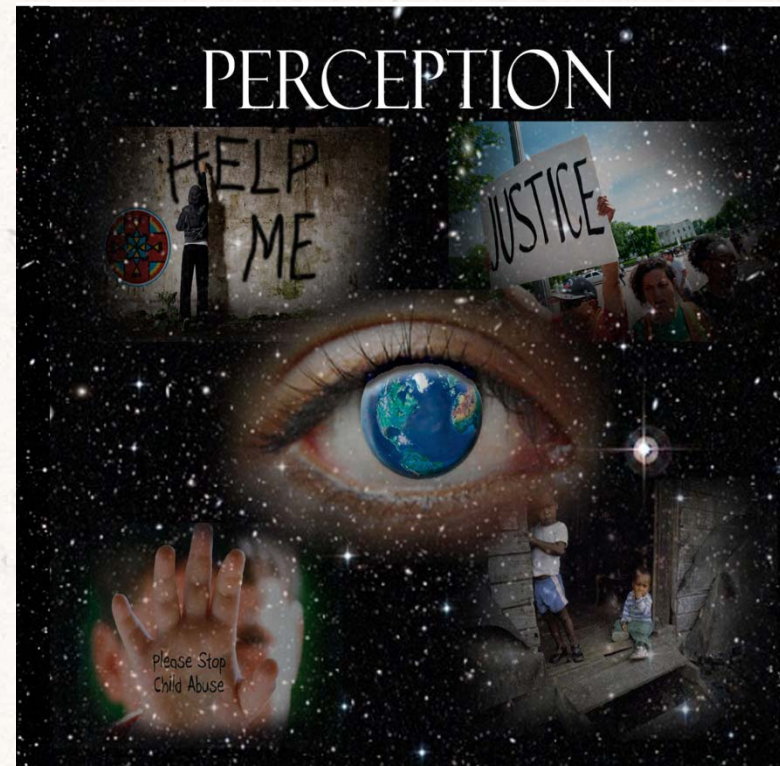
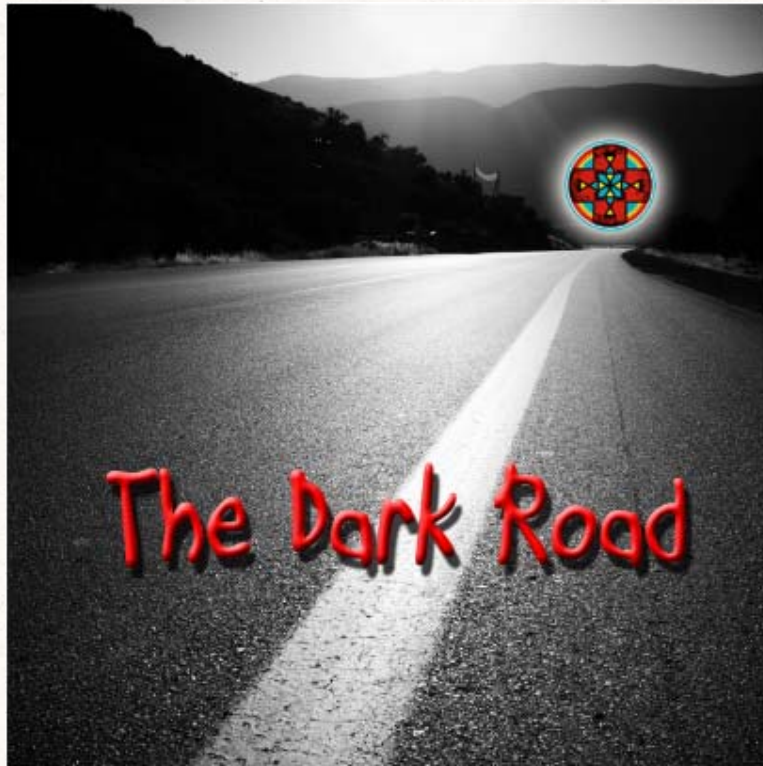
**DOPAMINE RELEASE** 

The act of trying new things, especially something that is emotionally, mentally or physically challenging, can go far in helping build a child's confidence and self-esteem.

Encouraging children to take healthy risks also helps them become more resilient. When they learn a new skill and encounter difficulty, their ability to bounce back and stay the course -- or move on and try something new -- shows that they have reached an important developmental milestone.



## CD Albums Written and Recorded by HL Kids





# Partnerships

- Several Tribes reached out to the Healing Lodge to ask for assistance and feedback on the development of treatment services in their communities for youth and adults. As a result, these Tribes came to the Healing Lodge for a tour and a meeting with the clinical team.
- These Tribes were introduced to the music program and the songs recorded by the young residents. They were so impressed by the outcome of the music program that they contributed funds which enabled the music program to move from a closet to a modular building. This gave the residents and the studio engineers more room for groups and recording.
- Other Tribes have expressed an interest in integrating music into outpatient services. These partnerships have strengthened both the Healing Lodge program and the services our youth receive at home.



# National Recognition

In 2011, the Healing Lodge received an Honorable Mention from the National **iAward** for innovative programming in behavioral healthcare for our music innovation.





# National Recognition (cont'd)

2<sup>nd</sup> Place Winner in the  
National MusiCares and  
GRAMMY  
Foundation's Teen  
Substance Abuse  
Awareness Music  
Contest.



Kevin Simmons at the Grammy Rehearsals



# National Recognition (cont'd)

Rickey “Deekon” Jones was chosen as one of 15 in the nation for President Obama’s Native Youth Challenge for his work in developing the music program.





# State Recognition

Outstanding Service Awards for Treatment Professionals



2011 Washington Co-Occurring Disorders and Treatment  
Conference's

*Innovative Program of the Year*



# JMATE Presentation





# References:

Horesh, T. 2003. Dangerous Music – Working with the Destructive and Healing Powers of Popular Music in the Treatment of Substance Abusers. *Music Therapy Today* (online). Vol. IV (3) June 2003

Lidstone, 2010 <http://www.bigquestionsonline.com/blogs/heather-wax/why-do-our-reward-pathways-activate-in-response-to-uncertainty>

Salimpoor, V., Benovoy, M., Larcher, K., Dagher, A., and Zatorre R. 2011. *Anatomically distinct dopamine release during anticipation and experience of peak emotion to music*. *Nature Neuroscience*. 14, 257-262



# Contact Information

[www.healinglodge.org](http://www.healinglodge.org)

(509)533-6910



# Crisis Hotline Numbers

Suicide Prevention Lifeline Number:

- 1-800-273-TALK (8255)

National Domestic Violence Hotline:

- 1-800-799-SAFE (7233) or TTY 1-800-787-3224

National Child Abuse Hotline:

- 1-800-4-A-CHILD

Sexual Assault Hotline:

- 1-800-262-9800