

Session Descriptions

Agency Climate: Creating an Emotionally Healthy Work Environment – Working in an emotionally and spiritually healthy work environment is important for everyone, but especially for those involved in the difficult work of tribal child welfare practice. We will talk about ways supervisors and managers can create and maintain an open and supportive workplace.

American Indian Family Strengths – This session will consider the inherent strengths of Native families and communities, and how awareness of them can be built in to the practice of child welfare.

Assessing Title IV-E Readiness – When tribes have the opportunity to enter in to Title IV-E agreements with states, there are several important considerations they must make. This session will present a proven methodology for assessing the readiness of tribes to develop IV-E programming.

Clinical Supervision – Clinical supervision is an important part of ensuring the high quality of services offered by a child welfare program. This session will focus on introducing effective clinical supervision in to tribal child welfare programs.

Coping with Grief in Indian Child Welfare – Grief is encountered regularly by tribal child welfare workers in the course of their work, and having the skills to address grief can have a significant impact in the worker's ability to serve a family. This session will present real life skills that will equip workers to deal with difficult emotional situations in the field.

Case Skills: Court (Courtroom and Preparation) – Building on the content from the Pre-Court session, this session focuses on the background tribal social workers must have for working in both Tribal and State District Courts. The discussion will cover differences between the two types of courts, expectations of the social worker in child welfare court, and practical skills such as writing good court reports and providing testimony.

Critical Issues in Indian Child Welfare – Supervisors in tribal child welfare agencies are often so busy that they are not able to gather together and exchange ideas and concerns with colleagues from other tribes. This session will provide a space for tribal child welfare administrators to have a free-flowing discussion on funding, sovereignty, and practice issues and to draw new ideas from the collective experience of the group.

Developmental Process for Title IV-E Services at Leech Lake – The Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe is currently assuming control of child welfare services. Administrators from the Band will discuss the process and challenges of taking on IV-E service provision.

Discussion: Modifying and Using Existing Indigenous Child Welfare Practice Models in Your Own Community – This group discussion will offer an opportunity for participants to discuss the previous session’s content on existing Indigenous child welfare practice models, with a special attention paid to adapting these models for use in your own tribal communities.

Evaluating Indian Child Welfare Practice – It is becoming increasingly important for tribal social services agencies to demonstrate effectiveness in their practice of child welfare. Presenters in this session will introduce participants to several useful techniques.

Indigenous Child Welfare Practice Models – Participants in this session will have the opportunity to explore various Native child welfare practice models being used throughout the United States and Canada. These, tribally-developed paradigms take in to account traditional tribal culture in planning and delivering child welfare services to children and families.

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder – In utero exposure to alcohol can have serious developmental consequences, and the associated issues impact many tribal communities. Tribal child welfare workers will learn about FASD, and how to respond to families affected by it.

Getting Along: Resolving Workplace Conflict – Because tribal social services agencies are staffed by people from different backgrounds and belief systems, conflict in the workplace is often a reality. This session will focus on how administrators can encourage a cooperative and open work place.

Panel Discussion: Historical Trauma and Resilience – Tribal child welfare workers see the impact of historical trauma on Native communities every day. This panel discussion will identify aspects of both trauma and resilience, and how they can be applied to tribal child welfare work in meaningful ways.

Panel Discussion: History and Development of ICWA – The Indian Child Welfare Act is the most important piece of legislation for tribal child welfare workers. The panel discussion will outline the development of the Act. It will also cover ICWA’s original intent, and how that has – or hasn’t – been followed in implementation.

Play on ICW (*Stolen Generations*) and Discussion – The play and a discussion that will follow will examine the impact of boarding schools on Native communities, and how tribal social workers can address these issues in their daily work.

Case Skills: Post-Court (Disposition to Case Closure) – The final session in the case skills series will cover the responsibilities of tribal child welfare workers from case disposition to closure. These skills will be practiced in the afternoon lab session.

Practice Lab and Discussion – Each of the three “Case Skills” sessions will include a corresponding practice lab and discussion session after lunch. These sessions will allow social workers to put into practice some of the skills they learned about in the morning session, and to help one another adapt the skills to specific tribal agencies’ practices.

Case Skills: Pre-Court (Intake and Investigation) – The first session in the case skills series will cover skills needed for intake and investigation of reported child abuse and neglect. This session will focus on the critical skills of assessment and documentation.

Self Care and Balance – Working as a tribal child welfare worker is often very stressful and emotionally exhausting. This session will cover self-care practices and will help participants to develop their own plan for staying physically, emotionally, and spiritually healthy in their work.

Self-Care and Creating Healthy Work Relationships – This session will examine the importance of having regular self-care practices when doing stressful and draining work in child welfare, with specific attention paid to maintaining healthy relationships in the workplace.

Tribal Institutional Review Boards (IRBs) – As tribes continue to assert their sovereignty it is important to develop means for managing research done with and among their members. One solution is the creation of tribal Institutional Review Boards (IRBs). This presentation will describe the development of a tribal IRB.

What is Cultural Competence in Indian Country? – Cultural Competence is often talked about as being a requirement for relevant social work practice. In this session, participants will discuss what the term means when it is applied to work done in Native communities in general, and their own tribes in particular, and what the implications are for child welfare practice.

Where Do We Go From Here? – On the last day, Administrative Track participants will meet to discuss how they can take things learned during the Institute back to their own communities and actually put them in to practice in their agencies. The session will also include a feedback discussion during which attendees will be able to offer suggestions for the development of the 2009 Summer Institute.

Evening Activities

Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) – AA meetings will be available on site in the evenings.

Helen Roy in Concert – Singer Helen Roy will perform some of your favorite popular music, with the lyrics translated into Ojibwe.

Leech Lake Reservation Tour – Take a guided tour of historical areas on the Leech Lake Reservation.

Sweat Lodge – A teaching lodge will be available to workshop participants.

Talking Circle with Tom Stillday - Tom will be meet with interested participants to have a talking circle.