Methamphetamine and Indian Child Welfare
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NICWA is dedicated to improving the lives of American Indian children and families.

- Mission Statement

National Indian Child Welfare Association
Protecting our children • Preserving our culture
This workshop is sponsored by The National Center on Substance Abuse and Child Welfare
A Program of the
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
Center for Substance Abuse Treatment
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Administration on Children, Youth and Families
Children’s Bureau
Office on Child Abuse and Neglect
What is Meth?

- Highly addictive substance
- Stimulant drug
- Illegally produced and distributed
- Can be snorted, smoked, swallowed, and/or injected

- Comes in several forms – powder, rocks, crystal
- In its crystal form, it is called “crystal meth”
Meth Is Not Natural

Unlike heroin, cocaine, and marijuana, meth is dependent on a manufacturing process involving store-bought chemicals.
Meth Awareness Class

- Alcohol (denatured)
- Acetone
- Ammonium sulfate (fertilizer)
- Battery acid
- Bleach
- Cold or allergy pills containing ephedrine
- Drain cleaner (lye based)
- Gasoline additive (Heet)
- Hydrogen peroxide
- Iodine
- Lithium batteries
- Matches
- Mineral spirits
- Hydrochloric acid (drain or pool cleaner)
- Table or rock salt
- Sodium or lithium metal
- Starting fluid
- Gun cleaning solvent
The Most Common Ingredient

- Pseudo ephedrine or ephedephrine cold medicine
- A cooking process is used to chemically make meth. Simple and crude labs are used, a dangerous and lethal drug is made, leaving a toxic hazard.
Equipment Commonly Used

- Aluminum foil
- Blenders
- Bottles (pop, glass, milk)
- Glassware
- Camp stoves
- Cheesecloth
- Coffee filters
- Cotton balls
- Duct tape
- Electric hot plates

- Funnels
- Garden spray jugs
- Gas cans
- Paper towels
- pH test strips
- Plastic tubing
- Pressure cookers
- Propane tanks
- Pyrex dishes
- Rags
It’s not the items; it’s the oddness of the items and their placement in the home.

Coffee filters in the living room, Heet in the kitchen, propane tanks and no grill
Residential and Building Clues

- Access denied to landlords, neighbors, and community visitors
- Chemical staining on walls and floors
- Covered or blacked out windows
- Security measures; baby monitors outside/cameras
- Stained or burnt grass indicating where chemicals were dumped
- Packaging from items on previous list in large quantities in trash
- Coffee filters, sheets, and pillow cases stained red
If You Suspect a Meth Lab

• Leave at once and report it;
• Do not open coolers, containers, or boxes;
• Do not touch items; and
• Handling meth lab chemicals or meth lab residue can cause burning in your eyes and skin. Breathing in the gas can cause respiratory damage.
Vital Collaborations

- Tribal Law Enforcement
- Child Welfare
- Child Care Providers
- Education Systems
- Housing
- Children’s Mental Health
- Indian Health Services
What is suggested

- Existing informal relationships between frontline workers of each system
- The willingness to form formal agreements
- Acknowledgement of shared values our children
Tribal System Collaboration

- Identification of need
- Identify stakeholders
- Stakeholder meetings
- Leadership/appointed and inherited
Affirming Values of Tribal Programs

• Tribal leadership was informed throughout process
• Defining areas of need
• Establishing roles
• Sharing divergent views
Leadership Lessons Learned

- Personal knowledge of values
- Professional vs. personal identity
- Traditional values and beliefs
- Tribal self-determination
Protocols for Each System

- Personnel decontamination
- Emergency activation
- Immediate response
- System response at 72 hours
- Follow-up activities with timelines
Protocol for Medical Evaluations of Children Found at Drug Labs

- Law enforcement
- Child protective services
- Medical personnel
- Children’s mental health
- Emergency department
What Is a “Worldview”? 

• Collective thought process of a group or people
• “Linear Worldview”
• “Relational Worldview”
Linear Worldview
Western European/American thought

Cause → Effect → New Cause → New Effect
Linear Worldview
Social Work/Medical Model

Social History → Presenting Problem → Assessment → Treatment → Outcome
Relational Worldview
Native and Tribal Thought

BALANCE

Context  Mind
Spirit  Body
Relational Worldview
Native and Tribal Thought

• Fluid, cyclical view of time.
• Each aspect of life is related.
• Services aimed to restore balance.
• Interventions may not be directed at “symptoms.”
• Underlying question is “how?”
Putting It into Practice

At the Individual Level
Relational Worldview
*Individual and Family Level*

Social History
- Economics
- Work/School
- Family/Peers
- Community
- Culture

Innate Positive
- Learned Positive
- Innate Negative
- Learned Negative

Knowledge/Judgment
- Thinking Process
- Self-Esteem
- Memories
- Emotions

Context

Mind

Body

Spirit

Bio chemistry
- Genetics
- Health Status
- Sleep/Rest State
- Substance Use/Abuse

Relational Worldview

Individual and Family Level

Spirit

Mind

Body

Context
Children’s Mental Health

- Vulnerability
- Early mental health screening
- Assessment
- Treatment
Vulnerability

- Risk due to age
- Special needs
- Chronic parental neglect and abuse
- Third-party abuse
- Reactive attachment disorder
- Exposure to domestic violence
Early Screening

• Children exposed to the world of meth are exposed to many other risk factors
• In addition, refer to other providers
• Physical and dental exams necessary
• Developmental assessment
Assessment

• Consumer-driven
• Mental health is important to overall health
• Used to develop and implement an intervention plan
• Referral to other needed services
Treatment

Services are driven by the need of the child and family.

- Individualized plan of care
- Access
- Coordinate services
- Improve exiting resources
The Relationship Between Substance Abuse and Child Abuse

- Those who were abused and neglected as children are more likely to have substance abuse disorders as adults.
- Adults with substance abuse disorders are more likely to abuse or neglect their children.
- The result is a multi-generational cycle of abuse and neglect.
Key Points of Understanding

- Frontline home visitors are at great risk for environmental hazards of an undetected meth house.
- Children may be contaminated and require immediate medical triage.
- Removing a child from the home needs to be a part of a multiple-step protocol.
Tribal Community RWV

- Cross-jurisdictional/relationship agreement
- Conveying educational information forums
- Protocols—task, decision, roles, making, who
- Inventory analysis and Gap analysis
- Build in existing process in court
Key Tribal Products

• Formal agreements with other jurisdictions
• Releases of information
• Formation of Family Wellness Team
• Assessment training across systems
Child Services Providers

- Need accurate information about the drug
- Need to know the effects on parents
- Need to know potential dangers to children
- Need to know the efficacy of treatment
- Need to know the possibility of recovery for parents
Child Safety Risks

- Risk rises with level of parents’ involvement
  - Episodic user, dependency, pregnant users, home meth “cooks”, trafficking, and manufacturing?

- User
  - Poor judgment, confusion, inadequate supervision, second-hand smoke, accidental ingestion, violence, and paranoia
Body

✓ Dependency
  ❖ Need for substance becomes more important than the needs of the child—neglect, medical, food, and higher risk of abuse.

✓ Prenatal
  ❖ Avoidance of medical care, brain and organ development, poor nutrition, oxygen deficit, etc.
Context

- Home labs
  - Toxic chemicals, fumes near floor, poisoning, fire, explosions, and greater vulnerability to health risks
- Trafficking
  - Violence, weapons, and physical or sexual abuse by customers
Exposure to Meth

✓ Manufacturing (superlabs)
  ❖ Few cases, but similar exposure

✓ Symptoms of Exposure
  ❖ Chronic cough, chest pain, shortness of breath, dizziness, headache, skin or eye irritation, chemical burns, nausea, and lethargy
Working with Parents

- Lack of recognition of the problem
- Inability to track written instructions (cognitive impairment)
- Serious health and dental problems
- Psychological disturbances, psychosis, confusion, and memory loss
- Depression and anxiety associated with discontinuing drug use
Relational Worldview
Organization and Community Level

Underlying Values
(Shared Vision)
Joint Accountability and Shared Outcomes

Working with Related Agencies
Building Community Supports

Environment
(Mind)
Infrastructure
(Mind)

(Spirit)
Mission

(Body)
Resources

Daily Practice
- Screening & Assessment
- Engagement & Retention in Care
- Services to Children

Information Systems

Training/Staff Development
Budgeting/Program Sustainability

(Context)

(Spirit)
Mission

(Body)
Resources
National Alliance for Drug Endangered Children

• Promotes the cause of drug endangered children (DEC)
• Holds annual national conferences on the needs of DEC
• Provides coordination and support for efforts among state and tribal DEC alliances

• www.nationaldec.org
Drug Endangered Children Program

Key Services

• Removal of children from endangering environments
• Medical, dental, and health evaluations and services
• Drug and chemical exposure screening
• Mental health evaluation and services
• Addiction treatment and restoration of families whenever possible
Tribal Resources

• ICKnowmeth@yahooogroups.com
• Listserve of research reports, training events, and news articles
• Initiated in January 2006 and maintained by the Tribal Law and Policy Institute
• Please send a request to diane@tlpi.org
National Tribal Initiatives

- BIA Office of Justice Services
- Handles law enforcement and tribal courts
- 2006 BIA Meth Survey
- National Congress of American Indians (NCAI)
Now What?

• Use this model as a framework
• Do a self-assessment
• Make a commitment to the process
• Develop a plan for action
• Share what you learned
• Do something different
Questions?

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Let’s remember why we are really here today…

Healthy Native Children
NICWA Thanks Our Partners

- The Squaxin Island Tribe
- The Tribal Law and Policy Institute
- The National Congress of American Indians
- The National Center for Substance Abuse and Child Welfare
- The Drug Endangered Children’s Alliance
- Rob Bovett, Special Prosecutor for the Oregon Drug Task Force
- NICWA
NICWA is dedicated to the well-being of American Indian children and families.
- Mission Statement

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