



National Indigenous Women's Resource Center

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## Sexual Violence Against Women and Children in Indian Country *Fact Sheet*

**Excerpt of Testimony by Dr. Susan Karol, Chief Medical Officer, Indian Health Service, presented to the Secretary's Advisory Committee on Infant Mortality (2015)**

**Historical Trauma** is the emotional and psychological wounding and group trauma over generations and throughout lifespan.

- Native people in North America have endured traumatic events such as the Wounded Knee Massacre in 1890, the Trail of Tears, the Long Walk of the Navajo to Bosque Redondo in 1864, etc.
- These events have resulted in the **unresolved trauma** of genocide, loss of culture, traditional lands and language, forcible removal of children from family and traditional lands (ex. reservations and boarding schools).
- **Boarding School Period** was accompanied by the beatings, rape and sexual abuse of children, as well as the prohibition of practicing their Tribal language and spiritual practices.
- **European and American colonialist policy:** Introduced disease (smallpox) and alcohol into Native communities, which resulted in the extermination of North American Indians from a population of 12 million (estimated) in 1500 to as low as 237,000 in 1900.

**American Indians and Crime, Report by the Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice (1992-96)** - *First time American Indian women identified as a specific group in report on violence against women*

**American Indian women are the most battered, raped, stalked and murdered group of women in the United States; 70 percent of the time by non-Native offenders. According to the report:**

- American Indian women are raped at a rate more than double that of rapes reported by all races on an annual average. (All races: 2 per 1,000; American Indian: 7 per 1,000)
- American Indian women were victimized by an intimate partner at rates higher than those for all other females (White: 8.1 per 1,000; American Indian: 23.2 per 1,000).
- Violent crime rate among American Indian women was 98 per 1,000 – at least twice that of white females (40 per 1,000) and of black females (56 per 1,000).
- Non-Native perpetrators (ex. individuals of other races) commit at least 70 percent of the violence against Native Americans.

**In the Garden of Truth: The Prostitution and Trafficking of Native Women in Minnesota, Report by Melissa Farley, Nicole Matthews, Sarah Deer, Guadalupe Lopez, Christine Stark, Eileen Hudon (2011)**

**As with other types of violence towards Native women, a majority of perpetrators are non-Native. Native women are fetishized as exotic.**

- "A john said to me, 'I thought we killed all of you'."
- Sixty-two percent of Native women saw a connection between prostitution and colonization and explained that the devaluation of women in prostitution was identical to the colonizing devaluation of Native people.
- Forty-two percent of Native women who were trafficked reported racial verbal abuse by pimps and buyers.
- Thirty-three percent said cultural/spiritual practices are an important part of who they are.



This publication is made possible by Grant Number #90EV0452-01-00 from the Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Family and Youth Services Bureau, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.