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Pathways to Knowledge

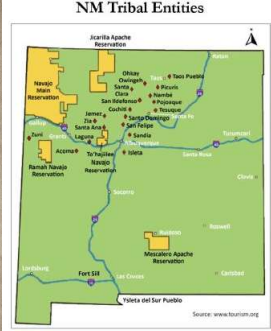
- **Articulate** how Indigenous communities conceptualize early relational wellbeing
- **Identify** core components and domains of the Indigenous Connectedness Framework
- **Reflect** on strategies to implement the framework's principles into practice

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NM Tribal Entities



Source: www.tourism.org

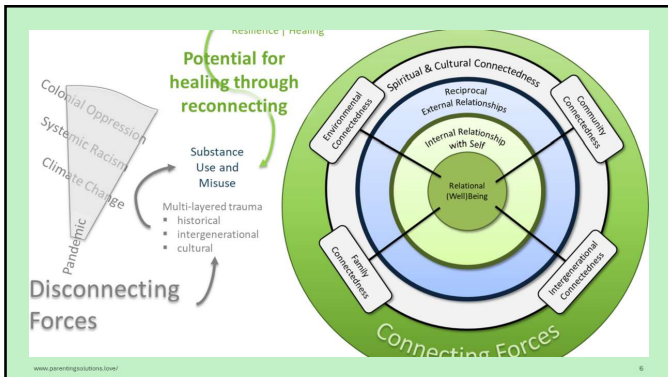
Native Americans in New Mexico

- 263,615 Native American citizens
- 12.4 % of the state's entire population
- 23 Federally recognized tribal nations
- 19 Pueblos, 3 Apache, and the Navajo Nation (Diné)
- 50% of NM Native's live in urban areas

(2020 census data)

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Definition of Infant Mental Health

The developing capacity of the child to experience, regulate, and express emotions; form close and secure relationships; and explore and master the environment and learn—All within the context of family, community, and culture.

(ZERO TO THREE, 2001).

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A Paradigm Shift: Understanding Infant Mental Health from an Indigenous Perspective

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Current Challenges in Supporting Culturally Responsive Infant Mental Health

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Clinical Assessments

Observational Protocols

Systemic Barriers and Disparities

Non-Integration of Indigenous Worldviews

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**Beyond Face-to-Face:
Re - Framing IMH Through Proximal,
Culturally Rooted Care**

Proximal caregiving is an alternative/enriching model (Little, 2019)

Still-Face Paradigm (Tronick et al., 1978)

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**The Indigenous
Connectedness Framework**

Places connectedness at the heart of child well-being. This holistic, relational model reframes protective factors as powerful "**connecting forces**" that build resilience, collective thriving, and healing—while risks arise as "disconnecting forces."

ICF emphasizes **reciprocal, multi-layered relationships**.

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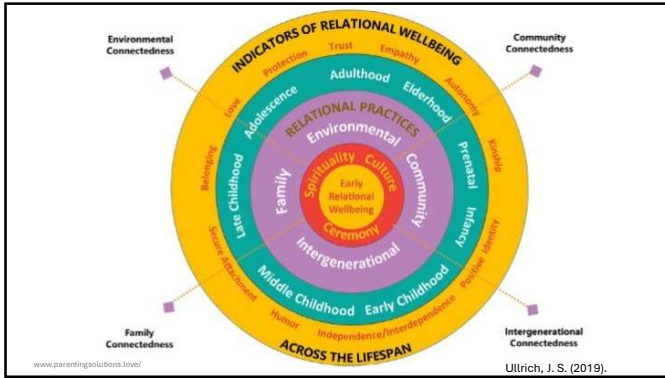


**Connectedness in
Indigenous Worldviews**

Connectedness is a pervasive principle in Indigenous worldviews, emphasizing balance, harmony, continuity, and wellness. It frames identity beyond individuality, emphasizing relational existence within ecosystems, ancestries, and communities.

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Connectedness = Indigenous Early Relational Wellbeing

"Deepening our understanding of Indigenous connectedness can assist with the restoration of knowledge and practices that promote child wellbeing."



Jessica Saniguq Ulrich,
MSW, Ph.D.

Photo: Parents as Teachers National Center, Inc.

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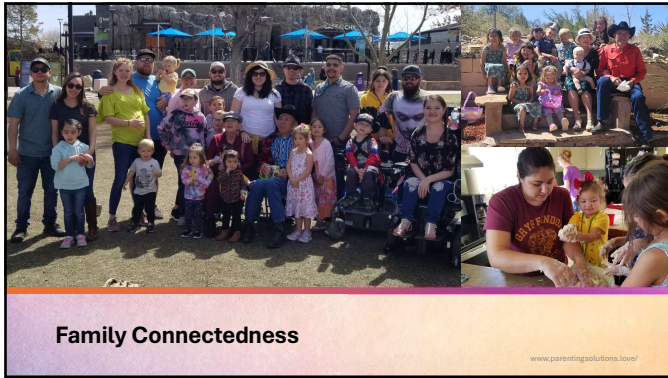


Weaving Together Relational Practices from the Indigenous Connectedness Framework

- Family
- Community
- Intergenerational
- Land/Environment
- Spiritual

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Photo: Heidi K. ...

Practice Opportunities: Small Groups

- **Choose** a Knowledge Keeper for each group
- **Review the** relational practice and definition on the handout in your group and apply these to the case study.
- **Explore** the inquiries on the handout and be a thought-partner to envision some strategies for each that align with the Indigenous Connectedness Framework.
- **Highlight** one of the questions your group explored, including strategies for how you will apply these strategies within your practice.

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Case Study

You are meeting a Native American Family for the first time in your role as a home visitor. The family consists of dad, mom, maternal grandmother, and children: a 5-year-old who attends Kindergarten, a two-year-old, and a 3-month-old infant. The family lives in an urban city, in a small home with a backyard.

Dad is a tribal employee, commuting 90 minutes one-way to work and back home again using the family's only vehicle.

Mom is a student and works part-time at a local grocery store, within walking distance.

Grandmother cares for the children and speaks only her Native language. On the weekends, the entire family visits their tribal homeland to participate in spiritual and community traditions.

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