**RESEARCH PROJECT**

- For the past five years, a University of New Mexico research team has partnered with the tribal community of Mescalero Apache in the cultural adaption of an existing evidence based Southwest American Indian family intervention program called the “Family Listening Program” to reduce the onset of risky behaviors among late elementary age youth.
- As a graduate research assistant I conducted field experience with the opportunity to gain field research experience in both quantitative and qualitative analysis of measures utilized in this project research.
- Funding of Research Study: Native American Research Centers for Health (NARCH V) through the Albuquerque Area Indian Health Board (AAIHB)
- Research Partnership: Mescalero Apache (2009-2014)
- Research Approach: Community Based Participatory Research and Tribal Participatory Research.

**MESCALERO APACHE**

- Located in southeast part of the state
- 720 square miles
- 4,000+ Enrolled Tribal Members
- Rural Mountainous Environment
- Three sub-tribe
- Hold elections for office of president every two years.
- There are eight tribal council members who are elected every two years.
- Local schools: Mescalero Apache, Ruidoso, Tularosa

**RESEARCH TEAMS**

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<th>Mescalero Team</th>
<th>Tribal Facilitators</th>
<th>UNM Team</th>
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<tr>
<td>Ardena Oroso</td>
<td>Debra Martinez</td>
<td>Lorenda Betone-Pi</td>
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<td>Willymae Smith</td>
<td>Teri Nashtama</td>
<td>Rebecca Rae</td>
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<td>Eloise Damon</td>
<td>Wendolyn Murphy</td>
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<td>Claudine Saenz</td>
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<td>Melvin Herrera</td>
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<td>Nina Wallenstein</td>
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<td>(List of Advocates)</td>
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<td>Past Research Team Members:</td>
<td>Emma Noyes and Justin Teive</td>
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**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

Mescalero Apache Tribal Council, Mescalero Apache School, Apache Language Program, Tribal Leadership, Tribal Programs, Albuquerque Area Indian Health Board, and the Southwest Tribal Institutional Review Board

**DEVELOPMENT OF THE FAMILY LISTENING PROGRAM**

**Initial Family Intervention Program**

National Institute of Drug Abuse funded family strengthening intervention/curriculum (10 sessions), a partnership between the Anishinabe (Ojibwe) people and Dr. Les Whitbeck at the University of Nebraska; results showed most effective with parents and children when there was an integration of cultural stories and traditions. (Whitbeck, 2001)

**Southwest Adaptation of Initial Family Intervention Program**

NARCH (cycle III) funded adaptation of Dr. Whitbeck’s family strengthening program with two southwest tribal communities, the final product was a detailed 202 page, 14 weekly session curriculum, embedding state educational standards, drug/alcohol prevention messages and other health promotion information for children, families and community, while reinforcing tribal traditions, history, knowledge and the tribal language (Betone et al., 2012; Betone et al. in Press; Betone et al. 2012)

**Mescalero Apache Adaptation of Southwest Family Listening Program**

NARCH (cycle V) funded adaptation of the 14 session southwest family intervention/curriculum. Mescalero Apache adaptation kept intact the teachings from the 14 sessions however shorter to 12 sessions (see below) by an integration of some of the sessions and the inclusion of a second history session.

**MESCALERO APACHE FAMILY LISTENING CURRICULUM**

**Intervention Curriculum**

1. Welcoming
2. Mescalero Apache History (Part 1)
3. Mescalero Apache History (Part 2)
4. My Family
5. Mescalero Apache Way of Life
6. Our Mescalero Apache Vision
7. Community Challenges
8. Communication, Help Seeking & Problem Solving
9. Recognizing Types of Anger and Managing Anger
10. Being Different & Positive Relationships
11. Building Social Support
12. Making a Commitment & Presentation of Projects

**12 Evening Family Sessions**

- Conducted by Trained Tribal Facilitators
- Start with a Prayer (youth or adult)
- Practice of Language Flash Cards
- Sharing of Home Practice
- Dinner Provided
- Ice Breaker Activity
- Activities: Separate Adult & Youth Groups
- Completion of Journals by Adults & Youth Wrap-up and take Home Practice Activity
- Small Incentive Provided
- Completion of Facilitator Evaluations

**IMPACT & PROCESS MEASURES**

**Facilitator Session Evaluations**

- Completed for each of the 12 sessions
- Reflected on the lessons learned & what could be improved, difficulties & ways to handle, and any new learnings by the participants.

**Participant Journaling By Session**

- Completed by child and parent participants after each session
- Focused on learnings, feelings, and thoughts about each session
- Parents reflected on what their child learned in each session

**PRELIMINARY FINDINGS**

**First Pilot (June to July 2013)**

- An average of four family participants weekly
- A session usually had two to five facilitators

**Facilitator Evaluation Findings**

- Participants enjoyed the activities in the sessions,
- Participants were willing to continue, and
- Some points of improvement are: increasing participants, being more involved with activities, helping participants overcome being shy and encouraging participants to return to the next session, and
- Changes for next session: asking participants to leave their devices at home, providing think time and working with participants to help them talk more.

**Weekly Journal Findings**

- Both children and adults learned about their ancestors and elders, their history and traditional culture, stages of life and about other participants.
- Children reflected on learning problem solving. Listening, anger control and supporting the community are other concepts that they learned.
- An area of concern for children was the outlook of the community. Some parents shared similar concerns but also added concerns of housing and alcohol.

**Quantitative Findings**

The preliminary impact analysis of the pre & post measures conducted among the child participants provided data indicating overall positive impact upon completing the program.

- The participants reported significant positive change, especially on coping skills and anxiety scales
- For example, participants reported feeling less restless and on edge upon program completion (pre-program, \( x = 2.42 \); post-program, \( x = 1.29 \); \( p = 0.04 \))
- Participants also reported a significant improvement in how to seek help from peers (pre-program, \( x = 3.87 \); post-program, \( x = 3.00 \); \( p = 0.04 \))

**SUMMARY**

- Overall the facilitators of the program were satisfied with the running of the sessions and the level of involvement by the participants in the activities and group discussions.
- What the parents hoped the children learned in the sessions aligned with the learning of the children, which included being respectful, understand the stages of life, be helpful to the community, and learn the history of their family and community.
- Although this program was intended as a prevention program for children, this unique program provided a family participation format; parents were asked to experience this program alongside their child; with skill building exercises offered to both the parent and child around communication, listening, anger management, respecting diversity and building trust. All these are important skills and can have positive effects in the future.