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An Exploratory Study of Resilience Among American Indian Human Service Professionals

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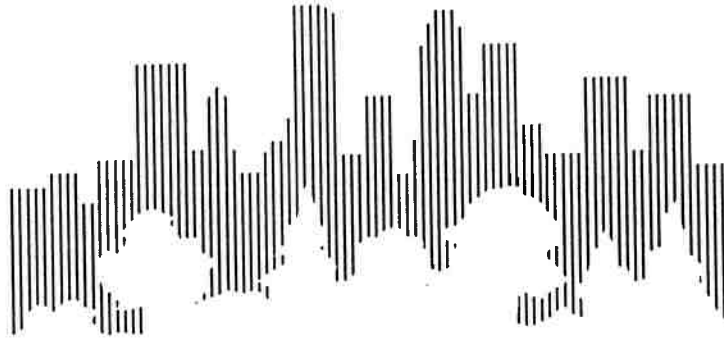
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**MASTERS IN SOCIAL WORK
THESIS**

Georgette M. Bunker

**An Exploratory Study of Resilience
among American Indian Human Service Professionals**

**MSW
Thesis**

Thesis
Bunker

1996

An Exploratory Study of Resilience Among American Indian Human Service
Professionals

by

Georgette M. Bunker

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty

of

Augsburg College

in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

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Master of Social Work

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Master of Social Work
Augsburg College
Minneapolis, Minnesota

Certificate of Approval


This is to certify that the Master's thesis of:

Georgette M. Bunker


has been approved by the Examining Committee for the thesis requirements
for the Master of Social Work Degree.

Date of Oral Presentation: May 14, 1996

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Anthony Bibus, III, Ph.D.-Thesis Reader



Rosalie Clark -Thesis Reader

Dedication

This research study has been driven from my own personal life. It is very important for one to recognize and acknowledge their own resilience.

I would like to dedicate this thesis to the three most important people in my life...

To my mother, Dorothy. Thanks Mom for all that you've taught me and haven't taught me. You have played a very important role in my life. For making me the young Indian woman that I am today. I miss you, Love, Georgette.

To my Uncle Clarence, Thank you for being a part of my life and for supporting me and encouraging me to become more. I miss you, Love, "Stink" (By the way I am still a "good egg").

To my Uncle George, A very special Thank you for helping me create, build, and maintain my "resilience". Thank you for helping me to understand the values of sharing, caring, and loving. I love you, Georgette.

Also, this thesis is dedicated to all the Indian lives unlived.....

Mii gwetch.

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I would like to say Mii gwetch to the Great Spirit for giving me this opportunity in life to fulfill my dream of becoming educated and giving me the strength and courage to continue fighting...

To my Fiancé, Tom, who has encouraged and supported me, and for putting our lives on hold for the last two years while I have taken on this challenge. Also, Thank you, Jennie, for keeping your Dad company while I have been away. I love you two dearly. Also, my friend Tina, for the continual harassment of “are you done yet?”

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An Exploratory Study of Resilience Among American Indian Human Service Professionals

GEORGETTE M. BUNKER
MAY 14, 1996

This study explores the link between Native American cultural factors and the concept of resilience. The research design utilized personal interviews with 12 Native Americans in positions of leadership within their own community, to explore questions about protective factors, risk factors and cultural factors. The bicultural continuum was used by the study participants to self assess their degree of assimilation. Findings did reflect some similarity between protective factors identified in the resilience literature and cultural factors. Discussion of findings addresses how increased knowledge of the Native American culture can assist practitioners in the assessment of resilience when working with Native American families.

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Introduction

Overview

Each community of color has had their trials and tribulations in encountering the dominant society..."Blacks in the United States have historically experienced high levels of suffering and exploitation..." while the "Hispanic population has been assessed and treated from the Anglo-American culture"(Velasquez and Velasquez, 1980,p. 598). "Only Indians have encountered federal policies aimed at their physical annihilation" (Hull, Jr., 1982, p.340). One way this was attempted was through the allocation of Indian people to the reservation.

"Allotting land to individual Indian families was seen as the ideal tool for accomplishing the objectives of civilizing Indians, speeding assimilation, and opening the 'surplus' reservation land to white settlement" (Ebbott, 1985, p. 10).

Due to the federal policies American Indians believed these Federal policies that resulted in their confinement offered them greater possibilities, such as the government offering 160 acres to families and 80 acres to individuals. However, they lived among their own people having no contact with the outside world, experiencing social isolation and the withholding of rations by the federal government (Ebbott, p.10). The federal policies that resulted in this for the Indian culture were sanctioned in the General

Allotment Act (Dawes Act) passed in 1887. This act according to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs was intended:

“To break up reservations, destroy tribal relations, settle Indians upon their own homesteads, incorporate them into national life, and deal with them not as nations or tribes or bands, but as individual citizens”
(Ebbott, 1985, p.10)

This act was created to assist in the assimilation of Native American people. Instead, the impact has led to such symptoms as high unemployment and alcoholism on the reservations (Harjo, 1985, p. 207).

“In spite of the federal policies of forced assimilation through the boarding school era and the efforts to destroy American Indian culture over the last two hundred years, American Indians have maintained their tribal identities and show no interest in giving up their identities”(Lum, 1996, p.2)

Indian people survived with the assistance of connections with the tribe (ie: the extended family and community). Indian people survived by relying on their spirituality, sense of humor and sharing that is seen as a value among tribes (Ebbott, 1985).

The survival of American Indian people in spite of conscious attempts to force their loss of tribal identity reflects their resilience. Using Masten’s (1994) and Garnezy (1992) definitions of resilience, American Indian people have overcome adversity supported by protective factors inherent in their traditions. This study will explore the risk, protective, and cultural factors

contributing to the resilience of a specific group of American Indian professionals.

This exploration of resilience also requires an examination of the concepts of acculturation, assimilation, and biculturalism.

As a result of not giving up their identity, American Indians have not assimilated, instead some have come to understand and accept acculturation to some degree (Lum, p.2). In this study Freeman's (Freeman, 1990) concept of biculturalism will be applied to understanding how American Indians have learned to walk in two worlds keeping their own cultural identity, yet being able to be successful in the dominant society.

Lum (1996) states that acculturation is a process of learning, reevaluating and coping both with the original and host cultures (p. 214). Acculturation refers to communities of color adapting to mainstream cultures, values, beliefs and customs leaving behind their own cultural beliefs and requires modifying the existing culture of origin as presently known (Lum, 1996). Lum (1996) refers to three types of acculturation: overacculturation, marginal acculturation and cultural competence. Overacculturation refers to the rejection and abandonment of the culture of origin. Marginal acculturation refers to a person who is not willing to conform to the mainstream society. A person who maintains the positive aspects of both cultures is considered culturally competent.

Historically, scholars have made efforts to understand the experience of acculturation. As Park (1928) and Stonequest (1935) made efforts to understand the “marginal man”, researchers today define the same concept with terminology such as assimilation, acculturation, and bicultural competence (Velasquez & Velasquez, 1980; Freeman, 1990; Lum, 1996).

Being partially acculturated one can learn to use strengths from both the original and host cultures. Assimilation is seen as forcing one’s culture onto an individual, whereas, individuals who are assimilated lose total contact with their culture of origin. Davis (1978) defines assimilation as a process whereby a group gradually merges with another and loses its separate identity and pride in distinctive cultural traits (p. 171). Acculturation and assimilation can be identified as gradual processes for individuals not wanting to lose touch with their original culture.

In this study, the Bicultural continuum (Freeman, 1990) will be utilized to measure how participants self-report their degree of assimilation. When individuals cross cultural lines a lot of adversity is experienced along with the need to learn to function and cope in both settings (Lum, 1996, p.215).

Park (1928) and Stonequest (1935) define the “marginal man” as one who is confronted with their own biological culture and that of the dominant society. Park and Stonequest state that this individual is likely to find him/herself on the margin of each culture, but a member of neither (Goldberg,

1941, p,52). Goldberg (1941) states that the marginal man may be either a cultural or racial hybrid. The individual may be of mixed race or racially pure so to speak, and yet participate in two cultures (p. 53).

This culturally based research study applies the concepts of resilience and a continuum of bicultural competence to understanding the success of a purposive sample of American Indian adults, by asking them about their experience of protective, risk, and cultural factors on their path to success. Success is defined by holding a position of service in the American Indian community, namely persons who lead or direct social service programs serving the American Indian community.

Significance for Practice

Lum (1996) recommends that an assessment of cultural strengths include the client's past heritage, present family structure, and future resources, from the perspective that a client is the expert in his/her situation. Two critical factors play a key role in the understanding and assessment of the client's situation: the environment and how one individual learned to survive. 1) The practitioner must assess how the environment affects the individual's identity and energy (Lum, 1996, p. 202). 2) How each individual has managed to survive in oppressive, even disastrous situations must be identified (Lum, 1996).

The United States is becoming increasingly multicultural. "In every region the influx of immigrants and refugees from Latin America , the

Caribbean, Asia and the Pacific, the rapidly increasing rate of interracial marriages, and the constant movement of people within the country bring together many varieties of people who had little or no contact in the past” (Fong & Wu, 1996, p.73). When practitioners learn about new cultures and how to deal with people, they can better assist people with finding resources to solve problems and get their needs met.

This study suggests that practitioners need to incorporate an assessment of resilience in their work with people of different cultures. Resilience is a process in which both internal and external factors are working in conjunction with one another to assist the individual in problem solving and adaptation. Likewise acculturation and assimilation are seen as an interactive process in which one must come to terms with the dominant society’s rules and mores. A biculturally competent person learns to accept and adapt to both cultures and uses the positive aspects of each to walk in both worlds. Practitioners can facilitate this walk.

Purpose of this Research Study

The purpose of this culturally based research is to answer the question: What are the risk, protective and cultural factors that foster resilience among the members of the American Indian community? This interview study will contribute new knowledge and understanding about resilience among a selected group of American Indian human service professionals.

In the following literature review assimilation and acculturation along with the risk and protective factors of resilience will be assessed in relation to the Native American culture and the research question.

Literature Review

Overview

The literature review will present definitions of resilience with particular attention to the concepts of risk and protective factors. Definitions of acculturation, assimilation, and biculturalism will be reviewed in relation to the research question posed by the study. Finally, the cultural context of American Indian people will be addressed.

Resilience

Masten (1992) and Garmezy (1993) define resilience as one's ability to overcome adversity. Resilience is further understood by examining a combination of internal and external risk and protective factors working together with one's ability to problem solve and successfully adapt to stressful situations (Masten, 1992). This interaction of the individual and environment are crucial. Saleebey (1996) describes "resilience from a strengths perspective as a continuing articulation of capacities and knowledge derived through interplay of risks and protections in the world" (p.299).

Masten (1994) has also defined resilience as a process that involves six ingredients: 1) the developmental path of the individual's competence and psychological functioning over time; 2) the nature of the adversities faced by

the individual; 3) individual and social assets and risks; 4) individual characteristics that function as protective of vulnerability factors; 5) environmental liabilities of protective factors; and 6) the context for adaptation. These ingredients are experienced in a developmental context and affect the individual outcome of life situations.

When applying the concept of resilience to social work practice, the acumen of a good assessment rests on the assumption that one's internal and external adaptation in the context of these ingredients are already in process (Masten, 1994). According to Masten (1992), psychological adaptation has two major components: internal and external. Internal adaptive factors include aspects of psychological well being such as internal equilibrium and ego strength. External adaptive factors include characteristics that enhance competent social adjustment such as social skills and behaviors consistent with social norms.

Each individual has risk and protective factors that are working in conjunction with one another (Masten, 1992). Risk factors impede an individual's development ,whereas, protective factors enhance one's ability to rebound and recover from trauma and stress (Saleebey, 1996,p.300). Both risk and protective factors have internal and external dimensions.

Risk Factors

Risk factors are described by Masten (1992) as a “characteristic of a group of people that is associated with an elevated probability of undesired outcomes” (p.5). According to Masten, the concept of risk applies more to a group than to one individual. Risk factors identified in the literature relevant to this study reflect this perspective. Examples of external risk factors articulated by other “resilience” researchers include: parents with a limited education and single parenting (Baldwin, Baldwin, Cole, 1990); relationship or marital instability (Kolvin, Miller, Scott, Gatznis, & Fleeting, 1988c); unskilled occupational status and family unemployment (Sameroff & Seifer, 1990); dependency on state (AFDC) (Kolvin, Miller, Fleeting, and Kolvin, 1988a); and disadvantaged minority status (Sameroff & Seifer, 1990).

Protective Factors

Masten (1992) identifies a protective factor as either an individual or environmental characteristic that reinforces better outcomes for people at risk. Garmezy (1991) characterizes protective factors as those that enable individuals to get around life stressors.

Garmezy (1991) has identified three dimensions to the study of protective factors related to resilience: individual, familial, and support. An individual focus describes how the individual reacts to new situations, is

responsive to others, and demonstrates cognitive skills. Masten & Wright (in press) further articulate internal protective factors as: intellectual ability, good coping skills, internal sense of direction (internal locus of control), and problem solving.

Familial factors include parental concern with a child's well being and the presence of a competent adult in the life of the child (Garmezy, 1991). Masten and Wright (in press) specify the need for a relationship with a competent adult and family cohesion. Lum (1996) offers specific examples of how to apply the knowledge about the importance of families and family networks to social work with American Indian people (p. 222-223).

Garmezy (1991) defines supportive factors related to protection as people outside the family such as church members, teachers, and other community members. Saleebey (1996) states that the community offers many opportunities for the individual to recognize and use the assets of the individuals in the community.

Applying the concepts of resilience, risk, and protection to social work practice with American Indian people requires a framework for assessing and understanding the role of culture. The following review of acculturation, assimilation and biculturalism offers such a framework.

Acculturation and Assimilation

Definitions of acculturation and assimilation have often been articulated as a continuum of experience. The notion of biculturalism is based on the conceptualization of a continuum.

The concept of the "marginal man" was conceived by Park (1928) and elaborated upon by Stonequest (1935). According to Stonequest (1937), the marginal man was an individual who through migration, education, or marriage or some other influence leaves one social group or culture without making a satisfactory adjustment to another. He then finds himself on the margin of each, but a member of neither (Stonequest, 1937, p.2-3). The concept of the marginal man came from the term "marginal culture" pertaining to the concept of marginal area. The marginal area was conceived of as the region where two cultures overlapped and where the occupying group partakes of the traits of both cultures. This notion could be viewed as a base for the current concept of biculturalism.

Lum (1996) defines acculturation as "an ethnic person's adoption of the dominant culture in which he or she is immersed" (p.182). To expand on this aspect of acculturation, he describes a framework described by Bogardus in a 1949 paper on "Cultural pluralism and acculturation". That framework identified accidental, forced and democratic acculturation. Of

these concepts, the definition of forced acculturation is descriptive of the attempts to force American Indian people to adopt the ways of the dominant culture and religion through removal from their lands, relegation to reservations and other government sanctioned means (Ebbott, 1985, p.13). As Lum points out, the concept of democratic acculturation is now approached as cultural pluralism (1996, p.182). This continuum of concepts addresses acculturation at the macro level.

Individual members of a family or group may experience different levels of acculturation and may experience problems related to acculturation. Lum (1996) emphasizes the importance of determining a person's acculturation status as part of the assessment process. He suggests that in the process of adapting to the majority society, "to some extent, acculturation involves modifying the existing culture of origin" (p.213). He presents a continuum to understand an individual's experience.

Rejection and abandonment of the culture of origin is called *overacculturation*. A person who displays resistance and reluctance to adapt to the majority culture is termed *marginal*. A person who integrates positive qualities of both cultures has achieved *bicultural competence* (p.213).

The concepts of acculturation and assimilation are inter-related. Acculturation focuses on the adoption of cultural traits and social patterns, while assimilation emphasizes the merging of cultural traits and social patterns, while assimilation emphasizes the merging of cultural traits

(Random House Dictionary, 1987 p.13 & 127). Davis' definitions of four types of assimilation provide further perspective on this inter-relationship (1987). The types defined by Davis are related to one another and therefore not mutually exclusive: partial assimilation, full assimilation, structural assimilation, and cultural assimilation. Partial assimilation means partially participating in the dominant culture and is contrasted with full assimilation. "Structural assimilation deals with the integration of social interaction, or the replacement of minority-group institutions and informal social patterns with participation in the dominant community (Davis, 1978, p.172). Cultural assimilation refers to acculturation or replacement of minority group cultural traits with those of the dominant community (Davis, 1978).

These concepts are relevant when working with individuals and families who are not members of the dominant culture and must attempt to maintain a positive racial identity with the community in which they are a member (Freeman, 1990, p61). Velasquez & Velasquez (1980) addressed this need by defining the concept of biculturalism as the capacity to function and cope effectively and comfortably between two worlds (p.599). They introduced the idea of a bicultural continuum and developed an assessment instrument relevant for the use in the Hispanic community.

Freeman, (1990) also addressed the concept of a bicultural continuum when working with African American families. Their instrument

uses the concept of assimilation on a three-point scale (p.61). Both bicultural continuum instruments (Velasquez & Velasquez, 1980; Freeman, 1990) can be used to measure the bicultural status of individuals and family members. They contrast being totally assimilated with mainstream society, adapting to all rules and regulations of dominant society with being totally immersed within the culture of origin. Freeman (1990) address the helpfulness of the “bicultural continuum” in identifying a clients degree of assimilation. Velasquez and Velasquez (1980) also emphasize its use as a treatment tool and as a model for training staff (p.599).

Red Horse (1978) identified two models of the assimilation of American Indian people into mainstream society based on a continuum to assist professional understanding and social work practice. The two models are: 1) the lifestyles of traditional, bicultural, and pan traditional and 2) the comparison of the curvilinear and nuclear families.

Culture: American Indian people

“The integration of lifestyle value orientations, relational bonding, and structural characteristics of the American Indian extended family system introduces the dynamic features of relational behavior designed to build mutual obligation in family development” (Red Horse, 1980, p. 466). This notion in the American Indian culture results in concepts of family, extended family and community that are almost indistinguishable from one another.

The Native American family thus has an expanded sense of community and extended family for social support.

Red Horse (1978) has developed two models to assist in understanding urban Indian families. The first model identifies three lifestyle patterns of the American Indian. These patterns do not identify "Indianness"; rather they are types of transactional styles (p.466): traditional, bicultural, and pan traditional. The traditional patterns include following traditional ways of the culture such as pow wows, naming ceremonies and funerals. The bicultural pattern most likely involves the practice of a dominant culture religion or adapting certain Indian themes to add to the dominant religion. Ministers for these "bicultural" churches are often American Indians ordained in a dominant culture religion (Red Horse, 1978). The pan traditional American Indians basically recapture their traditional language through the classroom settings. They seek out and practice religion with traditional elders.

The second model Red Horse (1980) developed was that of comparing a (curvilinear) extended, family system to the nuclear family system. The curvilinear family model describes an American Indian community and includes mother, father, siblings and extended family. The extended family also includes grandparents, who play an extremely important role in the household, along with aunts, uncles and cousins (DuBray, 1992).

The curvilinear model has three phases: being cared for, preparing to care for, and assuming care for (Red Horse, 1980). This model is based on Indian family development that is defined through relational behavior. The term “care” indicates cultural and spiritual maintenance as well as physical and emotional needs satisfaction. Phase one, “being cared for” is represented by naming ceremonies. Each tribe has individual rituals which define when this ceremony is to occur. Many Indian people believe that if you enter the after world without an Indian name your spirit may never be able to rest (Red Horse, 1980). Namesakes are very important in a child’s life and have daily contact to assist in parenting and teaching cultural and tribal customs.

Phase two, “preparing to care for” characterizes the adolescent learning independence and self reliance. It represents a period focused on family and community relationships. This is a period in which the adolescent develops relationships with community people. This is a period of time when adolescents are able to explore who they are through developing self reliance and decision making skills, while they know that the family system is there for support. Phase three, “assuming care for” is characterized by respect for the wisdom of the elders. The role of assuming care for elders goes beyond the immediate family and extends to the broader American Indian community. Members in this phase are reminded that elders provide strength and cultural pride. Elders also give back to the community via their

wisdom and knowledge. Strength is also demonstrated by responding to community needs (Red Horse, 1980). Elders are often adopted by young children as grandparents based on the relational bond that the elder has with the community at large.

The American Indian family dictates that lateral group relational behavior is supreme over autonomy and independence. Lateral group relational behavior refers to the group as primary. It is very important to keep the family existing at all times. The family is the most important choice over job and material wealth (DuBray, 1992,p,34). Each family allows children independence, as well as, fostering the growth of interdependence among family members. However, the past experiences of the American Indian has not always included keeping the family system together. Federal government placed Indian children in boarding schools as a means of civilizing them and destroying cultural parenting skills (Ebbott, 1985).

Meanwhile, with confinement on reservations, American Indian families were pressured with the destruction of the natural environment (Ebbott, 1985,p.9) Life on the reservation was governed by non Indian people. Rations and supplies were withheld if families did not send their children off to boarding school (Ebbott, p.9). Movement from the reservation setting to the urban area, was primarily designed for assimilation to occur (Hull, Jr., 1982). Some authors believe that with the break up of the extended

family and movement to the urban area community, family support was not readily available (Hull, Jr., 1982). The reservation remains a focal point for many American Indians in identifying their connection to where they come from. Ebbott (1985) cited advantages for living on a reservation: you belong to the "majority" status; one is in a position to join in the decision making process; extended family and natural resources, such as wild game, wood, housing assistance, and health care are available. Most importantly, individual freedom is respected (p.81).

Resilience, Families and American Indian Culture

McCubbin and McCubbin (1988) focused on family conditions and prospectively identified family strengths which assisted the family in time of adversity. McCubbin and McCubbin (1988) also identify five basic assumptions of family life. They are: "1) families naturally experience changes over the course of their life; 2) families tend to build a coping mechanism over the event of trials that assists the family in buffering the adversity; 3) challenges faced by the family call for different coping styles with every particular situation; 4) families develop strengths and capabilities over time that buffer them against unexpected events and assist in the adaptation for each new situation; 5) families contribute their strengths and capacity to assist others in the community. The family learns to utilize the community to build relationships and gain resources (p, 248).

McCubbin and McCubbin (1988) identify critical family strengths and coping skills over the family life cycle. The strengths include: celebrations, communication, hardiness, health, leisure activities, support network, time and routines and traditions. Some of the family strengths McCubbin and McCubbin defined can be paralleled with traditions in the Native American culture. Several will be highlighted.

The first, is that of "Celebrations: acknowledging birthdays, religious occasions, and other special events" (McCubbin & McCubbin, 1988, p.248). It is important to remember that "gift" giving is a custom in the Native American community. This is done when a thanking or trust is built within a working relationship. A practitioner may even be invited to a special event within the Indian community (Attneave, 1982).

Communication includes "sharing beliefs and emotions with one another. Emphasis is on how family members exchange information and caring for each other"(McCubbin & McCubbin, p.248), Within the Indian community communication is important. Relationships are seen through man and nature. Indian people believe that a spirit lives among us in all living things, including plants, rocks, mountains, and bodies of water. Western civilization sees the main theme of communication as that of control over nature (Attneave, p.65). Often, the first communication one has with another is that of a hand shake. The Indian hand shake is compared to that of a

dead fish, due to the limpness of the hand. The Indian handshake tends to be an exchange of touching and feeling rather than a firm handshake that symbolizes sincerity (Attneave, 1982,p.58).

“Hardiness: a basic strength through which families find the capacity to cope, emphasizes family members’ sense of control over their lives, commitment to the family, confidence that the family will survive no matter what, and the ability to grow, learn, and challenge each other” (McCubbin & McCubbin, 1988, p.248). To understand the hardiness of the Indian people is to understand the importance of relationships between man and nature (Attneave, 1982,p.65). This includes understanding value orientations of Indian people. If at any time the needs or goals of a group conflict with individual decisions, the preference is that of the group. The group may be the tribe, band, family or some other coherent cluster of people.

“Support network: emphasizes the positive aspects of relationships with in-laws, relatives, and friends”. Indian families consist of nuclear and extended family. Extended family consists of grandparents, aunts, uncles or cousins. Grandparents in many families play a strong role in serving as a stabilizing force for single parents (DuBray,1992, p.83). The input from the grandparents is of great importance at the time of doing an assessment with

the family. There will be very little progress without the grandparents intervention (DuBray, p.83).

“Time and routines: family meals, chores, togetherness, and other ordinary routines play an important role in creating continuity and stability in family life”. Indian people place a high value on extended family and collateral living. Indian people are known for sharing food, money and other material goods with extended family (DuBray, p. 50). To some this value may be seen as a dependency. The loyalty to family and group is sometimes seen as a means of blocking any interventions. Time orientation among the American Indians has always had a present tense orientation. Present time is cyclical rather than linear. It encompasses days, months, and years. Life is geared toward personal and seasonal rhythms rather than ordered and organized by external mechanical clocks and calendars. The day by day present is organized around personal and bodily needs (DuBray, 1992). Present day Indians will have retained some of this naturalness of rhythms and some distortions of it. “Indian time can be both a passive-aggressive resistance to mechanistic, technical, societal ways, and it can also be a way of expressing contrasting priorities” (Attneave,1982, p.64).

“Traditions: honoring holidays and important family experiences carried through generations” (McCubbin & McCubbin, 1988,p. 248).

Religious observations follow an annual seasonal cycle, along with various

social events and periods of travel for migratory groups. Generational learning and experiences are important aspects of Indian culture and history and are transmitted through oral traditions and stories passed from one generation to another (DuBray, 1992).

Summary

Resilience is a combination of risk and protective factors interacting together. Acculturation and assimilation are operationalized through the application of a bicultural continuum. Traditions of family in the American Indian culture are articulated by Red Horse (1980; 1978) in continuum formats. Family strengths identified by McCubbin & McCubbin (1988) have parallel application in the American Indian experience. These concepts form the conceptual basis for addressing the research question: "What are the factors that foster resilience among the members of the Native American community?"

Methodology

This chapter will discuss the research question, operational definitions, research design, subject selection, instrument design, ethical protection, data collection and analysis, and study limitations.

Research Question

The primary question for this research is: What are the factors that foster resilience among a key informant sample of American Indian human service professionals in positions of leadership in the American Indian community? The purpose of this study is to identify what risk, protective, and cultural factors are reported by American Indian human service professionals.

Conceptual Definitions

Key terms for this research are as follows:

Resilience: one's ability to bounce back, recoil from adversity (Garmezy, 1991). Resilience also refers to one's adaptability to stressful situations.

Risk factors: a characteristic that is associated with an elevated probability of an undesired outcome such as: parents with limited education, single parenting, relationship instability, unskilled work status, and family unemployment (Sameroff & Seifer, 1990).

Protective factors: a characteristic that reduces stress, such as: intellectual ability, relationship with competent adults, good coping skills, family cohesion and internal sense of direction (Masten, 1992, p18).

Success: in this study success is operationalized by identifying people in the American Indian community in a position of leadership in a human service agency serving American Indian people.

Research Design

This is an exploratory study which uses in-person interviews with successful American Indian professionals to identify protective, risk, and cultural factors related to their success. Success is defined by the position held in the American Indian community. Success in this definition also assumes resilience in the face of adversity.

Subject Selection

The data were gathered using a purposive sample of American Indian key informants. First twenty-nine American Indian agencies were identified from the Minneapolis-St.Paul, 1995-96, First Call for Help book, using the category "Services for Native Americans". From this list, agency directors were identified by name. They constituted the key informant sample population and were sent invitations to participate in this study.

Instrument Design

Due to the exploratory nature of the study the instrument used was a structured interview questionnaire. The in-person interviews were conducted by the researcher. The interview consisted of seventeen open and closed ended questions. (Please refer to Appendix B for questionnaire)

The construction of the questionnaire consisted of the researcher creating questions about risk, protective and cultural factors based on the literature review. The researcher piloted the instrument with fellow colleagues and one program director. This process allowed the researcher to refine and clarify interview items, enhancing the overall effectiveness of the instrument.

The structured interview questionnaire was organized into three sections addressing protective factors, risk factors, and cultural factors. Definitions of protective, risk, and biculturalism were included at the beginning of each identified section. The first question asked participants if they had any questions about the research or questions directly for the researcher. The second question consisted of identifying demographics. Then questions were asked about risk, protective and cultural factors that contributed to their success.

The Bicultural Continuum was explained to the respondents with examples. They were then asked to place themselves on the continuum based on how they saw their degree of assimilation.

Ethical Protection

This research study was approved and supported by the Augsburg Institutional Review Board on January 22, 1996, before any research commenced (Appendix A).

An invitation introducing the researcher as an American Indian graduate student at Augsburg College and a consent letter accompanied by a copy of the structured interview questionnaire (Appendix B) were sent to all persons identified for the sample. The consent explained the purpose of the research study and sponsorship as well as procedures involved in the study. In the consent form an additional line was added for consent to audiotape the interviews to verify accuracy of transcribing and reporting participants' responses. Consent was granted by the participant prior to the interview taking place. Participants received a copy of the consent form for their files.

All raw data and audiotapes were kept in a locked file in the researchers home when not being reviewed. All interviews that were granted permission to audiotape were transcribed by a human services professional. All data collection instruments and tapes were destroyed at the end of the research project.

Data Collection

In-person interviews were used to collect the data. The questionnaire, containing both quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection, was utilized to explore protective, risk, and cultural factors which may have contributed to the success of the American Indians in the study.

The invitation, consent letter, and interview questionnaire were sent to all American Indian agencies on January 23, 1996 by the primary researcher. The invitation introduced the researcher as an American Indian from the White Earth Indian reservation. The study was explained and a sample copy of the consent letter and the in-person questionnaire were sent to the participants to view prior to consenting to the study. One week after the letters were sent all agency directors on the target list were contacted by telephone to inquire if they were interested in participating. All in-person interviews were conducted by the researcher and each lasted approximately one and a half hours. At the time of the interview a consent form was signed giving permission to audio tape and participate in the study. The participant received a copy of the consent form. A small gift of jam, honey, coffee, and a kitchen towel were given as a token of appreciation for consenting to participate in this research study. An offering of tobacco was also given.

Data Analysis

Once potential study participants agencies were called and consent was obtained from 12 directors, case numbers were assigned. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the quantitative data and content analysis was conducted on the open ended questions of the interview. Findings are presented in narrative form and illustrated with tables in the following chapter. Comparative analysis was completed on several key variables with cross tables developed.

To conduct the content analysis, the responses for the open ended question were indexed and then analyzed according to key themes, patterns and categories that emerged from the data.

Study Limitations

With this exploratory study comes the limitations of using interviews. Participants may have been reluctant to answer questions due to the lack of anonymity. Having qualitative rather than quantitative questioning seldom yields precise measures, yet qualitative questions are appropriate for an exploratory design. Conclusions are regarded as suggestive rather than definitive (Rubin & Babbie, 1993). With a purposive sample the researcher is assuming that the population knows about the research subject. The information obtained cannot be transferred to the entire American Indian population.

Findings

Of the twenty three agency leaders targeted, twelve agreed to participate in the study. Of the twelve who chose to participate, seven chose not to answer one or more qualitative questions. Three chose not to answer questions 16 & 17 about the protective and risk factors due to having no direct contact with clientele. Findings will be presented by outlining demographics first, and then by categories: risk factors, protective factors, and cultural factors. All data will be presented by gender. Due to a small sample size, no computer program was utilized.

Background Information of Study Participants

Participants were asked eight questions related to demographic information in an attempt to better describe the survey population. Table 1 identified age and gender (N=12; eight females, four males). The age range was 30-60, with most participants between the ages of 41-60 (N=10)

Table 1: Gender and Age of Respondents
N=12

<u>Variable</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Male</u>
<u>AGE</u>		
30-40	1	1
41-50	3	2
51-60	4	1

Participants were asked to identify their highest level of education.

Table 2 identifies the three categories that were analyzed. Three females

reported having some college education. Two females and one male reported having a four year degree. Three females and three males reported having a Masters Degree, and one of these males was currently working on his Ph.D. It was also observed that of the females, three reported social service degrees; three reported non social service degrees, and two did not identify degree. All four males reported non social service degrees.

Table 2: Educational Status of Respondents by Gender
N=12

<u>Level and type</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Male</u>
Education		
Some College	3	--
Four year Degree	2	1
Master Degree	3	3
Type of Degree		
Social Service	3	--
Non Social Service	3	4
Unknown	2	--

Table 3 identifies participants' positions in the American Indian community. Five positions were categorized. The frequencies and positions reported were as follows: Two females reported "Executive Director", four females reported "Program Director", two males reported "advocate: and two females , one male reported "other". Other responses included: single mom, participant, private practice and board member.

Table 3: Respondents Position in the American Indian Community by Gender
N=12

	Female	Male
Executive Director	2	--
Program Director	4	--
Member	--	2
Advocate	--	1
Other A	2	1

A. Other responses include single mom, participant, private practice, and board member.

Table 4 identifies participants who grew up on a reservation by gender. Three females and one male reported growing up on a reservation. Five females and three males reported not growing up on a reservation.

Table 4: Grew up on Reservation by Gender
N=12

Variable	Female	Male
Grew up on reservation		
Yes	3	1
No	5	3

Table 5 identifies whether or not the participant is the “first generation college educated”. Two females; four males identify themselves as “first generation college educated”. Six females do not identify themselves as first generation college educated because they were not first generation to attend college. They had other family members who had attended college prior to themselves.

Table 5: First Generation College Educated by Gender
N=12

First generation college educated	Female	Male
Yes	2	4
No	6	--

Table 6 identifies the client population of the agency in which the participant works. Six populations were categorized from participants responses. Two females identified serving American Indians, two females; one male identified serving a multicultural community, three females identified serving in a community center; two males identified serving schools; one female identifies serving youth and one male identifies doing no direct practice.

Table 6: Population Agency Serves by Gender of Respondent
N=12

Population agency serves	Female	Male
American Indian	2	--
Multicultural community	2	1
Community Center	3	--
Middle School	--	2
Youth	1	--
No Direct Service	--	1

Participants were asked two questions to assess their qualities as an American Indian. First, participants were asked "to describe their qualities as an American Indian professional". Participants' responses to this question suggested three themes: "Dedication to the American Indian community"

(n=7); "Listening", (n=2); and "Spirituality", (n=2). Sample responses for these themes follows:

Dedication to the American Indian community

- One female stated she had "good knowledge of community in which they serve", this female was also concerned with having respect for the community which the agency served.
- Another female was concerned about "who will take over when I am gone" who would be the up and coming leaders of the American Indian community; .

All four males stated that dedication to the American Indian community was of great importance. Specific responses included:

- "My agenda is not a personal one, it is community", "...[I'm] more of a community person than an individual";
- "[I have]the ability to see detail at the same time I see a global perspective", and
- [I am] "dedicated to the American Indian community".

Listening

- Both respondents stated "the ability to voice the issues and concerns of the community",

Spirituality

- Both respondents stated "Inner peacefulness".

Participants were asked “to describe their qualities as an American Indian person who has completed a post secondary education”.(see Table 7) Several participants stated that post secondary education didn’t provide/add anything new to their Indian identity or role. In addition to the three themes identified above, two other themes were identified in response to this question about education. Four respondents indicated that they had

- “Opportunities for leadership through education”: this reflects their understanding that being educated provided opportunities, for example: being an educated Native American “puts you in a different category” (n=4).
- Two individual stated that being “flexible” in regards to home and family was important and they still put home and family before work. For example: a single parent was taking care of her children’s needs prior to going to work (n=2).

Table 7: Qualities as an American Indian who has completed a Post Secondary Education by Gender
N=12

<u>Theme</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Male</u>
Same Qualities as American Indian professional	3	2
Opportunity for leadership (through education)	2	--
<u>Educational skills</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>

Five participants (3 females, 2 males) described that furthering their education did not have a major impact on their qualities as an American Indian. However, 3 females and 2 males stated that a post secondary education had provided greater opportunity for developing educational skills that they were able to use in their careers. Developing, organizational skills, knowledge of funding, business and administration, and being goal oriented were described as benefits of a secondary education.

The participants in the study belonged to six in-state reservations, primarily Ojibwe, and six out-of-state reservations: two from Oklahoma, one from Ottawa, one from Mescalero, and two from Winnebago reservations located in Wisconsin and Nebraska.

Participants were also asked to describe other people in their nuclear/extended family who had qualities similar to theirs. This question was asked to identify other family members who may have been “successful”. Some of the participant responses follow.

- One female stated [they are people] “...who make things happen for the community they serve...”.
- another female stated “[Her]Mom contributed alot of her strengths”.
- another female participant stated that her extended family “[..they have] had same experiences as myself”.
- one female participant “feels lucky ,[she] has entire family here with her”.

- One male said his “cousins were dedicated and committed to people” ,
- One participant chose not to answer the question.

Participants were asked to describe what types of educational opportunities were available to them during their elementary, high school, and higher education years, The choices offered were: Boarding school, Public school, Native American school, Tribal college, and Other. The findings concluded that all four men attended public schools, with two men graduating public grade and high schools, then attending and completing institutions of higher education. Of the other two male participants, one graduated from an alternative school; the other went to reform school and obtained his general equivalency certificate at the age of 29. Five of the eight females attended public school and went to institutions of higher education. Of the three remaining females, two attended a short period of time in boarding schools, with one of the same participants switching to a public school during her elementary years. The other female who attended boarding school switched to a reservation school. The remaining female attended a reservation school and then went on to attend an institution of higher education. The respondents were also asked what grades they attended at each of the choices that pertained to them.

Participants were asked to describe their experiences after high school. Participants were allowed to include as many experiences as they

wanted. This question did not produce any distinctive findings. Seven of the twelve participants reported going directly to college.

Table 8: Familial Influence To Continue Education by Gender
N=12

<u>Influencer</u>	<u>Gender</u>	
	<u>Female</u>	<u>Male</u>
Mother	6	--
No One	1	3
Children A	1	1
Husband ^A	1	--

A. One female stated her husband and children were very influential.

As seen in Table 8, when asked who influenced their continued education, six female participants identified their mother as the primary influence their life. Three males stated that no one influenced them and one male identified his children as influential.

Table 9 shows factors which influenced the respondents in their leadership. Three females and three male participants reported that a strong dedication to the Indian community was influential in making them successful. Three women also identified external factors, such as community members and a supportive family system, that influenced their success. Two women stated that their own internal sense of direction was an important influence.

Table 9 : Factors Influencing Leadership by Gender

N=12

<u>Theme</u>	<u>Gender</u>	
	<u>Female</u>	<u>Male</u>
Commitment to Indian community	3	3
External Factors A	3	--
Internal Sense of Direction	2	--
<u>Definition of Success measured differently</u>	=	1

A. External Factors are community members, and other family members.

Respondents were asked to describe factors that fostered their success in the American Indian community. Female responses included:

- “No one is throwing me out”;
- “not getting involved in political issues” and
- “doing things for the community”.

Males responded:

- “ [I am] easy to work with”.
- “willing to explain myself, my decision, and listen to the other side”.
- “being clear about who I am, honest”; and
- “The fact that I get along with people”.

Respondents were also asked to describe how barriers/hardships were handled in their families. Four themes occurred from this question: “extended family support” (n=9), “[barriers] viewed as challenges, not hardships” (n=3); “avoidance”, (n=3). Some examples are as follow.

Extended family support

- “By pulling together, by sacrificing, by working, sometimes by silence, we didn’t talk about it [and also] by helping each other”.
- “ Primarily, my parents looked at barriers as a challenge as opposed to road blocks. [My] parents knew it was going to be difficult raising Indian children in an all white community and dealt with it in a loving, caring way. My mother was very bright. My father was very big. People respected him because he was a kind gentle man, but he was not to be crossed. My parents did not drink. [They] had a solid foundation in their marriage, but knew that we children would be faced with a lot of racism”.
- “Muddled through them. Mother was consistent and persistent”.
- “[In my] younger days, alcoholism [was used to handle the barriers and hardships]. Issues were not positively handled. I feel this way now, after revealing my past and looking at what happened. My parents divorced and we were all put in foster homes. Now, what we try to do is talk more. We have open communication. A real good positive attitude is needed because sometimes, in some cases, you can’t change it”.
- “Natural way of life. Barriers were handled as though they were common. We didn’t see them as barriers, it was just the way it was”.

Viewed as challenges:

- One participant stated “Mom was strong in believing you had to do what you had to do” and
- “Mom succeeded, she had the ability to get through.
- One participant also stated that “[her] parents knew it was going to be difficult raising Indian children in an all white community”.

Avoidance of barriers

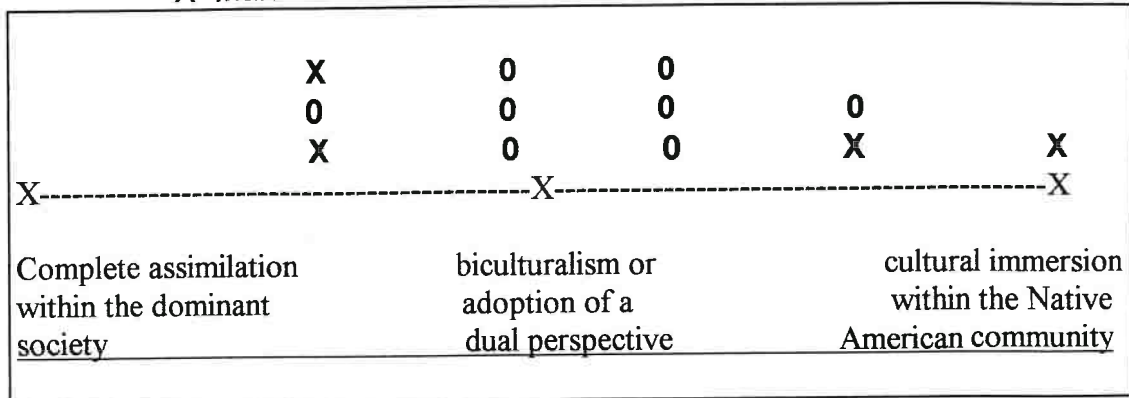
Participants stated responses such as

- “ran away from them” and
- “silence, not talking about them”.

Biculturalism/Assimilation

A Bicultural Continuum was used in the study for the participants to self-report their perceived degree of assimilation. The following figure illustrates the continuum.

Figure 1: Participants Self-identified Degree of Assimilation by Gender
 N=12
 X=Male 0= Female



Three participants (one female; two male) placed themselves between complete assimilation and biculturalism. Three female participants perceived themselves in the biculturalism perspective on the continuum. Three female participants identified themselves between biculturalism and cultural immersion. Two participants (one female; one male) placed themselves closer to cultural immersion, and with one male identified himself as completely immersed within the American Indian culture.

Participants were asked two questions to assess their degree of experience with biculturalism/assimilation. The questions were: 1) Please describe your experience with biculturalism/assimilation and 2)What, if any, are cultural conflicts for you. These questions were asked to identify if participants had difficulty assimilating and what barriers these experiences may have created for the participants. Three themes occurred from the

question of “What, if any, are cultural conflicts for you?”: adaptation (n=8), strong sense of self-identification (n=7), and denial of culture (n=3).

Examples of responses follow.

Adaptation

- One male replied: that” everyone [knew] he was Indian and he thought people expected him to fail because of it”.

One female stated: “I feel that we as Indian people are considered a second class citizens, yet, although we can vote, we’re still considered second class. I’ve learned to an extent to adapt with the norms of a mainstream society to the best of my abilities. I’ll never be a conformist to the mainstream society”.

Strong sense of self identification

- One male stated that “his cultural beliefs kept him from wanting to be part of another community. He had spent twelve years of school learning to be that [white], a sense of culture kept him Indian”.
- “The norms of mainstream society are something to deal with. I’ve attended many meetings as the director [of this agency]. I find that many white people don’t have a sense of humor. They don’t understand, at times, we need just to alleviate some of the issues coming before us and must laugh in order to go forward. Another thing that I see that they do is they speak out without concern to others. If someone’s talking, they don’t care, they bud

right in. They don't have a respect for the elders. They're unfamiliar with our spiritual being, like cedar-sage smoking will probably bring out a fire truck or the police for a drug bust. That's one of the things that I think is a conflict for me".

- "High priority on money and material things. Myself, as a Native American, I do not place a high priority on it. My priorities are more with the spiritual in the I'm supposed to be here for a reason. My reason for being here on earth is not to make money or to buy things or to aggrandize myself, or the make my self seem more important than I am. I'm suppose to remain humble and do the best I can in this world. I'm suppose to help others".

Denial of culture

- One male participant stated that at one point in time he was confused about his Indian identity and "I really didn't want to be Indian, I was ashamed" however, "I think there are times when I have to function in a total white society, surrounded by white players, officials, power brokers and to function as though you belong there. You use tools and skills that are available to you there, as I do in any other place. I've lived to be so flexible, but in terms of my own identity, I'm probably the most racist person...I know I am Indian. I know I came here in this life as an Indian and I know I'm gonna leave it as an Indian".

The participants were also asked to identify cultural conflicts they experienced. Two themes emerged from the cultural conflict question: discrimination and strength through spirituality.

Discrimination

- One female participant stated that in her multicultural setting she does not discriminate.
- “I don’t think I have any until someone will drop a little comment. That happened to me the other night and it really set me back. Friends we have had for nearly thirty years, were sitting there talking, and I know she didn’t mean this in a derogatory sense at all. She was describing her grandchildren who she dotes on and she used the term, “playing like a wild Indian” and I thought did I hear that right? But it’s a phrase that’s in their vocabulary, and they don’t even know they are [using] it”.
- “I can function in a tux at the nicest spot in the Twin Cities, or any place in the country and not do anything that would embarrass myself. But I can only function in that setting if people accept me as who I am. If someone makes a racist statement, I’m sorry, I’m all over them and I don’t care who it is. So to some extent I understand the games that need to be played and I can play to an extent but I will not compromise my integrity”.

Strength through Spirituality

- One female participant replied "my priorities are more with the spiritual, in that I'm supposed to be here for a reason and my reason for being here on earth is not to make money or to buy things or to grandize myself, make myself more important than I am. I'm supposed to remain humble and do the best I can in this world. I'm supposed to help others".

Participants were asked: "What do you think Social Workers need to know about working with American Indian families?" Three themes emerged: cultural values and traditions, human connection, and importance of spirituality.

Cultural values and traditions

- One female participant stated that "you as a person what are your cultural beliefs. You have to take into consideration [what] you might be passing something [on] to the clients that they don't want to know...It also depends on what [the clients] cultural beliefs are"
- "[The] first thing I learned was to throw out the social work books. [You] need to know something about the culture, the respect. Some of the concepts, traditions, and values. [You] need to open up, let things in, interact. Deal with people respectfully. Let down a little bit, not be rigid. Be

innovative. Everyone is different. Reality works. Be acquainted before you go in”.

Human connection

- One male participant stated “ they need to relate on a more personalized level, they need to treat people on a human being-to-human being level, rather than: I have learned this system; I have studied it, learned it; and therefore I am equipped to fix you and I’m here to fix you”.
- one female participant stated “that we are real people”.
- “Indian people by and large do not want to be assimilated. That is a white concept. A majority culture concept. There are places we can walk together, hand in hand, but there are other places where we want to be different and we are special and we are blessed. We have not lost all that people have tried to take away. We are surviving, not as part of majority culture, but as Indian people. We can walk as equals...for some, a difficult concept. When you think of equal, that was the premise of this country was built on, but we haven’t had that. Equality doesn’t mean sameness”.

Importance of spirituality

- ...”That is one of the main tenants of the Native American religion and spirituality, is respect, and when I see people say, ‘oh, she doesn’t know her traditions’ or ‘oh he does”.
- “My priorities are with the spiritual”.

Participants were also asked, “Do you know how to speak your Native language? If so, by whom or where were you taught?”. All twelve participants stated “no”. However, respondents did indicate that parents, grandparents, aunts, and uncles spoke the language fluently in the house the participant grew up in. Participants were asked, “Do you listen to American Indian music?” and “Under what circumstances...?” All twelve participants listen to American Indian music in circumstances such as work, cultural events, and riding in the car.

Protective Factors

Participants were asked to listen to a list of protective factors and to answer to whether or not the item was personally a protective factor. The answers recorded in Table 10 are only the “yes” answers for each factor. Eight females and four males reported that an “internal sense of direction” was a protective factor.

Table 10: Protective Factors Reported by Participant Gender
N=12

<u>Factor</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Male</u>
Internal sense of direction	8	4
Intellectual Ability	8	3
Good Coping Skills	8	3
Problem Solving Ability	8	3
Relationship with competent adult	8	2
Family Cohesion	7	1
Other	8	4

A. Other includes to responses such as spirituality base, athletics, people and environment, and culture.

The participants were also asked the same question for the clientele in which their agency serves. Those factors were not recorded in this data analysis since the study focus is on the participants [themselves] and not their clientele.

Risk Factors

Table 11 shows responses of participants to the risk factors presented. This table includes only the “yes” answers indicating that these were a risk factor for the participant. Five female participants identified disadvantaged minority status as a risk factor for them. Four female participants and two male participants stated that single parenting was a risk factor for them. One female identified being dependent on the state (AFDC) as a risk factor.

Table 11: Risk Factors Reported by Participant by Gender
N=12

<u>Factor</u>	<u>Gender</u>	
	<u>Female</u>	<u>Male</u>
Disadvantaged minority status	5	--
Single parenting	4	2
Family Unemployment	3	--
Unskilled working status	2	--
Relationship Instability	2	2
Parent(s) had limited education	1	2
<u>Dependency on State (AFDC)</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>=</u>

Summary

Finally, participants were asked if they had any other questions or comments regarding the interview. Nine of the twelve participants stated no. Three females had comments including a question about when the report would be published. Other comments addressed the interview process and the focus of the study.

“...this had been very interesting. I was nervous coming over here”.

“Social workers need to learn how to be nonjudgemental. Learn to check themselves in working with people of color, learn their bias, look at policies. Indian people have also gone through the same. There needs to be course work in American Indian community as well as in the educational system. We still have rights to our tribes even though we are in an urban area. We still can keep our identity”.

The following chapter presents a discussion and analysis of the study findings and limitations and implications for social work practice, policy, and research.

Discussion and Implications

Overview

In this chapter key findings will be highlighted and discussed as they relate to risk factors, protective factors and resilience. Study limitations related to external and internal validity and instrument design will be discussed.

Study Strengths and Limitations

The findings of this study are valuable; however, due to the small sample size these findings may not be transferable to all American Indians in similar positions. The interview questionnaire focused on risk, protective, and cultural factors identified in the literature. By asking participants to identify specific risks for their own family rather than having a predetermined list, responses may have been more congruent with the experience of study respondents. Some questions asked did not produce data relevant to the research question. For example, questions about language and American Indian music were not directly related to the research question. Questions pertaining to the clients served by the respondent's agencies were also asked to compare risk and protective factors of providers client's. Due to the study focus on the participants interviewed, questions about the clients were not analyzed.

Though many cultural issues were considered in the design of this study, some questions could have been worded in ways that more accurately reflected the American Indian perspective. One example is the use of the term “leadership”. Based on the study participant’s feedback, defining leadership in terms of cultural significance rather than in terms of position would have provided more culturally relevant information.

Comparison to Literature Review

The information provided by the respondents will be addressed in the categories of risk, protective, and cultural factors and biculturalism/assimilation.

Risk Factors

Participants were asked to identify risk factors from an already produced list of risk factors based on the literature. The participants, when identifying the risk factors, stated that some of the risk factors were not “risks”. For example, “parents had limited education”, coincides with the literature stating that a factor in one situation can be a risk for some individuals and a protective factor for others. Each individual had different qualities to assist them in adaptation (Wright & Masten, in press, p. 12).

The risk factor the most often mentioned (see Table 11) was “disadvantaged minority status”. Each participant identified having a variety of risk factors in their lives (see Table 11). A risk factor can be lessened with

the help of a protective factor (Masten, 1992). A protective factor reduces the risk of stress. The key informants of this study utilized an “internal locus of control” to overcome this risk factor and learn to partially assimilate.

Protective Factors

Participants were asked to identify protective factors from an already produced list of protective factors. All key informants (N=12) identified an “internal sense of direction” as the primary protective factor (see Table 10). The literature connects an internal sense of direction and a relationship with a competent adult as key protective factors (Masten, 1994; Garnezy, 1991a&b).

Biculturalism/ Assimilation

Participants were asked to self-identify their degree of assimilation (see Figure 1). Davis (1987) defines assimilation as a process whereby a group gradually emerges with another and loses its separate identity and pride in distinctive cultural traits. However, participants stated that they used dominant cultural values and behaviors when necessary. In addition they identified with their tribes and native music.

The literature on American Indian culture addresses the importance of family and “community” among Native American people. These affiliations assist individuals contributions to their cultural community. Participants in positions of leadership of Indian agencies serving Indian people reported a

commitment to the Indian community (see Table 9). This table coincides with the literature review and participants response (Saleebey, 1996; Masten, 1994; Garmezy, 1991a&b).

Based on this information about biculturalism/assimilation, risk factors, protective factors and culture, implications for social work will be discussed.

Implications for Practice

Implications for practice will be focused on the findings related to risk factors, protective factors and the American Indian culture. These implications are derived from the study and the literature review.

The most critical factor when working with American Indian families is that social workers treat them as though they were any other family.

Practitioners must learn to talk with American Indian families rather than talk at them.

Practitioners must learn to distinguish different tribal values, customs and traditions. Simply because a practitioner is working with an "Indian" family does not mean that they know about that family's tribal background. The commonalty among American Indians is that the family is Indian, the differences are tribal values.

Implications for Future Research

This investigator believes that more culturally based research needs to be done. First, in communities of color, resilience research would assist in

intervention and prevention work. Secondly, research must assist in learning cultural values and customs. It would also assist future research if cultural tools of measurement were formed for communities of color. For example, research needs to identify how the communities of color define each of the study variables. Researchers can examine how concepts are operationalized in different communities. Researchers must also learn to utilize cultural resources, such as asking the individuals from the culture to contribute to the cultural study. Each cultural tool to gather data would have to respect the individual culture's means of gathering data for analysis. For example, one must assess the relative value of in-person interviews, anonymous questionnaires or telephone conversations. Different data and quantities of data can be collected, depending on the client's comfort zone and what types of data are being requested.

Future research in the American Indian culture must be sensitive and take into considerations the cultural values that Indian people consider important such as being "non-intrusive".

Summary

Resilience is a concept to be utilized to assess the assets already present in one's life. Resilience is a process in which both internal and external factors are working in conjunction with one another. Acculturation

and assimilation are seen as an interactive process with one leading to another. A person who is able to walk in both worlds is seen as biculturally competent. This research was conducted to determine what factors fostered resilience in the American Indian community.

In conclusion, the research question was answered in the sense that respondents reported that the American Indian culture utilizes the extended family and community members to maintain resilience. Most of the participants in the study had one competent adult in their lives with whom they had a solid relationship. As successful key informants of the Native American culture, many of these participants identified with being partially assimilated, whether it be for personal reasons or for their career. The American Indian community has developed a sense of resilience as all participants in this study identified with a strong commitment to the American Indian community. Native American people most desire relationships with practitioners in which they are treated like other families and like other people.

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APPENDIX A
AUGSBURG IRB APPROVAL LETTER

AUGSBURG



C • O • L • L • E • G • E

DATE: 1/22/96

TO: Georgette Bunker
7039 165th St. No.
Hugo MN 55038

FROM: Rita Weisbrod, Ph.D.
Chair
Institutional Review Board

RE: Your IRB application "Walking in Two Worlds: Native American Resilience"

I have received your reply to our letter of Jan 12, 1996 from Lori Lohman summarizing the conditions and recommendations of the Institutional Review Board. Your changes meet our concerns, but I have one correction. In your cover letter the committee is mis-named: our name should be corrected to "Institutional Review Board." I also want to note that you do not need to put your IRB approval number on every page of your interview guide. Just once in the cover letter is enough since the respondents will not see the instrument in the interview context!

With this correction, your project is approved. Your approval number is

95 - 28 - 3. This number should appear on your cover letter.

If there are substantive changes to your project which change your procedures regarding the use of human subjects, you should report them to me by phone (612-330-1227) or in writing so that they may be reviewed for possible increased risk.

I wish you will in this intriguing study!

✓ Copy: Carol Kuechler, Thesis Adviser

APPENDIX B
INVITATION
CONSENT FORM
STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE

WALKING IN TWO WORLDS

Native American Resilience

Department of Social Work
Augsburg College

You are cordially invited to participate in a Graduate Research study being conducted by myself through the Augsburg College in Minneapolis. I am currently working toward my Master in Social Work. I grew up on the White Earth Indian Reservation, the youngest of eight children.

The purpose of this research study is to identify risk, protective, and cultural factors in the Native American culture that fosters success in individual members. You have been chosen for this invitation because of your position within the Native American community.

Enclosed is a consent form and a sample of the interview questions I will be asking you in a face to face interview that will take approximately one hour.

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary and will not affect your relationship with Augsburg College. If you are willing to participate, please call me at work 612-773-8401 or at home 612-426-3772 to set up an interview time. If I do not hear from you within one week of the date on this invitation, I will make a follow up call to inquire if you wish to participate.

Me-gwetch, for your time and I will be talking to you soon.

Sincerely,

Georgette.

Walking In Two Worlds

Consent Form

You are invited to be in a research study to find out how Native Americans are resilient. The research study is targeting Native Americans. I ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be a participant.

This study is being conducted by: Georgette Bunker, as a graduate student working toward a Masters in Social Work at Augsburg College in Minneapolis, MN. Georgette is an enrolled member of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe. She is half Ojibwa from the White Earth Indian Reservation. During this interview process a small gift of appreciation will be given to the participants as a means of showing respect for their contribution and time given to this research study. The questions will be about your own personal story in regards to challenges and successes that you encountered. The interview will also ask questions about clients served by your agency. This research has been approved by the Augsburg Institutional Review Board. Augsburg Approval number: 95-28-3.

Background Information: The purpose of this study is to find out what protective factors are an integral part of the Native American culture. The direct benefit will be that people will learn about the Native American culture from direct Native American experiences. The indirect benefit will be your input into this project. Implications for social workers will also be very useful to the field of social work.

Procedures: If you agree to participate, the interview will be approximately one hour long. You will be asked a series of questions related to : risk factors of the Native American culture, protective factors of the Native American culture and “walking in two worlds” (biculturalism) of the Native American people. The interview will also be audiotaped with participants consent. The interview will be audiotaped to ensure accuracy of the recording of the participants response to questions.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study: The discussion questions for the interview will concentrate on: risk factors, protective factors, and cultural factors of the Native American people. The risk of this study may occur in the discussion of personal stories. However, participants are entitled to stop the interview and/ or audiotaping at any time and continue with other questions. The Investigator is aware that personal stories may be spoken of the entire interview and will respect all aspects of individual privacy. An indirect benefit will be the sharing of your knowledge and experiences in how Native Americans are resilient and how to continue with this resilience for the future of seven generations. Participants may request a copy of the final written document.

Confidentiality: The records as well as the audiotapes from the interview process will be kept private. In any sort of report that may be published, no information that will make it possible to identify individual participants. Research data and audio tapes will be kept in a locked file at the home of the Principal Investigator. The Principal Investigator will have sole access to the information. An agreement will be signed prior to the interview for consent to the interviews and the audiotaping of the interview. The audio tapes and any notes from the interview will be destroyed in June, 1996. The audiotapes will be transcribed anonymously by a Human Services professional. The audiotapes will be assigned a number prior to transcription to maintain individual participants anonymity.

Voluntary Nature of the Study: Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Augsburg College. If you decide to participate in the interview, you are free to withdraw at anytime. In addition, you may refuse to answer questions that are uncomfortable and still continue to participate in the remainder of the interview.

Contacts and Questions: The researcher conducting this study is Georgette Bunker. You may ask questions now, or if you have questions later you may contact me at work 612-773-8401, Extension 6, between the hours of 8:00-4:00 p.m. Tuesday through Friday. Or at home after 6:00 p.m. at 612-426-3772. You may also contact my Thesis Advisor from Augsburg College, Carol Kuechler at 612-330-1439.

You will be given a copy of this form to keep for your records.

Statement of Consent: I have read the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I understand that the face to face interview will consist of one hour in length and will be audio taped. I consent to participate.

Signature _____ Date _____

Signature of Investigator _____ Date _____

I consent to the audiotaping of this interview.

Signature _____ Date _____

STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

It is common among the general public to use the terms Native American and American Indian interchangeably. The Minnesota Chippewa Tribe/ Dakota and a majority of other tribes in this country prefer the term American Indian. This thesis will use the term interchangeably.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In this interview I will be asking some questions about who you are and about the experience in what has encouraged and challenged you on your path to success. I will also be asking about how your American Indian heritage has played a role in your life. I will ask you about some general questions in regards to the clients your agency serves.

1. First of all, are there any questions that you have of me?

2. Please identify:

Age: _____

Gender: _____

Education: _____

Position In The Native American Community: _____

Tribal Affiliation: _____

Did you grow up on the reservation? yes no

Population agency serves: _____

Are you the first generation in your family to attend college? yes no

3. Please describe your qualities as a American Indian professional.

(a.) Please describe your qualities as an American Indian person who has completed a post secondary education.

4. Please describe other people in your nuclear/extended family who have qualities as your own.

PROTECTIVE FACTORS

Refers to people or experiences that have supported your success.

5. Please listen to the following list of protective factors. After each item please answer yes or no to whether or not the item was a protective factor for you.

- yes no intellectual ability
- yes no relationship with competent adults
- yes no good coping skills.
- yes no family cohesion.
- yes no internal sense of direction
- yes no problem solving ability
- other _____

6. (a.) Please describe what types of educational opportunity that were available to you.

- _____ boarding school (what grades: _____)
- _____ public school (what grades: _____)
- _____ Native American school (what grades: _____)
- _____ Tribal college
- _____ other (please specify: _____)

(b.) Please describe your experiences after high school.

(c.) Please describe the individuals in your family that influenced your decision to continue your education.

(d.) Please describe the factors that fostered your success in leadership.

(e.) Please describe the factors that fostered your success in the American Indian community.

RISK FACTORS

Refers to challenges that might impede accomplishing your goals.

7. Please listen to the following list of risk factors. After each item please answer yes or no to whether or not the item was a risk factor for you.

yes	no	parent(s) had limited education.
yes	no	single parenting.
yes	no	relationship instability.
yes	no	unskilled occupational status.
yes	no	family unemployment.
yes	no	dependency on the state (AFDC).
yes	no	disadvantaged minority status.
		other _____

8. Please describe how barriers/ hardships were handled in your family.

WALKING IN TWO WORLDS

Definition of *Biculturalism*: Being able to cope in the dominant society while maintaining your American Indian heritage.

X-----X		
Complete assimilation	biculturalism or	cultural
immersion		
within the dominant	adoption of a	within the
Native		
society	dual perspective	American
		community

FOR EXAMPLE:

BENEFITS

Greater acceptance by and blending in with larger society when assimilation is successful. Increased access to various resources in larger society and a decrease in conflicting demands from society and the Native American culture.

Increased ability to function effectively in the dominant society and in the Native American culture, access to resources in both environments, and provision of cultural maintenance and a positive racial identity

Increased group opportunities for cultural maintenance, and likelihood of positive racial identity formation
Decreased experiences with racial discrimination

LIMITATIONS

Loss of the Native American culture, traditions, and group support. Increased risk of marginality and rejection by larger society. Increased likelihood of a negative racial identity formation and a denial of self.

Emotional stress associated with adapting to two often conflicting sets of expectations from the larger society and the Native American culture.

Limited access to resources available in larger society, and loss of opportunities to learn about the positive effects of cultural diversity

9. (a.) Please describe your experience with biculturalism/acculturation. (assimilation)

(b.)What, if any, are the cultural conflicts for you?

X-----X

Complete assimilation within the dominant society

biculturalism or adoption of a dual perspective

cultural immersion within the Native American community

10. Please place yourself on the bicultural continuum.

11. Please describe the clientele's experience with biculturalism/assimilation that your agency provides services for.

12. Is there anything else you would like to add about biculturalism/assimilation?

13. What do you think social workers need to know about working with American Indian families?

14. Language:

(a.) Do you know how to speak your Native Language? If so, who or where were you taught?

(b.) Under what circumstances do you speak your Native language in your home?

(c.) Under what circumstances do you speak your Native language in public?

15. Music:

(a.) Do you listen to American Indian music? Yes no

(b.) Under what circumstances do you listen to this music?

WORKING WITH CLIENTELE:

16. Here are some factors that are considered as protective factors. Please check those that are considered as a protective factor for the families that your agency serves.

yes	no	intellectual ability.
yes	no	relationship with competent adults.
yes	no	good coping skills.
yes	no	family cohesion
yes	no	internal sense of direction
yes	no	problem solving abilities.
		other _____

17. Here are some factors that are considered as protective factors. Please check those that have been considered a risk factor for the families that your agency serves.

yes	no	parent(s) had limited education.
yes	no	single parenting.
yes	no	relationship instability.
yes	no	unskilled working status.
yes	no	family unemployment.
yes	no	dependency on the state (AFDC).
yes	no	disadvantaged minority status.
		other _____

Do you have any other questions or comments in regards to this interview?

Would you like a copy of the written report sent to you? yes no

If yes, where sent? _____

Thank you for your time in this study. I greatly appreciate your assistance and knowledge.

