Do Native Americans in Nurturing Parenting Experience Outcomes Similar to Other Participants? Results of an Exploratory Evaluation
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Introduction
Child maltreatment poses a serious threat to children’s development. The Nurturing Parenting Programs (NPP, Family Development Research, 2001) are adaptations of parent education programs used for prevention and correction of child maltreatment. Empirical support exists for the use of these programs with general and at-risk populations (e.g., Crown, 2001). One notable shortcoming is that Native Americans have largely been excluded in research literature, and no studies have evaluated the use of NPP in tribal populations.

NPP has been adapted for a number of specific cultural groups, but Native Americans are not among them. Additionally, existing research on NPP focuses on general populations rather than distinct cultural groups. Native American populations face special challenges, including a long and complicated history of interactions with government agencies. This history has led to a lack of trust in child protective services (Honpa, Craig, & Pablo, 1992). Furthermore, NPP may be inadequate for addressing historical trauma (see Brave Hektner, Dietz, & Althouse, 2011) within tribal communities.

Using existing data from three consecutive years of programming, the present study explores attitudinal outcomes for Native American participants as compared to other participants.

Method
Participants
• 303 out of 508 participants with matched data
• 68% female
• Mean age = 31 (SD = 8.5); Median age = 30
• Majority low income: 52% with annual income of $15,000 or less
• Most had completed some college but few had a 4-year degree
• Racial composition: 89% Caucasian, 2% Native American, 8% other
• Most referred through involvement in state child welfare system

Procedure
• Programming consisted of weekly sessions meeting for approximately 1 hour
• 15 sessions in 2009-2010, 16 sessions in following two years
• Assessments completed at 1st and 19th sessions

Measures of Parental Attitudes
• AAPI-2 scale
• 40 items divided into 5 scales (see Table 1)
• Items measured using five point Likert scale, strongly agree (1) to strongly disagree (5)
• Scores for each scale reported as t-scores (normal distribution, scale of 1-10)

Analysis
• Repeated Measures ANOVA, separate analyses conducted for each AAPI-2 scale
• After each initial ANOVA, covariates were added and a second ANOVA was conducted

Results
Parental Expectations
Group effect: F(2, 299) = 11.32, p < .001 (Tribal lower than other groups)
G x T interaction: N.S.
With covariates
Education: Education: F(1, 292) = 19.33, p < .001 (higher education = higher scores)
History of abuse: N.S.
No interactions of covariates with time
Group effect: remained significant, F(2, 292) = 6.87, p < .001

Empathic Awareness
Group effect: F(2, 299) = 4.47, p < .001 (Tribal lower than other groups)
G x T interaction: N.S.
With covariates
Education: Education: F(1, 292) = 12.47, p < .001 (Tribal lower than other groups)
G x T interaction: trend, F(2, 299) = 2.04, p = .056

Empathy Awareness
Group effect: F(2, 299) = 24.36, p < .001
Group effect: F(2, 299) = 2.65, p = .049
G x T interaction: trend, F(2, 299) = 2.65, p = .049

Corporal Punishment
Group effect: F(2, 299) = 5.43, p < .001
Group effect: F(2, 299) = 2.91, p = .056
G x T interaction: F(2, 299) = 10.03, p < .001

With covariates
Group effect: Education: F(1, 292) = 9.34, p < .001 (higher education = higher scores)
History of abuse: N.S.
No interactions of covariates with time
Group effect: remained significant, F(2, 292) = 7.80, p < .001

Power and Independence
Group effect: F(2, 299) = 11.98, p < .001 (Tribal lower than other groups)
G x T interaction: N.S.
With covariates
Education: Education: F(1, 292) = 4.68, p = .036 (participants who reported childhood experiences of abuse experienced greater improvement)
History of abuse: N.S.
No interactions of covariates with time
Group effect: remained significant, F(2, 292) = 7.50, p < .001

Results (Continued)

Role Reversal
Group effect: F(2, 299) = 6.08, p = .005
Group effect: F(2, 299) = 25.07, p < .001 (Tribal lower than other groups)
G x T interaction: N.S.
With covariates
Education: Education: F(1, 292) = 9.36, p < .003 (higher education = higher scores)
History of abuse: N.S.
Abuse X Time interaction: trend, F(1, 292) = 3.61, p = .058 (participants who reported childhood experiences of abuse experienced greater improvement)
Time effect: no longer significant
Group effect: remained significant, F(2, 292) = 17.70, p < .001

Power and Independence
Group effect: F(2, 299) = 12.65, p < .001 (Tribal lower than other groups)
G x T interaction: N.S.
With covariates
Education: Education: F(1, 292) = 12.65, p < .001 (higher education = higher scores)
History of abuse: N.S.
No interactions of covariates with time
Group effect: remained significant, F(2, 292) = 7.50, p < .001

Discussion
Mixed results for Native American participants
• Both Tribal and non-reservation Native Americans improved by greater than half of a point in Empathic Awareness, yet other participants improved by well over a whole point.
• Both Native American groups improved by about half of a point in Role Reversal, again indicating reduced risk for maltreatment.
• Some findings were discouraging. For example, Tribal participants experienced a slight worsening in Corporal Punishment scores, while the group encompassing all other participants improved by almost an entire point. Nonreservation Native Americans experienced a worsening in their Power and Independence scores, and Tribal participants experienced essentially no change. From a practical standpoint, it is alarming to see worsening or no improvement in scores after months of programming.

Limitations
• Sampling: Any generalizations should be made with caution given the small number of Native American participants in this study.
• No fidelity checks: It is unknown if Tribal participants experienced lower program quality, which could account for the observed differences.

Future Directions
• The cultural appropriateness of program content and implementation should be explored in Native American populations, particularly tribal communities.

Acknowledgements
Thank you to Dr. Sean Brotherson for data preparation and to Amy Tichy for providing important background information on program implementation.

Table 1

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Note: Unbalanced means for stan scores. Group by time interactions do not include covariates. Tribal n = 47; Non-reservation Native American n = 29; All others n = 227.