AAHOMONE

by

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Ma'óhkéénáʼe

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DEDICATION

To my éškeme Betty, and my heške Lee Ann,

á'eh (Thank you) for the ametanénestȯtse (life) lessons.

To my children,

I wanted to heal the second I saw your face, your little hands and little feet.

Forgive me for not healing sooner.

ABSTRACT

Archibald (2008) said, "I have learned from First Nations Elders that beginning with a humble prayer creates a cultural learning process, which promotes the teachings of respect, reverence, responsibility, and reciprocity. I use the term "teachings" to mean cultural values, beliefs, lessons, and understandings that are passed from generation to generation." (1)

In the Cheyenne tribe, we have a ceremony called “the call back ceremony,” we call back our own spirit. We have four spirits that makes us a whole person, and sometimes our spirit will stay in a location which could be in the past, or in a place such as a home you once lived in. It is important to pray and call your four spirits back. Cheyennes have used the “Serenity Prayer,” to call back their spirit in everyday life.

The Cheyenne Serenity Prayer

Ma'heo'o, nehvestâhemêste tsesto'seovana'xaehestanomo hova'ehe tsesaatonêšetaomenetâhevanohemo. Nexheestaha'oveo'o tsesto'senetâhevanomo navo'êstanehevestôtse. Naa nehno'voo'šêšeo'o hova'ehe tsesaatonêšenetâhevanohemo. Hena'haanehe

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I want to take a moment to express my heartfelt gratitude to all the incredible people *névááhe* (who) have supported me throughout my educational *hóxovéstavaohe* (journey). First and foremost, I owe a huge *á'eh* (Thank you) to my sisters, Macayla Rogers, Kaya Rogers, and Feather Magpie. Your willingness to help watch over Emma, Ronnie, and Kayla allowed me the time I needed to focus on my studies.

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A special shoutout goes to Nick Rink, Dani White, Rosilia, and Gary LaFranier. Your deep knowledge of your *manáhestótse* (tribes) has been a constant source of inspiration for me. You embody the beauty, responsibility, and duty we owe to future *amevo'ėstanéhevestótse* (generations), igniting my passion for learning and teaching Native American Studies.

Lastly, I want to express my profound gratitude to *má'hahkeso* (my husband), Mackenzie Kade Rachel. You found me during a time when I was struggling, and with your encouragement, I sought help and began to heal. Your unwavering support as I navigated my past trauma has been transformative. You have sparked my own interest in this thesis, finding out why I am, *névááhe* (who) I am *éšeēva* (today). *á'eh* (Thank you) for protecting me from negativity and helping me rediscover my strength and identity.

I'm truly grateful for each of you, *á'eh* (Thank you)!

AMERICAN INDIAN HERITAGE & POSITIONALITY STATEMENT

My name is Alisha Nicole Fisher, and my Cheyenne name is Red Plume Woman. I am one of the last descendants of the So'tao'o tribe. They were separate from the Northern Cheyenne but dissolved into the tribe as one, since the language and beliefs were similar. I was born in Montana, and I am from the Northern Cheyenne Reservation, specifically from the Birney district. I attended St. Labre Indian Catholic Boarding School from kindergarten until graduation. My school was a reformed boarding institution, where we had amazing teachers—no nuns—along with one priest who was a great example of what being Catholic should encompass.

At St. Labre, we learned about our own Northern Cheyenne tribe as well as the Crow tribe. Instead of Spanish or French, we learned our Native languages. St. Labre was my safe space, and I felt fortunate to have a stable learning experience. I often think about how I wish the elders of my tribe had had the same opportunities.

It's important to acknowledge that St. Labre has a horrific past and is still haunted by that history, much like many other boarding schools across North America. After graduating, I went to Montana State University, where I was fortunate enough to make my mark on campus through Native American art. I loved my education so much that it was very hard to leave. Bozeman, Montana, was the first place I truly felt at home, and it will always hold a special place in my heart.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Xamaevo'ėstane (Native American) Peoples perceive *ametanénestȯtse* (life) as a *néma'* (circular) *hóxovéstavaohe* (journey), a continuous cycle rich with connections and lessons, rather than a linear progression. Identity is a complex tapestry woven from our memories, experiences, relationships, and values, all of which collectively shape our sense of self. This intricate amalgamation fosters a consistent *hetóeotse* (understanding) of *névᾱᾱhe* (who) we are over time, even as we incorporate *mónahe* (new) elements into our identities. It compels us to engage in profound self-inquiry: *névᾱᾱhe* (who) am I? *hénaaʼe* (what) makes me, uniquely me? No *nés* (two) stories are identical, and the *ánȯse* (true) marvel of individuality lies in the realization that each person is irreplaceable.

In the contemporary landscape, many *xamaevo'ėstane* (Native American) Peoples grapple with the challenge of gaining *nanóvȧhtsestȯtse* (mutual recognition) within broader *nótȧxeme* (society); tragically, a significant portion of the population remains unaware of our ongoing existence. Our identities have been sculpted by myriad external influences, including skewed media portrayals, distorted historical narratives, and legal struggles such as blood quantum laws. As *xamaevo'ėstane* (Native American) Peoples navigate the complexities of self-identity, they endeavor to *hetóeotse* (understand) where they fit in a historical context marred by centuries of oppression, persistent systemic racism, and an enduring quest for resilience and belonging.

Central to this worldview is storytelling, an art form that transcends mere narrative to embody a vital means of preserving culture and wisdom. The poignant saying, "Every time an elder dies, a library dies with them," underscores the profound void left by the loss of unique voices and invaluable knowledge that will never be shared again. A deep understanding of our history is essential; without this awareness, we jeopardize the *héne'ená* (lessons) and risk

repeating the mistakes of those *névááhe* (who) came before us. For countless *xamaevo'ėstane* (Native American) peoples around the globe, storytelling serves as both a cherished source of entertainment and a powerful mechanism for passing down history and *ametanénestȯtse* (life) lessons, strengthening the bonds within families and communities.

This sentiment highlights the urgent need to live fully in the present while diligently preserving the stories and wisdom we have at our disposal, particularly the invaluable experiences of our elders. Equally crucial is our responsibility to look toward the future, empowering our youth and amplifying their voices as they navigate their own paths. Continuous learning becomes a vital practice, ensuring we honor and carry forward our rich heritage.

As stated by a Tommy Orange, a Cheyenne writer,

> We've been defined by everyone else and continue to be slandered despite easily accessible facts about the realities of our histories and our current state as a people. We have the sad, defeated Indian silhouette, the heads rolling down temple stairs; we have it in our heads, Kevin Costner saving us, John Wayne's six-shooter slaying us, an Italian named Iron Eyes Cody playing our parts in movies. (Orange, 2018)

This stark reflection reveals the battle against misrepresentation and the necessity of reclaiming our narratives. Embarking on the *hóxovéstavaohe* (journey) of self-discovery can feel both exhilarating and overwhelming, but I'm filled with anticipation as I share my story with you. My name is Alisha Nicole Fisher (Rogers), and I proudly belong to the Northern *Tsėhéstáno* (Cheyenne people). Our community is steeped in heritage, though we find ourselves divided across *nés* (two) distinct reservations—the *Ȯh-mésėhé'e* (Northern Cheyenne) in the breathtaking landscapes of Montana and the Southern Cheyenne in the state of Oklahoma.

I have changed some names in this story, because I am promoting my own growth and not continuing a toxic cycle of gossip.

Growing up on the *Ȯh-mésėhéʼe* (Northern Cheyenne) Reservation has profoundly shaped my worldview, even as I occasionally grapple with a sense of disconnection from my roots. Despite my limited knowledge of our complex history and beautiful language, I hold a deep reverence for our culture, which resonates in the rhythms of our traditions and the stories of our ancestors.

I have witnessed the myriad challenges faced by many *xamaevoʼėstane* (Native American) communities, often feeling as though we inhabit a hidden world within our own country—a world rich with *ametanénestȯtse* (life) and spirit yet often overlooked. Nevertheless, I firmly believe there is incredible strength in our resilience and the unbreakable bonds of our unity. My heart is eager to *héneʼená* (learn) more about my heritage, to deepen my understanding, and to forge a stronger connection with my people.

As I look ahead, I am filled with optimism about the *hóxovéstavaohe* (journey) before me and the opportunity to nurture a profound bond with my community. Together, we can uplift one another, celebrating and honoring our majestic history and vibrant culture that continue to thrive against all odds.

Recently, we've faced profound challenges, including the pervasive issues of substance abuse and the heartbreaking reality of missing and murdered *xamaevoʼėstane* (Native American) women, coupled with the often overlooked, yet stark violence in our communities. Living in rural areas can cast a shadow over the search for uplifting distractions, making it more difficult to find solace and joy. While some might expect me to feel a deep, intrinsic connection to our community due to the legacy of my esteemed *éškeme, (*Grandma*)* the truth is that her focus was primarily on survival and the day-to-day struggles of raising us, her *néxahéhasėstse* (grandchildren). This often left little room for her to impart the richness of our traditions.

Nevertheless, I hold onto a sense of optimism and a genuine eagerness to *héne'ená* (learn). With each step I take, I hope to forge a deeper connection to our heritage and uncover the culture that has shaped our identity.

> I got my route, and the mail does not stop coming just like the bills do not. Your phones, the internet, electricity, food. There's rent and clothes and bus and train money. Listen, baby, it makes me happy you want to know, but learning about your heritage is a privilege. A privilege we don't have. And anyway, anything you hear from me about your heritage does not make you more or less a real Indian. (Orange, 2018)

One of the most compelling challenges faced by *xamaevo'ëstane* (Native American) Peoples, as highlighted by *ma'ëheóvahe* (Orange), is the intricate and multifaceted question of identity. Take, for instance, Orvil: a young man *névááhe* (who) embodies this internal struggle as he discreetly *héne'enás* (learns) to dance beneath the watchful gaze of his *éškeme*, Opal. This personal *hóxovéstavaohe* (journey) is a poignant reflection of the heavy burden of intergenerational trauma intertwined with the threads of his Cheyenne heritage, as he embarks on a quest to uncover the essence of *névááhe* (who) he truly is. The powerful assertion from "The Truth About Stories" resonates profoundly: "The truth about stories is that it is all we are." (King, 2003) This encapsulates beautifully how *xamaevo'ëstane* (Native American) Peoples articulate and embrace their identities, with oral histories lovingly passed down through *amevo'ëstanéhevestötse* (generations), serving as a vital *ametanénestötse* (life) line that actively preserves and enriches our diverse culture.

However, it is crucial to recognize that many authors, both Native and non-Native, often romanticize Native stories, which can inadvertently create a skewed perception of contemporary Native identity. Such portrayals risk spawning misconceptions for those outside of Native communities and even for individuals within these communities, *névááhe* (who) may grapple with feelings of detachment from their roots. While Sherman Alexie's films frequently illuminate

essential truths, they sometimes veer into dramatic exaggeration, inadvertently showcasing stereotypes rather than authentically reflecting the lived experiences of *xamaevo'ėstane* (Native American) Peoples. By emphasizing and sharing our genuine stories, we can cultivate a more accurate and enriching representation of our lives *éšeēva* (today), fostering understanding and appreciation for the complexities of our existence.

From a young age, many *xamaevo'ėstane* (Native American) children embark on a profound and often challenging *hóxovéstavaohe* (journey) to define their *mése'homöhtohe* (cultural belief) identity. This process is intricately shaped by big, sometimes misleading portrayals in pop culture, as well as the subtle but pervasive nature of racial microaggressions. It's intriguing to explore how various creators—be they authors, filmmakers, or lawmakers—craft narratives that affect perceptions of *xamaevo'ėstane* (Native American) Peoples. These narratives infiltrate media, social interactions, educational settings, and even universities, shaping both internal self-image and external viewpoints.

When you envision *xamaevo'ėstane* (Native American) Peoples, *hénaa'e* (what) comes to mind? Is it the striking image of an individual with long, flowing black hair elegantly braided, or perhaps someone adorned in traditional regalia that speaks to their heritage? These representations, while iconic, can often reduce the rich tapestry of Native cultures to simple stereotypes. I remember my own initial encounters with the term "Indians" in films; I found them amusing at first, but as I delved deeper, I began to grasp how misleading and even damaging these stereotypes could be.

It is essential for all of us to cultivate a deeper, more nuanced understanding of Native cultures and their myriad stories, while honoring the diversity that exists within them. Together, let's embark on a *hóxovéstavaohe* (journey) to foster greater respect and appreciation for these

remarkable identities, embracing the complexity and beauty of *xamaevo'ėstane* (Native American) heritage.

Stepping into college felt like embarking on a profound *hóxovéstavaohe* (journey) of transformation, particularly during my *xamaevo'ėstane* (Native American) studies classes, where history resonated on a deeply personal level. I can still vividly recall our intense discussion on the Sand Creek massacre. As I leaned in closer, eager to absorb the narratives being shared, I was confronted with haunting images that lingered in my mind. A surge of emotion swept through me—my heart raced, breaths came in short, shaky gasps, and my hands trembled, caught in a tumult of anger and sorrow. In that moment, I found myself questioning the source of my anguish; was it the echo of my ancestors' suffering that stirred my spirit? Their remarkable resilience paved the way for my existence *éšeēva* (today), yet I felt an overwhelming urge to escape the weight of this realization.

Rather than harboring resentment towards my professor for unraveling these painful truths, a curiosity emerged: Did my peers share the same tumultuous feelings? The subsequent lecture on another *manáhestötse* (tribe) rekindled those powerful emotions, amplifying my anxiety and leaving me feeling raw and exposed in front of my classmates. It dawned on me then that I am not merely a historical figure trapped in the past; I am a proud descendant of survivors, and that connection to my heritage is an invaluable legacy. Understanding my identity is a winding path, but with every lesson, I am drawn closer to embracing it in its entirety. This *hóxovéstavaohe* (journey) is not just about grappling with sorrow; it is an opportunity for deep personal growth and authentic connection. I choose to face this path with hope and unwavering determination!

I’m thrilled to embark on the exploration of my *hóxovéstavaohe* (journey) as an educated brown girl, reflecting deeply on my *mése'homöhtohe* (cultural beliefes) identity! For my thesis, I chose the title *“Áahtomóné*” or “*Névé'-nėhešéve”* which translates to “Custer's ears.” My friend Gary often shares fond anecdotes about my grandma, a wellspring of wisdom *névάáhe* (who) embodies the traditions of the *Ȯh-mésėhé'e* (Northern Cheyenne). With a twinkle in her eye, she playfully remarked to him that I don't always manage to listen, a sentiment that has turned into a delightful running joke. My teasing brother leans into this playful banter, affectionately dubbing me *“Áahtomóné”* as a gentle nudge for me to pay better attention. This light-hearted teasing not only brings laughter but also inspired the choice of my thesis title. I am eager to dive deeper into my heritage and uncover the stories and traditions that shape my identity!

> Some older community members once told me that if you want to learn your language or hear something important, you should chew on a little piece of sage and then rub it around your ears so that you can hear better.
>
> — Me`eooe Hataveseve`hame

Among the lessons passed down to Cheyenne children is the poignant tale of the Battle of the Greasy Grass. General Armstrong Custer made disastrous choices during the infamous *Tsėhe'ėsta'éhe Tséhvonanėse* (Battle of the Little Big Horn). Once upon a time, he was regarded as a friend to the Cheyenne people. In a gesture of goodwill, they crafted a buckskin jacket for him, one resembling his military coat, symbolizing their hope for unity. *Ešeēva* (today), at the site of the *Tsėhe'ėsta'éhe Tséhvonanėse* (Battle of the Little Big Horn), a replica of that buckskin jacket serves as a solemn reminder of a fractured trust, as the original was lost to the sands of time.

Custer's fate remains shrouded in mystery; rumors abound regarding his final moments. Some believe he was shot and feigned death amidst the chaos. In the aftermath of the battle, as

smoke cleared and grief lingered, the *Tsėhésėhéʼe* (Cheyenne women) embarked on a solemn quest for remnants—treasures of their loved ones, buttons, and other items they could salvage for the *manáhestótse* (tribe). Amidst the harrowing scene, one Cheyenne woman stumbled upon a shocking sight: Custer, alive.

Whether he was discovered by a solitary soul or surrounded by a circle of women—history is vague on the details. *hénaaʼe* (what) remains undeniably clear is that he was found not among the fallen, but breathing, stirring a complex web of emotions among those *névááhe* (who) once considered him an ally.

During my first visit to the Little Big Horn Battlefield, I discovered a story about a strong-willed Cheyenne woman *névááhe* (who), in a striking act of bravery, cut out a man's tongue. "In the next *ametanénestótse* (life), you will not lie," she declared with fierce resolve. With an arrow or a slender stick, she then poked out his ears, imparting a lesson on the importance of truly listening—*"aatamone.*" This kind of discipline was a cherished tradition among the Cheyenne, with elders often reminding their young ones, "You don't listen; I should take your ears!"

Going back to the lobby of Limon, as Gary and I exchanged laughter, he teasingly remarked, "See, you don't listen." I responded with a playful grin, "Please don't poke out my ears!" We erupted into laughter, the sound echoing in the air and weaving a stronger bond between all the chaperones. It was moments like these that inspired me to title my paper *"Áahtomóné,"* a name that resonates deeply within the fabric of my heart.

Learning, I have come to realize, is a rich *hóxovéstavaohe* (journey) that underscores the significance of listening. Just as we must pause to think before we speak or act, it is essential to show respect as we truly hear one another. Archibald (2008) emphasizes that once we *héneʼená*

to listen to these rich, woven stories of our culture, we bear the sacred responsibility to share that wisdom, ensuring it flourishes for *amevoʼëstanéhevestötse* (generations) to come. Embracing this philosophy nurtures connection and continuity, preserving the beauty of our heritage for those *névááhe* (who) will follow.

I wholeheartedly embraced the opportunity to listen attentively, immersing myself in the wisdom shared with both care and respect (Archibald, 2008). Gary's playful teasing brought a lightness to our interactions, and he introduced me to a beautiful Cheyenne word, *"Áahtomóné,"* which I now hold close to my heart. It's truly remarkable how a single word can weave a thread of connection among us all!

> Patience and trust are essential for preparing to listen to stories. Listening involves more than just using your auditory sense. We must visualize the characters and their actions. We must let our emotions surface. As the Elders say, it is essential to listen with 'three ears: two on the sides of our head and the one that is in our heart. (Archibald 2018, 8)

Remember back in 2012 when the air was thick with chatter about the Mayan Calendar and its ominous predictions for the end of the world? (With a lively Tsistsistas accent) It was a captivating time, especially with the thrilling debut of "The Walking Dead" on AMC! As a *heške* (mother) of *nés* (two), I felt an unsettling wave of concern wash over me—Walmart even seized the moment with their cheeky "end of the world" sales, turning panic into a marketing bonanza.

Looking back, it draws parallels to how we navigated the tumultuous landscape of 2020 during the Covid pandemic. Survival kits morphed into coveted treasures, and I found myself pondering: were people truly gripped by fear, or was there a legitimate cause for alarm? Amid that whirlwind of anxiety and reflection, I embarked on a whimsical quest for survival tips for the Zombie Apocalypse! At first, I couldn't help but chuckle at the absurdity, but soon I began to unearth echoes of my own culture within that thrill. The nomadic way of *ametanénestötse* (life) for my people has undergone a profound transformation. We've

hóxovéstavaohe (journeyed) through invasions and found ourselves woven into the fabric of lives often defined as "settlers." It's been a daunting yet enriching *hóxovéstavaohe* (journey)—striving to adapt to a *mónahe* (new) way of living while passionately preserving our traditional culture and identity as "the beings" or "the people."

Did you know there are currently 574 recognized *manáhestótse* (tribes) in the United States as of 2022, a number that continues to flourish as *mónahe* (new) *manáhestótse* (tribes) earn their rightful *nanóváhtsestótse* (mutual recognition)? It's both thrilling and heartening to see our deeply-rooted heritage honored, igniting a hopeful spark for the future! Together, we can celebrate our rich past while wholeheartedly embracing *mónahe* (new) opportunities with optimism and resilience!

I feel a deep, unwavering connection to my *voʼėstaneme* (family) and community, accompanied by a profound sense of responsibility toward those around me. To explore how psychological trauma can shape individuals, originating from stressful events that irrevocably alter their mental health. On a larger scale, the concept of intergenerational trauma reveals its pervasive effects on entire communities, particularly those scarred by historical tragedies such as genocide. This haunting form of trauma seeps through the fabric of *amevoʼėstanéhevestótse* (generations), often evident in families where parents or grandparents have borne the weight of significant hardships. Subsequent *amevoʼėstanéhevestótse* (generations), even if untouched by the original trauma, continue to feel its far-reaching ripple effects.

This cycle of trauma tends to trace back to specific, defining events in a *voʼėstaneme* (family's) history (Berube, 2015). I am eager to delve into the complexities of intergenerational trauma, also known as historical trauma, and its compelling relationship with epigenetics. This shared emotional legacy can lead to profound and lasting consequences on communities,

accumulating over time (Barker et al. 249). By understanding these dynamics, we can cultivate hope as we embark on the *hóxovéstavaohe* (journey) of healing and resilience together!

The enduring impacts of colonialism continue to echo within *xamaevo'ėstane* (Native American) communities, especially among the resilient *Ȯh-mésėhé'e* (Northern Cheyenne) people. Let us delve into the history and unwavering spirit of these remarkable communities, highlighting their *hóxovéstavaohe* (journey) toward healing, empowerment, and the revitalization of their *mése'homöhtohe* (Cultural) heritage!

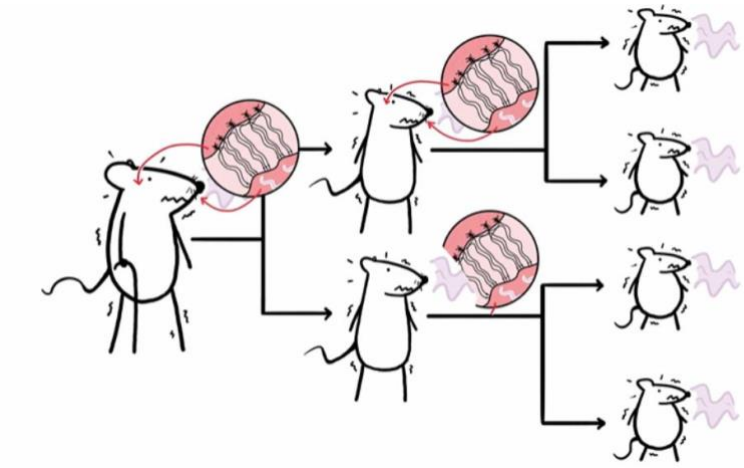

Figure 1 epigenetics: Many epigenetic studies focus on how stress, trauma, and care become molecularly embodied, affect gene expression without changing DNA sequence, and produce changes that influence the health and behavior of individuals, their offspring, and future generations. (Lappe, 2018, 698)

My first introduction to epigenetics came from a YouTube video titled “Epigenetics: Why Inheritance Is Weirder Than We Thought.” (MinuteEarth 2015) In an intriguing study, researchers discovered that when lab rats were exposed to the scent of acetic acid alongside an electric shock, they quickly learned to associate that smell with fear. This intense experience triggered the development of additional neurons in their noses as well as in the brain's processing

center, enhancing their sensitivity to the scent. *Hénaa'e* (what's) truly fascinating is that even their offspring, *névâáhe* (who) had never encountered either the smell or their parents, exhibited this heightened sensitivity and an increased number of neurons. (MinuteEarth, 2015)

This finding challenges traditional genetics, which typically focuses on the inheritance of genetic information encoded in DNA. Instead, it suggests that the fear-induced experiences can lead to changes in gene expression—not by altering the DNA sequence, but through the influence of epigenetic tags that can activate or deactivate specific genes. Remarkably, the fear response appears to have activated a gene related to smell in the sperm cells, potentially equipping the next *amevoʼėstanéhevestȯtse* (generation) of mice with remarkable sensitivity. This opens up exciting avenues of research into how experiences can shape biology across *amevoʼėstanéhevestȯtse* (generations)!

After immersing myself in this thought-provoking video, I found myself ignited with inspiration to explore some questions! *hénaaʼe* (what) specific epigenetic markers have evolved within the *Ȯh-mésėhéʼe* (Northern Cheyenne) community? Have we, as a collective, grown more attuned to the environmental stressors that have shaped our upbringing? My curiosity is particularly piqued by the intricate patterns that may serve as triggers for our responses.

Intergenerational trauma is a complex yet crucial topic that illuminates the lingering pain experienced by many, both in historical contexts and in the modern day. This trauma manifests in myriad ways, often slipping under the radar of conventional Western healing practices, such as therapy. As I delve deeper into the historical events that have indelibly impacted the *Ȯh-mésėhéʼe* (Northern Cheyenne) people, I find myself eager to *hetóeotse* (understand) the profound and lasting effects these events have on past, present, and future *amevoʼėstanéhevestȯtse* (generations).

Research in neuroscience reveals that *intergenerational trauma* is a shared burden that resides within us all. It significantly influences our behaviors, perspectives, and coping mechanisms, all of which are intricately intertwined with the struggles faced by our ancestors. The fascinating connection between trauma and genetic coding, known as epigenetics, truly opens a gateway to a deeper understanding of our collective experience and the potential pathways toward healing.

One image that truly touches my heart is the poignant depiction of a pregnant woman, tenderly cradling the child blossoming within her. This powerful image evokes memories of my beloved *éškeme (grandma)*, Betty, *névááhe* (who) traversed the profound *hóxovéstavaohe* (journey) of pregnancy with my *hešk*e, embodying the essence of *ametanénestȯtse* (life) itself. In turn, my *hešk*e (mother) carried within her the very essence of me. This beautiful intergenerational bond illustrates how the experiences of one *amevoʼėstanéhevestȯtse* (generation) can resonate through the corridors of time, weaving a remarkable thread that connects us all.

I'm thrilled to share my personal narrative, beginning with the compelling *ametanénestȯtse* (life) story of my *éškeme* (Grandma). In this exploration, we will unveil patterns that illuminate the deeply impactful concept of intergenerational trauma—those emotional and psychological scars that our ancestors bear, which can cast long shadows over our own lives. Dr. Mariel Buque poignantly describes this haunting transmission of trauma that may stretch back *nés* (two) to three centuries, potentially reaching as far back as seven *amevoʼėstanéhevestȯtse* (generations).

As members of the Northern *Tsėhéstáno* (Cheyenne people), I feel a profound calling to trace my lineage through history. Our *voʼėstaneme* (family's) legacy has been sculpted by

significant events, shadowed by the sorrow of broken treaties, such as the Friendship Treaty. One gripping tale that has been etched into our *voʼëstaneme* (family) lore is from the harrowing Fort Robinson breakout. I vividly recall the story of a courageous woman, her heart racing in the cold *ené* (Night) air, as she emerged from the cabin that held the Cheyenne captives; with *nés* (two) small children by her side. The fierce bond between *hešhke* (mother) and child radiates with every heartbeat as she secured her infant snugly on her back, while her other child dashed alongside her. In the midst of this *ametanénestötse* (life)-altering crisis, the piercing cries of her little one abruptly ceased, a moment suspended in time, as she steeled herself against the encroaching danger, bravely urging her children to flee.

These ancestral stories reveal not only the unyielding strength and resilience of our lineage but also offer a glimmer of hope for healing and growth in the *amevoʼëstanéhevestötse* (generations) to come. Together, we will delve into the profound connections that shape our identity, fostering a deep sense of unity and belonging.

The Sand Creek Massacre stands as a deeply emotional chapter in our collective history, where chilling images of frozen bodies eerily illustrate the horrors endured. Originally known as the Battle of Sand Creek, this devastating event is a tragic testament to the struggles faced by *xamaevoʼëstane* (Native American) peoples. Heart-wrenching stories emerged from that dark time, revealing unimaginable loss and sorrow, yet this often-overlooked event also entwines with a broader narrative of resilience and survival.

As we reflect on the formidable challenges faced by our ancestors, including the fierce battles of Greasy Grass and Rosebud, we also pay tribute to extraordinary acts of courage, such as the young girl *névááhe* (who) bravely saved her brother amidst chaos. Our *hóxovéstavaohe* (journey) has been marked by significant transformations, from being forcibly confined to

reservations to the landmark moment in 1924 when we were finally granted U.S. citizenship, a bittersweet victory overshadowed by the painful legacy of *momóonémȧhéóʼo* (Boarding schools). This complex history marks the beginning of a legacy that profoundly shapes our identities *éšeēva* (today).

Looking back, I am drawn to the era of my great-great-*éškeme*, a time when the devoted Ursuline nuns established a mission on our reservation, bringing both hope and challenges. This institution, part of a broader historical movement that began around 1879, was initiated by Captain Richard Henry Pratt, *névȧáhe* (who) established the Carlisle Indian *momóonémȧhéóʼo* (Boarding school) in Pennsylvania. These schools were created with the intention of educating *xamaevoʼėstane* (Native American) children in a starkly different environment, often resulting in a painful separation from their families and communities. I recently found out of my maternal *voʼėstaneme* (family) had been forced into *momóonémȧhéóʼo* (Boarding schools) all located in Montana. My *éškeme* Betty's experience in *momóonémȧhéóʼo* (Boarding schools) left an indelible mark on her *ametanénestȯtse* (life), shaping her worldview and the narratives she passed down. Jo-ann Archibald (2008) beautifully captures the profound power of *xamaevoʼėstane* (Native American) storytelling, illuminating how these narratives enrich our understanding of culture, nature, history, and the vital roles played by *voʼėstaneme* (family) and Elders in our communities.

Ešeēva (today), we reflect on the intricacies of how intergenerational trauma impacts *xamaevoʼėstane* (Native American) women. We strive to comprehend the historical consequences of *momóonémȧhéóʼo* (Boarding schools) and their far-reaching influence on our families and communities. My culture holds immense significance for me, as I cherish the educational opportunities that have been made available to me, both within and beyond the

confines of the reservation. With hope and determination, I look forward to building a future that honors our rich past while charting a brighter path for the next seven *amevoʼėstanéhevestȯtse* (generations). Together, we can uplift and celebrate the heritage that defines us!

2. ESKEME BETTY

September 23, 1944- August 27, 2025

My éškeme, Betty Rogers, proudly embodies the spirit of the Northern *Tsėhéstáno* (Cheyenne people), having grown up amidst the stunning landscapes of *Oévemanȧhéno* (Birney, Montana). Our *voʼėstaneme* (family') roots are deeply intertwined with the *Ȯh-mésėhéʼe* (Northern Cheyenne) reservation, a tapestry woven with rich culture and enduring traditions. Despite the persistent challenges of poverty and scarce job opportunities that the community faces, these hardships are eclipsed by the extraordinary resilience and strength of its people. I often find myself reflecting on my *éškeme's* (grandma's)remarkable *hóxovéstavaohe* (journey), filled with the obstacles she courageously overcame. Her story inspires me to embrace the richness of our heritage and to celebrate the unwavering spirit of our community.

Understanding Her Life Trauma

As a young child, my *éškeme* (grandma) endured the challenging experience of *ametanénestȯtse* (life) at St. Labre Indian *momóonémȧhéóʼo* (Boarding school), where she spent her weekdays in unfamiliar surroundings while returning home only on weekends.

The narrative surrounding these past experiences is intricate and often laced with sorrow, yet it serves as a powerful testament to the resilience and strength woven into the fabric of Native communities. *éšeēva* (today), we have the opportunity to honor and celebrate the cultures that continue to flourish despite the trials they have faced. It's crucial to reflect on this complex history, to pay tribute to those *névȧáhe* (who) lived through these experiences, and to envision a future where every voice is valued and respected. Together, we can ignite meaningful dialogue

and cultivate a more inclusive *nótäxeme* (society), paving the way for understanding and unity among all.

> That was the mindset under which the U.S. government forced tens of thousands of Native American children to attend "assimilation" Boarding schools in the late 19th century. Decades later, those words—delivered in a speech by U.S. cavalry captain Richard Henry Pratt, have come to symbolize the brutality of the Boarding school system. (Little, 2018)

In boarding schools, children faced significant restrictions on their ability to sing, speak their native language, or embrace their rich *mése'homöhtohe* (Cultural) traditions. Unfortunately, this was just the beginning. *Heškes* (mothers) were relocated to designated "Indian" lands, and if they sought to reunite with their children, they were labeled as "hostiles," seen as a threat to the United States government.

My *éškeme* (grandma) shared her experiences of speaking Cheyenne, recalling the harsh consequences faced if she did so. She endured unimaginable trauma during this time, suffering at the hands of those *névääheʼ* (who) should have been providing care. My *éškeme* Betty was slapped on the hands with a ruler. The nuns and priests had taken vows of celibacy, which seemed to strip away their understanding of a *heške's* (mother's) love and the gentle nurturing needed for these *xamaevo'ėstane* (Native American) children. At just five years old, many were separated from their families, unable to return until they turned 18. Can you imagine being taken away from the comfort of your *vo'ėstaneme* (family), only to return years later, unable to communicate because of a disconnect in language and culture?

Despite these challenges, *éšeēva* (today's) *amevo'ėstanéhevestötse* (generation) of *xamaevo'ėstane* (Native American) children are embracing their heritage. My great-*éškeme*, Mary, faced a difficult choice; she chose not to teach her *néxahéhasėstse* (grandchildren), like

my *heške* (mother) Lee Ann's *amevoʼëstanéhevestötse* (generation), our traditional ways out of fear that they might endure the same *méseʼhomöhtohe* (Cultural belief) suppression.

This cycle is evolving, and I believe that with each passing *amevoʼëstanéhevestötse* (generation), there is hope for the revival and preservation of our culture. It's time to recognize and celebrate our resilience and the power of *méseʼhomöhtohe* (Cultural) identity, ensuring that our traditions are passed on with pride and love.

> The early studies called it "survivor syndrome" and suggested it included symptoms such as: denial, depersonalization, isolation, somatization, memory loss, agitation, anxiety, guilt, depression, intrusive thoughts, nightmares, psychic numbing and survivor guilt. In addition to the PTSD-like symptoms that the actual victims of the traumas experience, there has been data to suggest that the offspring of the victims of trauma may also suffer from PTSD-like symptoms by a process that is often referred to as "secondary", "vicarious" or "intergenerational" trauma. This secondary response to the trauma by the next generation is thought to be part of the basis of the persistence of the effects of historical trauma. (Ehlers et al., 2013)

Among the older *amevoʼëstanéhevestötse* (generations) they shamed young adults for not knowing the history or the language. They still had fight left in them. A notable rule dictated that my *éškeme* (grandma) was forbidden from speaking the *Ȯh-mésėhéʼe* (Northern Cheyenne) language. Instead, the school emphasized imparting practical skills to the girls, immersing them in lessons on cleaning and managing household tasks. This approach aimed to mold their futures with vital *ametanénestötse* (life) skills, shaping them into capable individuals prepared to navigate the complexities of *ametanénestötse* (life).

> Furthermore, because of a combination of inadequate funding, shelter, basic public health, and nutrition, Native American children frequently succumbed to preventable diseases while attending a residential school. More recently, horrific accounts of sexual, physical, and emotional abuse have been documented, and a number of former residential school staff have been convicted in for their part in these crimes. (Barker et al., 2019, 249)

My *éškeme's* (grandma's) *hóxovéstavaohe* (journey) is a tapestry of resilience and inspiration. As one of the *xamaevoʼėstane* (Native American) Peoples affected by the Indian Relocation Act of 1956, she faced daunting challenges, but she refused to let those experiences define her identity. With unwavering determination, she pursued her education in the vibrant communities of Lawrence, Kansas, and Albuquerque, New Mexico. It was there that she met the love of her *ametanénestötse* (life), my grandfather, Clarence—a meeting that blossomed into a *ametanénestötse* (life)long partnership filled with love and laughter.

Together, they cultivated a warm and nurturing *voʼėstaneme* (family) in the picturesque town of Ashland, Montana, where they welcomed three remarkable children: Kim, Lee Ann, and Waylon. Their home was a sanctuary, full of joy and the echoes of cherished memories. However, the *hóxovéstavaohe* (journey) was not without its shadows. Returning to the reservation shattered my *éškeme's* (grandma's) heart when tragedy struck with the murder of her beloved sister, *heóvėstséávoʼoʼe* (Rose), in Lame Deer. This harrowing event was cloaked in a painful web of secrecy and injustice. When *heóvėstséávoʼoʼe* (Rose's) remains were finally discovered, my *éškeme's* (grandma's) indomitable spirit shone through. She courageously adopted Arlene, *heóvėstséávoʼoʼe* (Rose's) daughter, embracing her with open arms and boundless love, showcasing her remarkable strength during such dark times.

Duran presents a compelling and thought-provoking perspective on the role of *momóonémähéóʼo* (Boarding schools), characterizing them as a "tool of social control." In his illuminating book, "Healing the Soul Wound", he underscores the significant and often devastating loss of identity that *xamaevoʼėstane* (Native American) Peoples endured while attending these institutions. This profound theme resonates deeply within my *voʼėstaneme* (family's) history. The impact of this tragedy left an indelible mark on Betty's *ametanénestötse*

(life). Even in her later years, she tirelessly sought closure, hiring a private investigator in a quest for answers about the circumstances surrounding *heóvėstséávoʼoʼe* (Rose's) murder. Her fascination with crime shows mirrored a heightened awareness of the dangers lurking in the world, a reflection of her own harrowing *ametanénestȯtse* (life) experiences.

In the article "Preventing intergenerational trauma Transmission: A Critical Interpretive Synthesis" (Isobel et al. 2017), the authors explore the intricate dynamics between infants and their parents, introducing the concept of "relational trauma". This study offers a fresh lens through which to view intergenerational trauma, tracing its roots back three *amevoʼėstanéhevestȯtse* (generations) instead of the traditional seven. This shift highlights the urgent need for proactive intervention to prevent the insidious transmission of trauma. The authors assert that trauma can be passed down through *héneʼená*ed behaviors and entrenched patterns, presenting a striking contrast to my own observations.

I firmly believe that my *éškemeʼs* (grandma's) fears about the world around her shaped her into a strict parent *névάάhe* (who) sometimes exhibited a possessive nature, manifested through verbal abuse. Despite her often withdrawn demeanor, she harbored a profound longing to keep her children and *néxahéhasėstse* (grandchildren) close, finding solace in their presence. This intricate interplay of love and fear has crafted our *voʼėstaneme* (family's) narrative, of trauma and resilience that we continue to navigate together, forging ahead with courage and empathy.

> As residential schools cut off Native American students from their families, communities, and cultures, and as school staff interacted with students based on a model of control, punishment, and fear, in addition to personal traumas incurred many survivors experienced difficulties engaging in healthy relationships and healthy parenting with their own children. (Barker et al., 2019, 249)

In our *voʼėstaneme* (family), my *éškeme* often encapsulated her upbringing in her parenting style, reflecting on her experiences with the phrase, “This is how I was raised.” Like Duran states, for her, this mantra encompassed the painful experience of being torn from her *voʼėstaneme* (family). My *heške* navigated a complex landscape of inconsistent parenting, where my *éškeme* sometimes resorted to physical control as a means of protection while remaining emotionally distant, mirroring the stern nuns *névääheʼ* (who) played a significant role in her own upbringing.

While the study provides valuable insights, one of its limitations lies in its somewhat narrow exploration of intergenerational trauma, primarily due to a lack of thorough research on prior studies in this area. Growing up on the reservation and observing my family, it’s clear that the boarding school system has left a lasting impact. The mission of the boarding schools was to "kill the Indian to save the man." (Pratt, 1887) Many may not realize it, but the roots of their pain extend back more than seven generations. At least three generations of my maternal family attended boarding school and have concealed the fact that each of them experienced sexual abuse by the priests, nuns, or classmates they lived with. They were physically punished and humiliated by the nuns and priests in front of their peers, which can be psychologically damaging.

As a result, Indigenous peoples often struggle with self-dislike and animosity toward other tribes, leading to low self-esteem, self-doubt, self-harm, and tragically, suicide. This psychological trauma cultivates feelings of hate, racism, and a deep connection to the land that has been marred by these experiences.

Though epigenetics is briefly mentioned, there remains a scarcity of documented evidence on this multifaceted topic. The emphasis on mitigating risk factors is commendable, yet

we must confront the reality that implementing solutions can be extremely challenging, particularly in communities like reservations where issues such as poverty and unemployment loom large. It's crucial to acknowledge that while we strive for healing, we may not be able to eradicate all trauma. *Ametanénestötse* (life) is inherently unpredictable, and we cannot regard individuals merely as subjects within a clinical experiment.

Relationship To Cheyenne Culture

My *éškeme*, (grandma) Betty, was of the *Ȯh-mésėhéʼe* (Northern Cheyenne) culture. Growing up, she wasn't pressured to *héneʼená* the language or customs, as her parents spoke Cheyenne fluently. Being the youngest in her *voʼėstaneme* (family), the weight of *méseʼhomȯhtohe* (Cultural belief) responsibilities fell primarily on her older siblings, allowing her a different experience.

She often reminisced about her older sister, *heóvėstséávoʼoʼe* (Rose) Fisher, *névάáhe* (who) was groomed to be a medicine woman. In those stories, I could vividly imagine the lessons *heóvėstséávoʼoʼe* (Rose) received from revered medicine men and women, sharing knowledge about the healing properties of plants deeply rooted in Cheyenne traditions. *Heóvėstséávoʼoʼe* (Rose), though fluent in Cheyenne, was unable to write it down, embodying the oral traditions passed through *amevoʼėstanéhevestötse* (generations).

While my *éškeme* (grandma) identified as a part of our *méseʼhomȯhtohe* (Cultural belief) heritage, she didn't adhere strictly to traditional practices. She opted to observe the sundance ceremonies rather than participate, preferring to relish the atmosphere of pow wows instead of taking part in the dances herself. At home, the melodious sounds of the Cheyenne language were seldom heard; she never took the initiative to teach it to her *néxahéhasėstse* (grandchildren).

When we stumbled over our pronunciations, her silent shame hung in the air, but when we sought her guidance, she often chose silence.

In honoring our deceased relatives, my *éškeme* (grandma) participated in pow wow giveaways, a testament to her respect for those *névááhe* (who) came before us. However, I couldn't shake the feeling that she held a treasure trove of knowledge, perhaps more than she ever revealed. As I grew older, my curiosity deepened. The stories she shared during my childhood, were often simple oral tales, leaving me to wonder about their authenticity. She rarely delved into our *voʼėstaneme* (family) history, creating a mysterious veil around our lineage.

Betty cultivated an image of being steeped in traditional knowledge, yet when I pressed her for stories, she would claim familiarity but seldom share. This seemed to reflect a broader pattern among elders of her *amevoʼėstanéhevestȯtse* (generation)—an unspoken gatekeeping of *méseʼhomȯhtohe* (Cultural belief) knowledge. It leaves me pondering how much they truly *kmónahe* (new) and whether the lingering impact of *momóonémȧhéóʼo* (Boarding schools) on their *amevoʼėstanéhevestȯtse* (generation) contributed to a silence surrounding discussions about our culture and the Cheyenne language.

3. MY MOM LEE ANN

October 24, 1972 - April 4, 2021

My *heške*, (mother) Lee Ann, spent her formative years in the small town of Ashland, Montana, where the shadow of loss loomed large after her father succumbed to a heart attack during her childhood. Raised by my stern *éškeme*, (grandma) Betty, she navigated a strict upbringing that starkly contrasted with the more lenient experiences of her brothers. One particular incident at the mall stands out vividly, where Lee Ann asked permission to go look at clothes in a store, my *éškeme* (grandma) said yes. My *heške* (mother) was mortified when screamed at unprovoked. She had permission to go the store but was treated as if she did not. A moment that encapsulated the rigid expectations placed upon her.

At just 17, Lee Ann found herself pregnant with me, a life-altering reality that led her to make the incredibly difficult decision to place me for adoption at 18, largely due to the immense pressure exerted by my *éškeme* (grandma). Seeking a fresh start, she relocated to Oklahoma, where she welcomed my brother, Jordan, and leaned on *vo'ėstaneme* (family) support to help raise her four children. Lee Ann pursued her ambition of becoming an EMT with determination, passing her certification exam on her first attempt, alongside a critical driving test that showcased her skill—a remarkable achievement that allowed her to surpass colleagues *névááhe* (who) had been in the field for years. This caused envy and an uncomfortable work environment for her. My *vo'ėstaneme* (family) often spoke of her tireless work ethic and unwavering commitment.

However, tragedy struck when she was faced with a harrowing incident involving our cousin Matthew, *névááhe* (who) had been struck by a drunk driver. In the chaos of that *ené*

(night), he tragically succumbed to his injuries en route to the emergency room, leaving an indelible mark on my *hešk*e's psyche and plunging her into a struggle with her mental health.

The situation deteriorated further when my brother Jordan suffered severe burns during a fireworks accident that occurred under my *éškeme*'s (grandma's) watchful eye. Despite their time spent in the burn center, my *éškeme* made the drastic decision to take Jordan and me to live with her, unjustly contacting social services against our *hešk*e. The loss of custody of her *név* (four) children devastated Lee Ann, driving her into the depths of alcohol and *nétȧhévemóhtȧhestȯtse* (drugs) as she sought a way to cope with the overwhelming pain and loss.

> Prior research has found that RSS survivors experience a host of risks associated with diminished parental capacity including elevated rates of problematic alcohol and substance use, fetal alcohol syndrome, domestic violence, and poorer physical and mental health compared with those who did not attend a residential school. (Barker et al., 2019, 249)

My mom encountered a series of daunting challenges when she lost both her job and our home. During that difficult period, she struggled profoundly to advocate for herself, often feeling overwhelmed by the circumstances. As a result, her *ametanénestȯtse* (life) took on a nomadic quality, leading my sisters to stay in foster care while my brother found temporary refuge with our *éškeme* (grandma). I, too, had to adjust to this *mónahe* (new) reality, finding shelter wherever I could. Yet amidst the uncertainty and upheaval, we discovered a remarkable resilience within ourselves and an unwavering commitment to our *voʼėstaneme* (family) bonds. This experience stands as a powerful reminder of our inner strength and the ties that hold us together.

Relationship To Cheyenne Culture

My *hešk*e, (mother) Lee Ann, spent her formative elementary years at St. Labre, a place that holds a special significance in our *voʼėstaneme* (family's) history. While she didn't participate in powwows, the traditional Sundance ceremonies, or other *mése'homȯhtohe* (Cultural

belief) gatherings, her heart was deeply attuned to our heritage. Although she never became fluent in our language, she possessed a profound understanding of it and was able to translate its nuances with care. Her respect and appreciation for our culture were truly heartfelt, shining through even in her modest involvement in teaching or *héne'ená*ing. Lee Ann embodied a *he'k* (quiet) reverence for our traditions that continues to inspire our *vo'ëstaneme* (family) *éšeēva* (today).

4. ALISHA NICOLE FISHER

May 17, 1991

As a young girl, I often felt that fragments of my *ametanénestötse* (life) were shrouded in mystery. My *heške*'s (mother's) friends would greet her warmly and then turn to me with curious expressions, asking, "*néevá'eve* (who) is this?" She would respond proudly, "This is my eldest," but their puzzled reactions left me feeling like a ghost in my own story, as if I were a name they had never learned. During *vo'ėstaneme* (family) visits, I would hear relatives fondly recount tales of cradling me as a baby, their laughter echoing with nostalgia, and I couldn't help but feel a pang of frustration at the gaps in my own memory. It wasn't until I reached middle school that the truth unfurled before me: my *heške* (mother) had entrusted me to my Auntie Arlene and Uncle Larry at the hospital, where they had given me a name I would carry through *ametanénestötse* (life). My childhood was spent among the rolling hills and sunsets of the *Ȯhmésėhéʼe* (Northern Cheyenne) Reservation, in the small towns of Ashland and Lame Deer, Montana, shaping my identity amidst culture and community.

Understanding my *ametanénestötse* (life) traumas, I began to unravel the tapestry of my early years and uncovered a profound truth: I had been adopted by my Auntie Arlene and Uncle Larry when I was in the second grade. Their marriage had unraveled during my infancy, buried beneath the weight of their discord, and I found solace in the care of my Auntie Kim around the age of six months.

Auntie Kim, a resilient single *heške*, (mother) embraced the challenge of raising me, often leaving me in the attentive hands of our babysitter, Lavina Blackwolf. My biological *heške*, (mother) embarking on a *mónahe* (new) chapter in Oklahoma, was pregnant with my brother Jordan. One day, she failed to pick me up from Lavina's, an absence that stretched agonizingly

over *nés* (two) long weeks. In the midst of this confusion, the babysitters mistakenly believed I was Andrew's daughter, as he had dated my mom before my arrival into the world. I had crafted a tender bond with him, though I carried the weight of another father's existence—Preston Gardipee. Our paths crossed only a few times, and I wrestled with the desire to keep Preston a secret from Andrew, for it was Andrew *névᾱáhe* (who) held my heart.

Though I began visiting Preston, it was my time with my *éškeme*, (grandma) Emma Gardipee, that filled my spirit with joy. She was my steadfast anchor, her nurturing presence a constant source of love and support, always willing to lend an ear even when my choices were misguided. I hold a distinct memory of a day when she gently revealed that she would soon be leaving this earthly plane for heaven. Her warm assurances enveloped me, a comforting balm amid my confusion.

The next time I saw her, she lay in a stark hospital bed, a mask covering her once-happy face. It wasn't until my *hešhke* (mother) pulled me away, wanting to shield me from the sight, that I grasped the truth—Grandma Emma was in a coma. It was a devastating realization that deepened the ache within me. After she succumbed to cancer, our visits to Preston became infrequent. The air between us shifted, fraught with an unfamiliar discomfort, as I grappled with an unexplainable fear that clouded the warmth of our previous encounters.

Throughout my school years, my *ametanénestȯtse* (life) was a whirlwind of transitions, as I frequently moved between the homes of various *voʼëstaneme* (family) members. I rarely settled in one place for longer than six months to a year, a nomadic lifestyle that opened my eyes to the complexities of diverse *voʼëstaneme* (family) dynamics. Although I was fortunate to live with my adopted *voʼëstaneme* (family), I never had the luxury of my own bed; I always shared a bed with a *voʼëstaneme* (family) member or found myself curled up on the couch, trying to carve

out a small space in the midst of shifting relationships. These experiences became invaluable lessons on both healthy and dysfunctional *voʼëstaneme* (family) interactions, forcing me to adapt my behavior based on the unique blend of personalities and circumstances surrounding me.

For instance, at my aunt's house, I sensed an undercurrent of tension; she seemed reluctant to have me there, so I *héneʼená*ed to tiptoe around her, staying silent and compliant, a ghost in my own *voʼëstaneme* (family). My cousin, on the other hand, found my enthusiasm overwhelming and deemed me too bossy when we played. Then came the time with my *éškeme*, where I was met with conflicting expectations—I was prohibited from disturbing her peaceful routine, yet I was tasked with cleaning every day in a home that, while meticulously tidy, was often cluttered with odds and ends that didn't quite belong. In stark contrast, my *hešk*e's house was a whirlwind of chaos, where cleanliness was an afterthought. There, I assumed the mantle of responsibility for my younger siblings, often feeling the weight of the world on my shoulders. Despite my best efforts to bring order to our lives, I soon discovered I was the only one willing to put in the effort.

When I spent time at Aunt Arlene's house, it was a different scene altogether. Parties erupted into the *ené* (night), with laughter and music ringing through the air while I stood guard, watching over my younger siblings. I would lock the door to shield us from the chaos outside, desperate to maintain a semblance of peace as I watched the world awaken with the dawn. I can still vividly picture the school bus arriving at 7 AM, its engine humming, oblivious to my absence as it pulled away without me.

Growing up, it became evident that I was not a natural liar; I often kept my *ánȯse* (true) thoughts tucked away, hidden from the world. However, I developed an acute ability to read people, honing in on their subtle cues and discerning *névᾱáhe* (who) was being dishonest or

manipulative. I learned to observe from the sidelines, hesitant to engage fully until I felt assured of someone's character. This cautious approach was born out of a necessity to protect myself; I longed to identify those *névááhe* (who) were trustworthy amidst a backdrop of uncertainty.

To this day, I rely on that instinctual understanding of people, trusting my gut feeling to navigate relationships. I believe this sensitivity and awareness are tangled threads of my *hóxovéstavaohe* (journey) to heal from intergenerational trauma. To foster my own well-being, I had to take a step back, distancing myself from my *vo'ėstaneme* (family), even though my love for them remains deep-rooted. I refused to be swept into the destructive cycles that permeated our *vo'ėstaneme* (family) interactions—cycles marked by unspoken issues, gossip, and stories that only served to misrepresent one another. Boundaries were non-existent; one *vo'ėstaneme* (family) member might label another as an alcoholic or a thief, and soon the entire *vo'ėstaneme* (family) would rally against that individual. *hénaa'e* (what) had started as light-hearted teasing evolved into a barrage of backhanded comments that lost their playful essence, morphing into barbed words that cut deeper than anyone dared to admit.

My school *ametanénestȯtse* (life) unfolded within a steady rhythm, though the backdrop often shifted as I found myself staying with *vo'ėstaneme* (family) friends. My *éškeme*, (grandma) a formidable presence *névááhe* (who) raised me, instilled a strict sense of discipline that governed our household. When misfortune struck, there was little room for explanations. I recall a particularly vivid incident when I missed the bus home. My best friend Shalane, ever the kind soul, graciously offered me a ride. But upon my arrival, my *éškeme* (grandma) and uncle met me with their disapproving glares. Despite my fervent attempts to explain, I faced the inevitable consequence of being grounded for a week.

In matters of discipline, my *éškeme* (grandma) and uncle formed an unyielding alliance that often felt excessively stern. After I finished my chores, I would nervously await my uncle's return, knowing he might add to my burdens. I still remember the grueling *ené* (night) I spent mowing the lawn in relentless rain, working tirelessly from 3 PM until 2 AM—an experience that truly tested the limits of my determination and resilience.

When I made the pivotal decision to attend college at MSU Bozeman, my *éškeme*'s reaction was nothing short of tumultuous. The fear of losing my support gripped her, leading to anxious words about my siblings potentially being placed in social services. Balancing my aspirations for education with my desire to keep my siblings safe and close became a delicate tightrope I had to walk.

After completing my studies, *ametanénestȯtse* (life) ushered me into adulthood with unexpected twists, including an unplanned pregnancy that brought me back to my childhood home. It was during this tumultuous time that I grappled with long-held frustrations toward my parents, particularly my *heške*. Her presence in my *ametanénestȯtse* (life) had been inconsistent, a bittersweet memory. Once, we had shared an unbreakable bond, but her struggles with addiction and the chaos of her *ametanénestȯtse* (life) cast heavy shadows over our relationship, especially as I juggled the demands of school and parenthood.

One day, in a candid conversation with my Grandma Betty, I laid bare my feelings of frustration and confusion. With a deep empathy, she revealed the dark chapters of my *hešķe's* (mother's) past—stories filled with unimaginable trauma. My *heške*, (mother) Lee Ann, had faced heart-wrenching events during her youth, including an assault and the painful decision to relinquish a child for adoption—me.

This devastating revelation offered a glimpse into the disconnection I had often felt with my *voʼėstaneme* (family), helping to explain why many viewed me as distant from my *hešketa* (mother). A rush of emotions surged through me: hurt and isolation intertwined as I contemplated the countless hours I had spent at home, while my peers reveled in their freedom. In shock, I reached out to my *hešketa* to corroborate Grandma's account.

To my profound relief, my *hešketa* (mother) confirmed the truth in Grandma's words. In that vulnerable moment, I expressed my sorrow for her suffering and questioned why she allowed me to be around my father. Her perspective was illuminating; she spoke of forgiveness, sharing that she believed it crucial for me to know him since he longed to be part of my *ametanénestótse* (life). A wave of anger swelled within me as I grappled with her capacity to forgive. Her response struck deep: "I forgave him because if that hadn't happened, I wouldn't have had you."

That poignant statement has lingered in my heart, blending love with a profound ache for *hénaaʼe* (what) my mom endured. It has taken me many years to piece together the intricate tapestry of my *ametanénestótse* (life). Ultimately, I continue to find strength not only in my past but also in the promise of my future.

She loved me enough to keep me,
When I am a walking and talking reminder of
A crime.

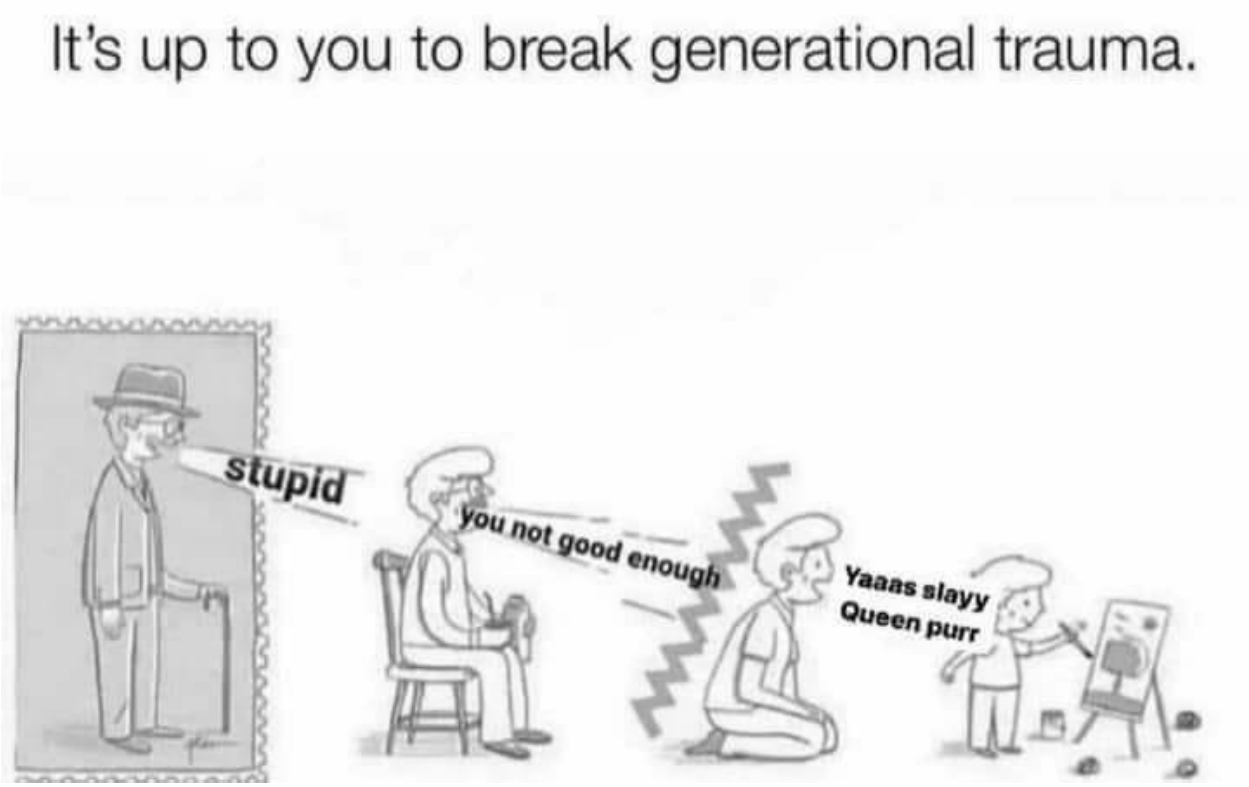

Figure 2 Breaking generational trauma

When violence happens, where it could have been avoided; it always amazes me and shocks me. I was born into this world because of violence. It has a funny way of following me throughout my *ametanénestótse* (life).

Exploring the intricate connection between intergenerational trauma and epigenetics unveils the profound impact that our *ametanénestȯtse* (life) experiences wield over the expression of our genes. It's both unsettling and fascinating to realize how physical and emotional stress can reshape our genetic landscape, potentially influencing not only our own lives but also those of future *amevoʼëstanéhevestȯtse* (generations). For instance, my *heške* (mother) endured a harrowing assault by my father, an experience that submerged her in a maelstrom of emotions—fear, unease, and caution—that continues to reverberate through my own feelings towards him to this day. The aftermath of that trauma plunged my *heške* into a battle with PTSD during her pregnancy, leading her into a world of isolation and an overwhelming sense of shame.

Despite the shadows of our past, I hold immense gratitude for my *voʼëstaneme* (family) and the steadfast support of the *Ȯh-mésėhéʼe* (Northern Cheyenne) community that has enveloped me throughout my *ametanénestȯtse* (life). The resentment I once clung to in relation to my heške has transformed into a deep well of respect and understanding. As I learned more about her painful experiences, particularly her courageous decision to carry me despite the trauma she faced, my perspective underwent a profound shift. It forced me to confront how misguided my earlier judgments had been.

This revelation ignited a deep curiosity within me about the effects of generational trauma that ripple through my *éškeme* (grandma), my *heške* (mother), myself, and inevitably, my children. I often find myself pondering the origins of the persistent feelings of doom that seem to shadow my existence.

Sharing my *hóxovéstavaohe* (journey) has become something I never envisioned doing, yet it feels essential. During my time at MSU, I discovered I was pregnant with my first

daughter, compelling me to return to Crow Agency to raise her alongside her father. However, the joy of this *mónahe* (new) chapter quickly became overshadowed by darkness. At seven months pregnant, I faced his aggression for the first time—a terrifying encounter born from his intoxication. Though he later claimed to have no memory of the incident, it marked the beginning of a relentless cycle of fear. Despite my desperate attempts to escape, his threats hung heavily over me, chillingly declaring that he would take the children away.

One particularly harrowing *ené* (night) escalated perilously; he cornered me in a cramped room, and just when the tension reached its peak, my daughter Emma walked in and was pushed down, injuring herself in a moment of chaos. In that desperate moment, I cried out for my roommate, Chris, *névááhe* (who) rushed to my aid, becoming a pillar of support amid the turmoil. I opened up to him about the relentless struggles I faced, and he compassionately documented the bruises I bore as evidence of the violence.

This tumultuous experience has deepened my understanding of resilience and highlighted the essential need for seeking help. I aspire to continue this *hóxovéstavaohe* (journey) of healing—not merely for myself but for all the *amevoʼëstanéhevestótse* (generations) that will follow.

After having a heartfelt conversation with my ex's *heške*, her concerns about the potential risks to the children weighed heavily on my heart. As she spoke, her words resonated deeply within me, illuminating the urgent need to document every detail and ensure the safety of the kids—especially during those tense, unpredictable moments. To provide them with a sense of security, I even began sleeping in their room, a silent guardian in the *ené* (night).

During this tumultuous time, I was fortunate to receive unwavering support from his cousin, Feather. Her encouragement pushed me to muster the courage needed to take a brave step

toward freedom. The defining moment arrived when I witnessed him erupting in a fit of rage, yelling at the kids and coming dangerously close to harming Ronnie. It was then that I found my voice and declared, "It's over." I stood firm, making it clear that while he could take his belongings, the children would remain with me. In response, he threatened me, insisting that I would need to go to extreme lengths for us to separate. Yet, ultimately, it was on my birthday—an occasion meant for celebration—that he stormed out following a heated argument. Those final days were filled with a mix of fear and adrenaline, but they also paved the way for me to reclaim my voice and assert my independence.

I confronted him directly, asking, "*hénaaʼe* (what) did I do that warranted such treatment?" His response, "You didn't do anything," laid bare the injustice of our situation. After he left, I hurried to pick up my kids from school, my heart racing, and sought refuge at my best friend's home, a temporary safe haven until it was truly safe to return to our house.

Upon my eventual return, the sight that greeted me was heartbreaking: the house was in disarray, and many of my beloved paintings—fragments of my spirit—were gone. Overwhelmed by emotion, I broke down in tears, each sob a release of pent-up frustration and sorrow. On *hénaaʼe* (what) was supposed to be a day of joy, my birthday, I felt a bittersweet mix of guilt and relief wash over me—my marriage had come to a definitive end. Though my Catholic beliefs regarding divorce weighed heavily on my conscience, I recognized that my love for him had dulled over time. It was finally time to embrace a *mónahe* (new) beginning, to seek a future filled with hope and possibility.

Relationship To Cheyenne Culture

Hénaaʼe (what) truly sets me apart is the profound and transformative *hóxovéstavaohe* (journey) I experienced while growing up at St. Labre Indian Catholic *momóonémähéóʼo*

(Boarding school) Academy in Ashland, Montana. This distinctive chapter of my *ametanénestötse* (life) not only shaped my identity but also instilled in me a deep appreciation for culture and community. Unlike many *névääheʼ* (who) faced significant challenges in similar institutions, my time at St. Labre was overwhelmingly positive. I often found myself absorbed in the heartrending stories shared by those *névääheʼ* (who) attended before me—tales that captured the stark realities of a school that has undergone significant changes over the decades. While some of these narratives haunted my thoughts, they sparked a curiosity that deepened my gratitude for my own experience.

St. Labre provided a nurturing and stable environment that I cherished as my *ánöse* (true) home. The teachers and advisors became my extended *voʼëstaneme* (family), their guidance nurturing my growth and development. Our education there was rich, with a strong emphasis on church and theology, yet we also enjoyed the freedom to explore and celebrate our *méseʼhomöhtohe* (Cultural belief) heritage. I vividly remember the joyous moments when we brought our drums to church, our hearts swelling with pride as we donned our elaborate regalia. Instead of Spanish, we *héneʼená*ed to converse in the Cheyenne and Crow languages, and our curriculum expanded beyond the familiar boundaries to encompass the traditions of many *manähestötse* (tribes), offering a tapestry of knowledge and connection. Yet, amidst this wealth of *héneʼená*ing, I often felt a tinge of regret that we did not venture further into our own history—a missed opportunity to deepen our understanding of *névääheʼ* (who) we are.

Nonetheless, I gained practical skills that resonate deeply within me, from the meticulous art of scraping hides to the traditional techniques of hunting buffalo, skinning it, and preserving meat. My grasp of the Crow and Cheyenne languages is still growing as I seek to build my

confidence in teaching, yearning for more practical applications in everyday *ametanénestötse* (life).

The *xamaevoʼëstane* (Native American) Studies program at Montana State University has opened up *mónahe* (new) horizons for me, significantly expanding my knowledge of tribal history across Montana. I take immense pride in sharing these insights with others, illuminating the remarkable historical events that have shaped our communities. My active role in my *manähestötse* (tribe's) youth programs has provided me with invaluable lessons, connecting me to important events like the Sand Creek Massacre and the Fort Robinson outbreak—tragedies that echo through my *voʼëstaneme* (family's) history.

One of my most indelible experiences occurred at Fort Robinson, where I participated in a reenactment of the breakout as part of an immersive *héneʼená*ing exercise. The emotional weight of that moment was profound. As a bitter chill enveloped us and darkness fell, I felt an overwhelming wave of fear and urgency. We lined up by the door—elders and children first, followed closely by women, and then men. When that door swung open, we had mere seconds to react before the alarm blared, sending us racing around the cabin *név* (four) frantic times before we dashed back to our group van, the echoes of simulated gunfire ringing in our ears. The heartbreak of that experience struck me with an intensity I had never known, especially now as I reflect on my own *hóxovéstavaohe* (journey) as a parent. The mere thought of running into the frigid *ené* (night) under such dire circumstances is almost too much to bear.

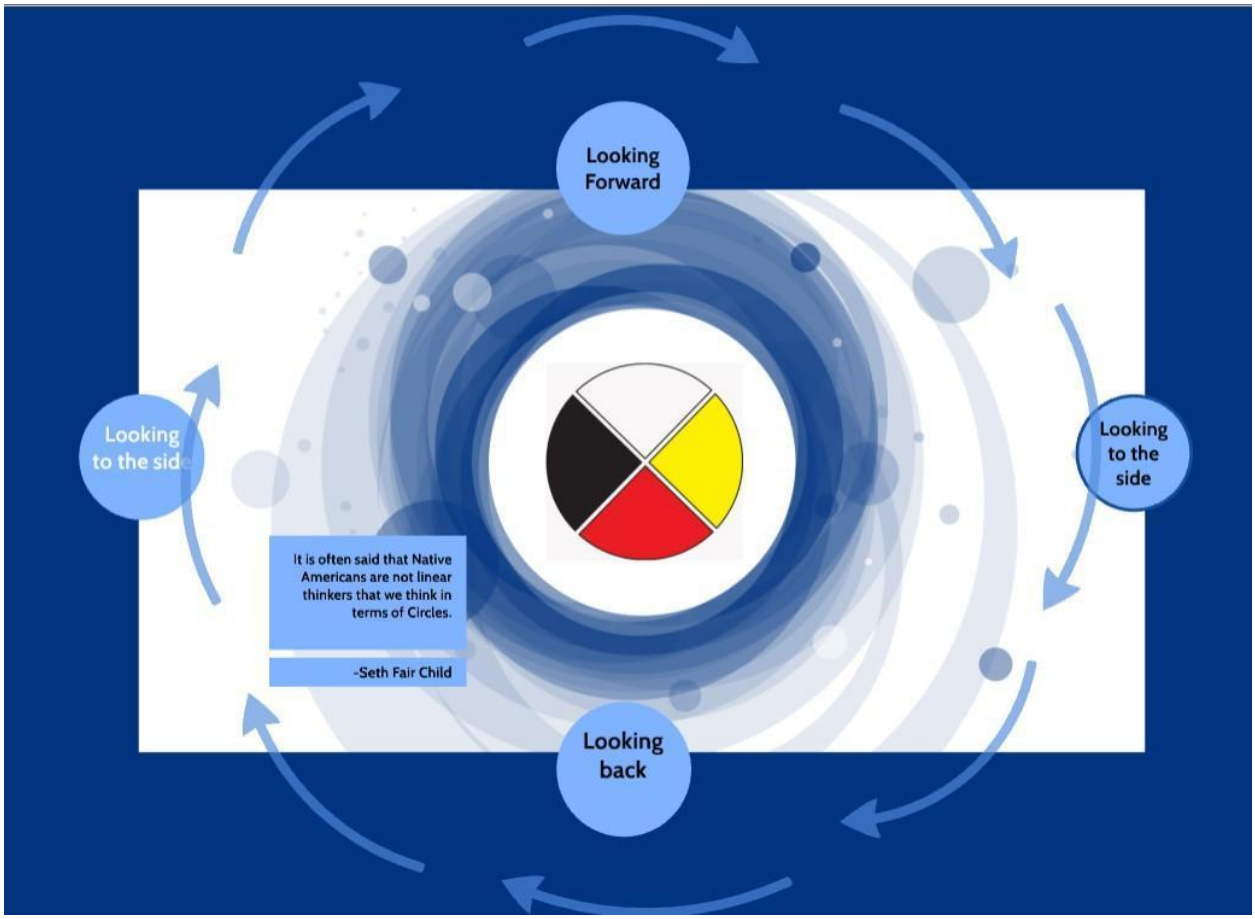

Figure 3 Medicine Wheel life cycle

Me'eooe Hataveseve'hame, a respected member of the Northern *Tsėhéstáno* (Cheyenne people), enriched my understanding of our *mése'homóhtohe* (Cultural belief) colors with insights steeped in tradition and meaning. She emphasized that for the *Tsitsistas*, *név* (four) colors hold profound significance, each reflecting the sacred number *név* (four). Among these colors, *So'tao'o* stands out as a unique emblem of our identity and heritage. In contrast, five colors represent the five crucial stages of *ametanénestötse* (life): infancy, adolescence, adulthood, elderhood, and the transition into the spiritual realm—where blue elegantly symbolizes the Creator of the universe.

This perspective resonates deeply with my own appreciation of Cheyenne practices. Within the sacred space of the sweat lodge, we embrace the tradition of moving left, in a circle as a practice rich with spiritual significance to the medicine wheel. The *onéstȧhkeoxaʼóhe* (medicine wheel), a powerful symbol of our interconnectedness, embodies the belief that all elements of *ametanénestȯtse* (life) exist within a harmonious circle, where each aspect holds equal importance. Each color within this sacred circle plays a pivotal role: white embodies the promise of *mónahe* (new) beginnings, yellow radiates the vibrancy of youth, red signifies the strength and vitality of adulthood, and black represents the wisdom of our elders, marking the completion of *ametanénestȯtse* (life's) *hóxovéstavaohe* (journey).

While various *manȧhestȯtse* (tribes) may interpret the *onéstȧhkeoxaʼóhe* (medicine wheel) through their unique lenses, I hold these teachings dear to my heart. They serve as constant reminders of the cycles of *ametanénestȯtse* (life) and the continuity we experience along our paths. Embracing this holistic worldview not only enhances our understanding but also deepens our appreciation of *ametanénestȯtse* (life's) *hóxovéstavaohe* (journey).

5. MY CHILDREN

I noticed a palpable calmness in the room after my ex-*éhamá* (husband), Steward, left, a tranquility that contrasted sharply with the tension that had filled it moments before. Emma, in her usual lively spirit, accidentally knocked a plate off the table. As it shattered on the floor, her wide eyes filled with panic, and she cried out, "I'm sorry! I'm sorry!" In an instant, tears cascaded down her cheeks, and I rushed to her side, offering comfort. "Emma, it's okay," I assured her gently, kneeling down to her level. "It's just a plate." I showed her how to carefully clean up the pieces, emphasizing that the plate's value paled in comparison to her feelings; I had never been fond of that plate anyway.

In that moment, it became strikingly clear to me how Steward had already left his mark on the children, a shadow that darkened their spirits. If he had been present when Emma broke something, his reaction would have been a roar of anger, filled with threats that would leave her trembling, terrified as if she were about to face a storm. My *nés* (two) eldest children, both on the autism spectrum, are particularly sensitive; they feel the weight of loud noises, aggressive gestures, and even the faintest hints of conflict in their environment acutely, their nerves frayed by such experiences.

I always thought epigenetics got passed from Steward to the kids. Steward's psychological trauma heightened his genes to respond with rage when small annoyances happed. Can that be passed down and reflected in my children's responses to yelling and aggression. Their senses highlighted to "survival mode" during these outrage episodes? I am not saying trauma can cause autism but suggesting, that our genes may be getting heightened to respond with stressors in our environment. My *voʼëstaneme* (family) has a history of depression and disconnection, nursed with alcohol and *nétähévemóhtähestötse* (drugs) but not violence.

Steward's *vo'ėstaneme* (family) history, has a history of criminal activity and violence. Can our unhealed past among our grandparents already destroy our children's psyche? Intergenerational trauma often echoes through the halls of a *vo'ėstaneme* (family), with painful experiences reverberating from parent to child, and even from grandparent to grandchild. Each successive *amevo'ėstanéhevestȯtse* (generation) bears the burden of the trauma, often rooted in catastrophic events unique to that *vo'ėstaneme* (family) history (Berube, 2015). Reflecting on my own children, I feel the sting of their direct trauma—trauma that stems from my first marriage, where I regretfully failed to shield them from the harsh realities imposed by their father.

My ex-*éhamá* (husband's) *vo'ėstaneme* (family) had been ensnared in a historical web of violence, where minor disputes were settled not with words, but with fists. His *heške*, (mother) Paula, suffered in silence, enduring the abuse to protect her children from the shadow of a step-*heške névááhe* (who) might not embrace them. This cycle of fear and pain twisted through her upbringing and spiraled down to my children, *névááhe* (who) now feel the impacts of that generational trauma. Their cold demeanor manifests as indifference, treating them as if they were less deserving of love and acceptance.

After six relentless years of emotional turmoil, I find myself still navigating the path to healing, striving to mend the deep wounds of the past. Yet my children, now growing older and more perceptive, are beginning to *hetóeotse* (understand) the roots of their pain. They are engaging in their own *hóxovéstavaohe* (journeys) of healing, bravely practicing coping skills and grappling with the emotional legacies that lie behind them. They have chosen to have separate lives from their father they do not *hetóeotse* (understand) why he complains about wanting to see them and yet never make the effort to have meaningful relationships with them.

Relationship To Cheyenne Culture

My children desire to *héneʼená* (learn) the Cheyenne language and they know almost nothing about the history. I had a dream my children and I were arguing in Cheyenne language I laughed with happiness waking up. I knew *hénaaʼe* (what) I was saying. I actually spoke fluent Cheyenne. I told my kids and they wished to *héneʼená* on the spot. I wish I knew more, I only speak a little.

> Listen, baby, it makes me happy you want to know, but learning about your heritage is a privilege. A privilege we don't have. And anyway, anything you hear from me about your heritage does not make you more or less Indian. More or less a real Indian. Don't ever let anyone tell you what Indian means. Too many of us died to get just a little of us here, right now, in this kitchen. You, me. Every part of our people that made it is precious. You're Indian because you're Indian because you're Indian. (Orange, 2018)

Although my children didn't grow up on the reservation, their visits have sparked a vibrant curiosity about their heritage. My youngest daughter, in particular, is brimming with eagerness to uncover her identity. She often approaches me with a gleam of excitement in her eyes, asking how to speak our language, much like I once did with my beloved grandma. The thought of teaching her the basics fills me with joy—simple words for pepper, dog, and the everyday emotions we all experience, like joyfully proclaiming, "I'm feeling really well!"

While it can be a bit challenging to immerse them fully in our rich culture from a distance, they do possess a deep understanding of how to pray and express their spirituality, which warms my heart. They are also enthusiastic about learning to dance, a cherished part of our traditions that I've always dreamed of sharing with them. I'm thrilled to discover creative ways to intertwine *mése'homȯhtohe* (Cultural belief) lessons with joyful experiences, allowing them to forge a profound connection to their roots. Together, we are embarking on a beautiful *hóxovéstavaohe* (journey) of discovery, celebrating and nurturing an appreciation for our time-honored traditions that bind us together.

6. PATTERNS

Winston Churchill once remarked, "Those *névάάhe* (who) fail to *héne'ená* from history are doomed to repeat it." As I embarked on writing this paper, the profound influence of my *éškeme*'s wisdom guided my exploration of my *vo'ėstaneme* (family's) past. By delving into the lives of my great-*éškeme*, *éškeme*, and *heške*, I unearthed their struggles and joys, allowing me to perceive them through a *mónahe* (new), more nuanced lens. The psychological traumas they faced dramatically altered their paths, yet they rarely took the necessary time to heal. In recounting my maternal lineage's narrative, I couldn't help but reflect on the patterns that seem to echo through *amevo'ėstanéhevestȯtse* (generations).

Russell Means poignantly expressed, "We have adapted ourselves in less than a *amevo'ėstanéhevestȯtse* (generation) to become 'civilized' so we may keep our land and our people, only to be faced with conflicting guidelines we have to follow. We had to live through *momóonémȧhéóʼo* (Boarding schools)—*'naʼh* (kill) the Indian, save the man'—only to be told at the same time by the federal government that we can only keep our reservations if we still practice our *'mése'homȯhtohe* (Cultural belief) way' of *ametanénestȯtse* (life)." This sentiment echoed through the histories of the women in my *vo'ėstaneme* (family).

For *amevo'ėstanéhevestȯtse* (generations), my maternal lineage has existed in a state of survival. My great-great-*éškeme* Mildred attended a solemn *momóonémȧhéóʼo* (Boarding school) in Montana; my great-*éškeme* Mary found herself in a similar institution in Busby, MT; and my *éškeme* was shaped by her experiences at a *momóonémȧhéóʼo* (Boarding school) in Ashland, MT. Three *amevo'ėstanéhevestȯtse* (generations) of women imparted knowledge through the rigid teachings of nuns, devoid of the nurturing embrace of healing. Each woman, grappling with her own past, bore children between the ages of 16 and 19, embarking on the *hóxovéstavaohe*

(journey) of *heške*hood as teenagers, cloaked in the naivete of youth. None of us took the time to heal from the wounds of our childhood traumas before stepping into the demanding role of parenthood, perpetually navigating *ametanénestȯtse* (life's) unpredictable terrain as *mónahe* (new) *heške*s while striving to fulfill our educational aspirations.

In examining our diverse parenting styles, I've observed stark contrasts among the women in my *voʼėstaneme* (family). My *éškeme* Betty adopted an excessively strict, at times emotionally abusive demeanor, wielding control over her children with an iron fist. In contrast, my *heške*, Lee Ann, embodies a more disconnected approach, often struggling to connect with her children emotionally and display empathy. From my own experiences intertwined with abandonment issues rooted in *voʼėstaneme* (family) dynamics, I carry emotional scars that echo through our *voʼėstaneme* (family) tree. While I strive to be an attentive and engaged parent, I often find myself locked in a struggle against mental absence, leaving my children's academic needs unmet. Despite my physical presence, I sometimes falter in establishing meaningful connections, reminiscent of the painful cycles that bind us—a testament to the *amevoʼėstanéhevestȯtse* (generations) of hearts yearning for healing and understanding amidst the chaos of *ametanénestȯtse* (life). My children, mostly desire their own space.

7. CONCLUSION

Acknowledging past traumas is a crucial step toward crafting a genuine apology and is essential for personal healing. Embracing this *hóxovéstavaohe* (journey) empowers individuals to cultivate healthier behaviors that can profoundly impact future *amevoʼëstanéhevestötse* (generations), setting off a beautiful cycle of healing instead of continuing the cycle of trauma. In his insightful book “Healing the Soul Wound,” Eduardo Duran shares a powerful *xamaevoʼëstane* (Native American) perspective on intergenerational trauma, introducing the thought-provoking concept of “injury, where blood does not flow,” which powerfully illustrates the lasting effects of trauma.

Duran reveals the deep impacts of intergenerational trauma that manifest in troubling statistics of alcoholism, suicide, and *voʼëstaneme* (family) challenges. He shares valuable insights for therapists working with *xamaevoʼëstane* (Native American) clients, emphasizing the guardedness that can stem from the heavy legacy of settler colonialism. Duran wonderfully advocates for weaving traditional healing tools—like sage and sweetgrass—into therapeutic practices to create spaces that resonate with *méseʼhomȯhtohe* (Cultural belief) significance.

When working with individuals facing alcoholism, Duran encourages a brave approach—bringing their drink into sessions to open up real conversations about their relationship with it. He makes an impactful point that intergenerational trauma can extend over *név* (four)teen *amevoʼëstanéhevestötse* (generations), emphasizing our shared responsibility to heal for the benefit of those to come. Duran passionately highlights the role of dreams and traditional practices in healing, urging a decolonization of *xamaevoʼëstane* (Native American) mindsets to confront pain and forge vital relationships.

Navigating these complexities is all about reconnecting with our *mése'homȯhtohe* (Cultural belief) heritage, participating in ceremonies, and honoring our tribal narratives. This revitalization helps many heal from their experiences in residential schools and reconnect with the richness of their *mése'homȯhtohe* (Cultural belief) roots. Engaging with elders can be transformational and serves as a *ánȯse* (true) source of healing wisdom.

Our *hóxovéstavaohe* (journey) as Native individuals is deeply intertwined with the pursuit of mentorship and the sharing of traditional knowledge. By maintaining an openness to *héne'enái*ng and listening, we can grow and deepen our understanding of our identities through the cherished rituals and bonds of our community. By emphasizing the importance of *xamaevo'ėstane* (Native American) history alongside other critical narratives, we can foster deeper connections and appreciation of our shared histories. Ultimately, by honoring the healer within us and embracing all our experiences, we can pave the way for an even more compassionate and healing future. Together, we have the power to cultivate a resilient community that honors its heritage while boldly looking ahead to a brighter *mȧhvóonā'o* (tomorrow).

Háoenahtȯtse (prayer) can be powerful for my people. We pray in the mornings, before significant events, about big decisions, and when we do not know *hénaa'e* (what) to do. Larry Hotóama'hēō'o (Medicine Bull) a *Ȯh-mésėhé'e* (Northern Cheyenne) Chief, taught me what's called *nésemanoo'ȯtse* (spirit calling song) What it means is that if you have *név* (four) *mȧhta'sóoma*'s, and if you visit a place that has meaning to you. One of your *mȧhta'sóoma*'s could stay there until it's called back. He taught us to call back our *mȧhta'sóoma*'s by lighting a *he'pohtȯtse* (cigarette), calling your name 4 times in each direction and leaving a fresh

he'pohtòtse (cigarette) where you called it back. This is a self healing practice that will bring your spirits back and make you a whole person again, and should be practiced more.

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