Elder Mental Health & Wellbeing
at the St. Croix Indian Reservation

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St. Croix

The Reservation:
- 1,054 registered tribal members
- >2,000 acres spread across 5 counties in WI and MN
- Employs 2,500 people (gaming, lodging, agriculture, health)

St. Croix Tribal Health Clinic (SCTHC):
- Medical
- Behavioral Health & AODA
- Dental
- Pharmacy
- Optical
- Community Health
- Diabetes/Healthy Heart

Daily Activities
- Elder home visits with Community Health Nursing staff
  Medication management
  Diabetic foot checks
  Blood pressure checks
- Participated in AODA counseling sessions with patients
- Joined clinic events, like the Diabetes Support Group
- Created educational posters:
  Diabetes and Dental Care

Outcomes & Impacts

Example: Grief vs. Depression Pamphlet
Educational materials will be distributed at SCTHC and health fairs by nursing and AODA staff
- Information is tailored to the community and its needs
- Medium works well for a population with limited internet, phone, and car access.
- Tribal clinic staff does not have the staff or time available for the creation of educational materials, making this a project well suited for volunteers/interns.

Lessons Learned:
- Important to understand a community before attempting to serve it. You must connect with individuals rooted in the community.
- Gained knowledge about Native American culture and history, particularly specific to the St. Croix Chippewa tribe
- Pamphlet writing skills: brevity and accessibility

My Project

- Collaboration with the St. Croix Tribal Health Clinic
- Spend every Wed. at Clinic during PCC rotation
- Creation of educational materials tailored for the tribal elders
  - Dementia
  - Grief vs. depression
  - Mental Health Crisis hotline pamphlet
- Gain cultural competency
- Shadow and meet with clinic health professionals to better understand their needs.

Gaining Cultural Competency
- Met with Russell FourEagles, local Oneida medicine man who utilizes herbal remedies for treating conditions like cancer and Lyme disease.
  - Loose leaf tobacco we gave to Russell FourEagles as it’s a traditional gift given to elders.
- Learned about Intergenerational trauma via SCTHC staff and videos/materials on whitebison.org
- Learned about the “Well-briety” movement – a grass roots sobriety program specific for Native Americans
- Followed St. Croix Facebook page and other social media

Resources & References
* National Resource Center on Native American Aging [http://nrcnaa.org/]
* Native American Council on Aging [http://naco.org/]
* Wisconsin Alzheimer Institute (WAI) [http://www.wai.wisc.edu]
* Alzheimer’s Disease Education and Referral Center [http://www.alz.org]
* American Indian Health: Elder’s Health [http://www.nia.nih.gov/alzheimers]

Miigwetch!

- Caitlin Rublee, B.S., MS3
- Sarah Cormell, Health Director of St Croix Tribal Health Clinic
- Laurel Stusek, Healthy Heart Project Director & RN
- Bob Kovar, Health Educator with Marshfield Clinic
- Shelley Hammes, Clinical Supervisor/Counselor
- Susan Merchant, Dental Hygienist
- Julie Steiner, Community Health RN
- Pam Nichols, Certified Diabetes Educator, RN
- Stephen Holthaus, MD and Lori Remeika, MD - WARM
- Darcy Vanden Elzen, Healthy Lifestyles Program Manager with Marshfield Clinic