

ISDOH Training: Indigenous Social Determinants of Health

Module III



SEVEN DIRECTIONS
A CENTER FOR INDIGENOUS PUBLIC HEALTH
UNIVERSITY of WASHINGTON



National Network
of Public Health Institutes™



Purpose and Learning Objectives

This module supports the defining and applying Indigenous Social Determinants of Health (ISDOH) to public health and health-related work. The activities provide attendees with an opportunity to identify and describe ISDOH in their own community.

Learning Objectives:

At the end of this module, attendees will be able to:

- Define the term Indigenous Social Determinants of Health (ISDOH)
- Connect the ISDOH factors with specific American Indian and Alaska Native communities
- Recognize that an ISDOH framework can address unique cultural and contextual needs and present their effect on health and wellness for American Indian and Alaska Native communities.
- Describe how to use an ISDOH framework to conduct assessment, develop programs, and advocate for policies (tribal, county, state, federal).

What are Indigenous Social Determinants of Health?

***"Indigenous Social Determinants of Health are the conditions specific and unique to Indigenous communities that impact health and well-being."
(Carroll et al., 2022)***

Indigenous Social Determinants of Health are holistic, interconnected, and community centered. Several characteristics of our communities can inform our definitions of Indigenous Social Determinants of Health:

1. What is the community context? What are the historical and contemporary events that affect our health?
2. What aspects of our respective cultures inform our health and the health of our community?
3. Tribal sovereignty offers an important tool to address public health issues. What role does it play in informing our community's health?

There are 576 American Indian and Alaska Native Nations, Tribes, Pueblos, and Villages recognized in the U.S. Each Native nation has its own history, culture, traditions, kinship, lands, and relationship to them. Major domains of Indigenous social determinants of health include Indigenous Knowledge, Language & Identity, Land & Kinships, and Sovereignty & Governance.

Indigenous Knowledge

Indigenous Knowledge varies by region and culture.

Indigenous Knowledge could include:

- Ways to process, understand, teach, and take collective action for various causes and policies (Gone, 2019).
- Ways to be in community, including, but not limited to, benefiting from prayer, mutual aid, togetherness, cultural connectedness, and other shared experiences that support wellness (Straits, 2020).



Language and Identity

Language and identity vary across regions and cultures.

Language and identity could include:

- Speaking Indigenous languages with other speakers, passing on and practicing cultural teachings, engaging in practices that support collective identity (Gonzalez et al., 2021).
- Revitalizing and growing Indigenous language use; reclaiming traditional knowledge, beliefs, and practices; finding ways to support community in maintaining and growing cultural connection opportunities (Jacob et al., 2019).



Land and Kinship

Understandings of land and kinship differ across tribal communities. Constructs of land and kinship could include:

- Connection to the geography of a people and to one another (Greenwood & Lindsay, 2019).
- Recognizing and reaffirming Indigenous peoples are rooted in traditional understandings of specific places, be it land-, water-, or ice-based locations (Walters et al., 2020).
- Traditional stories, Indigenous language names for locations and landmarks, and traditional ways of being with and respecting the land and environment (Hodge et al., 2022).



Sovereignty

Tribal sovereignty may be expressed differently across tribal communities. It may include:

- Sovereign rights of tribal governments to ensure healing, health, welfare, and safety of their people and ancestral lands (Mays, 2022).
- Governance practices, both current and traditional, that support wellness for individuals, families, communities, and the environment around us (Rasmus et al., 2020).



Applying Indigenous Social Determinants to Community Health

- American Indian and Alaska Native communities have been in contact with Europeans for over 500 years.
- The forces of colonization have had an indelible impact on Native populations, cultures, languages, and access to traditional lands and resources.
- Our Indigenous understandings, practices, and beliefs have been retained through hard fought efforts to maintain languages, preserve cultural and community connections, sustain relationships and supports, and protect and sustain our connections to our lands and other living beings that are part of our shared environments.



Explore and Apply Indigenous Social Determinants

Discuss the following questions:

- How would you describe/define these ISDOH?
- How are these domains operating in your tribal community?
- What trends do you see? What stands out?
- What issues can be addressed by your team or program?
- What strategies can be used to improve one ISDOH within your/a tribal community? How could you measure the impact of this improvement?



Refer to Module III, Part 1 worksheet

ISDOH Constructs

Indigenous Knowledge

Language and Identity

Land and Kinship

Sovereignty

Structural and Systemic Factors

Activity: Think, Pair, Share

ISDOH Constructs

Indigenous Knowledge

Language and Identity

Land and Kinship

Sovereignty

Structural and Systemic Factors



Instructions:

- With your team, **draw a map or diagram** of the ISDOH important in your community.
- Use the ISDOH constructs as a guide for your discussion and mapping process.
- Consider if there are additional ISDOH that need to be included in your map.



Refer to Module III
worksheet for
additional activities

Post-Module Reflection

- What were your thoughts having gone through the ISDOH Mapping exercise?
- How has your perspective shifted **AFTER** this module, if at all?
- How will you apply this information to your current work?
- Can you identify some things you will do differently after participating in this module?

Summary

Module III provided background and definitions of Indigenous social determinants of health as described in peer-reviewed literature and *Our Stories, Our Journeys*.

These ISDOH constructs provide ways to identify them in community contexts.

This module also supported important discussions about ISDOH and their impact on community health.

Module III will provide a definition and foster further discussion about various structural and systemic factors that are attributed to the well-being in American Indian and Alaska Native nations and communities



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