



Cultural Competencies

Urban Myths or Tribal Truths

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Objectives

- Share real world experience
- Dispel some myths
- Share some Tribal Truths
- Help you “understand” Tribal Culture
- All in effort to help you integrate Tribes into your programs and services.



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Disclaimer

- One size does not fit all!
- Different cultures, customs, languages
- Purpose of today is to give some general principles to consider when working with tribes or tribal members



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General Truths

Importance of Sovereignty

- Right to self govern
- Authority over their own internal affairs
- Create and enforce their own laws
- Create their own government
- Levy taxes within their borders
- Be recognized as an independent Nation
- Government to Government Relationship



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Tribal Truths

- Pride in their culture
- Pride in the American Flag
- Pride in being U.S citizens
- Pride in contribution to military by tribal members
- Very spiritual
- Love for environment and natural resources



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Urban Myth or Tribal Truth?

- Gaming has made tribes and tribal members financially independent and made tribes very wealthy.



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Urban Myth...

Tribal Gaming Facts

- Not all tribes have gaming
- Not all tribal Casinos are that profitable
- Tribes view gaming as a way to provide opportunity in jobs for members more than a way to make money.
- Not all tribes pay a per-capita to tribal members
- Most revenue goes to provide essential services for tribal members.....and future generations plan.



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Urban Myth or Tribal Truth?

- Tribes will not allow their resources to respond outside of their jurisdictional boundaries because of cultural and legal issues.



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Urban Myth...

Tribal Facts

- Many Tribes have signed state level mutual aid compacts.
- Many Tribes have multiple other mutual aid agreements with neighboring jurisdictions.
- Tribes are good regional partners.
- However, natural resources, environmental impacts and culturally significant areas need to be discussed prior to outside agency response onto tribal lands.
- Law enforcement agreements must include any possible limitations on either side.



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Urban Myth or Tribal Truth?

- Things take much longer to get done when working with or within Tribal Government.

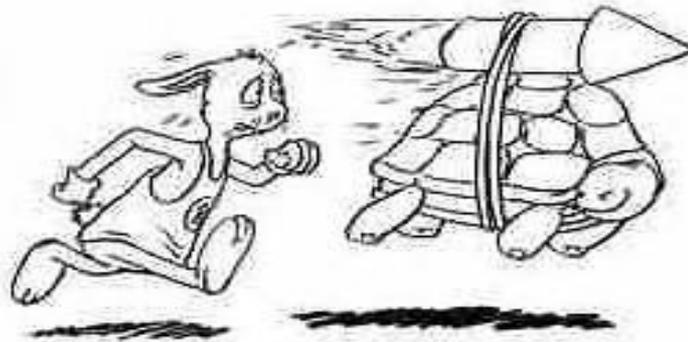


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You are correct!

Tribal Facts

- Depends on the Tribe
- Cultural issues, sovereignty issues, legal issues may slow process.....but it will get done!



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Urban Myth or Tribal Truth?

Tribes cannot have disaster exercises because there is a belief that if you talk about it and play it out.....it will happen.



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Both an Urban Myth and Tribal Truth

Tribal Facts

- Some tribes do have this belief
- Most do not and have practiced for bad events historically.....war, harsh winters
- Some may not like the word disaster



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Urban Myth or Tribal Truth?

Non Native Americans working with Tribes may find that earning the trust of Native Americans takes longer than expected.



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Both an Urban Myth and Tribal Truth

- More often than not, you will need to build that trust over a period of time.
- During an emergency incident is NOT the time to be meeting someone for the first time and expect/demand their trust



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General Recommendations

- Listen, observe, more than you talk
- Wait for response from tribal member.....do not try to fill the silence void.
- May have to earn trust
- Do not go right into business. Create a connection through casual conversation.....then be clear about your purpose
- Do not make empty promises
- Know how tribe refers to itself: Nation, Reservation, Community
- Be cautious about asking for data about tribe



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General Recommendations

Be careful to not use phrases that may be insulting to tribe.

- The Calvary is coming
- Circling the wagons
- Low man on the totem pole
- Feather in my cap
- Indian Time
- “The Rez”



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Summary

- Really.....isn't most of it the same principle you would/should use when dealing with any agency or person.
- Respect, patience, listen
- Hope I have provided you with some insight to help make us stronger as we “engage” in Whole Community Planning
- I ask.....reach out to tribes, even when it may seem that they are not reaching back.



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