ITTI'AT AKKA' WÁYYA'AHOOKYA IKKOBAFFO (TREES BEND, BUT DON'T BREAK):
CHICKASAW FAMILY STORIES OF HISTORICAL TRAUMA AND
RESILIENCE ACROSS THE GENERATIONS

by

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B.A, The Pennsylvania State University, 2003
M.A., University of Louisiana at Monroe, 2009

AN ABSTRACT OF A DISSERTATION

submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

School of Family Studies and Human Services
College of Human Ecology

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Abstract

The Chickasaw represent one non-reservation bound American Indian tribe whose experiences of family life, historical trauma and resilience has not been fully understood. Therefore, this study sought to identify the qualities common to Chickasaw families, Chickasaw families' experiences of historical trauma and the factors that contribute to Chickasaw families' ability to persevere under adversarial circumstances. Using in-depth phenomenological interviews with nine ($N = 9$) three-generation minimum Chickasaw families, four central themes emerged that answered the four research questions. The first theme, "Chokka-chaffa' Nanna Móma Ímmayya/The Family Is Everything" indicated that Chickasaw families were a heterogeneously complex system with a natural orientation toward the family unit itself, whereby the families valued emotional closeness, warmth and affection, quality time together, praise, respect and openness. Families were involved with one another and were active participants in strengthening their own families and communities. Families were prideful of family members' accomplishments and valued extended kin and spirituality. Further, families were confronted with challenges, but showed an ability to "bend, but not break," often citing the very same qualities, such as involvement, pride and an orientation toward family, as contributing to their ability to solve problems and keep the family unit intact. The second theme, "Impalahámmi Bíyyi'ka/They Have It Really Bad," indicated the families experienced historical trauma by mourning the loss of land, language, culture and identity and that losses went unacknowledged by their non-Native counterparts and were ongoing, thus expecting to affect younger and future generations. The third theme, "Chikashsha Poyacha Ilaa-áyya'shakatí'ma/We Are Chickasaw, and We Are Still Here" indicated that despite hardships, families saw resilience as a trait found

within their Chickasaw heritage. Maintaining a positive outlook, a spirit of determination, a fierce loyalty toward family members and a close connection to the Chickasaw Nation further contributed to families' resilience. The fourth theme, "Hooittapila/They Help One Another" indicated that resilient qualities were passed in a multidirectional pattern throughout all generations of family members, whereby family members from all generations supported and uplifted one another. Also discussed are the study's strengths and limitations and the clinical and research implications for Chickasaw families.

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to the families of the unconquered and unconquerable

Chickasaw Nation who volunteered their stories.

Preface

In the early to mid-1830s, the Chickasaws labored vigorously to prevent the removal of their people from their native homelands in present day Mississippi, Alabama, Kentucky and Tennessee to Indian Territory, present day Oklahoma. Many Chickasaws at the time foresaw the adversity their people would encounter both during removal and after. Levi Colbert (1759-1834), also known as "Ittawamba Minko'," meaning "Bench Chief," former leader and chief of the Chickasaws, metaphorically captured the fear of Chickasaw removal and the spirit of determination within the Chickasaw people to prevent removal, "We never had a thought of exchanging our land for any other…fearing the consequences may be similar to transplanting an old tree, which would wither and die away." Despite Colbert's and others' efforts, removal for the Chickasaw became inevitable.

Fittingly, nearly 180 years since the beginning of Chickasaw removal, the cultural metaphor of a tree would again be used by Chickasaw families to describe their natural orientation toward family, their times of strife and struggle, but importantly their ability to "bend, but not break." While the Chickasaw tree may have withered during and after removal, it has never died. Today, the Chickasaw family tree stands tall in Oklahoma and beyond, its roots run deep and spread wide. And although the tree may be bent, it will never break.

Chapter 1 - Introduction

American Indians (AIs) have been the victims of racism, oppression, genocide and
ethnocide for over 500 years (Bradford, 2007; Duran & Duran, 1995; French, 2003; Grandbois,
2005; Weaver & Congress, 2010). Once accounting for approximately 10 to 12 million
inhabitants in the late 1400s in what is now known as North America (Waldman, 2000), between
1890 and 1910 the AI population measured as little as 250,000 (Stuart, 1987; Venables, 2004;
Waldman, 2000). This resulted in a loss of approximately 98 percent of the total AI population
(Venables, 2004), or an estimated survival rate of one for every 40 AIs (Waldman, 2000). Only
recently has such devastating loss been referred to as a Holocaust in the family and social science
literature (Yellow Horse Brave Heart & DeBruyn, 1998; Tafoya & Del Vecchio, 2005). The
physical, mental and social harm done to AIs during this Holocaust are said to have resulted in
high rates of infant mortality, suicide, family violence, alcoholism, teen pregnancy, gang
violence, poverty and a multitude of other intra and interpersonal problems that currently affect
this population (for reviews, see Bradford, 2007; Cameron & Turtle-Song, 2003; Cheshire, 2006;
Evans-Campbell & Walters, 2006; Grant & Feimer, 2007; Kendall, 2001; Willmon-Haque &
BigFoot, 2009). Rates of such problems are projected to be higher within the AI population than
any other ethnic group (Cheshire, 2006). Therefore, it has been suggested that many AIs are
continuing to live this Holocaust (Whitbeck, Adams, Hoyt, & Chen, 2004). Collectively, this
places AIs at significant risk for mental illness, substance abuse, strained family relationships
and other social ailments.

The losses experienced by AIs have further been conceptualized as a collective grief
(Yellow Horse Brave Heart & DeBruyn, 1998), which is commonly referred to as historical

trauma (Duran, 2006; Jervis & the AI-SUPERPFP Team, 2009). However, despite having endured centuries of hardships and continued suffering from historical trauma (Whitbeck et al., 2004; Myhra, 2011) in many ways AIs remain strong and resilient. For example, the AI population has since rebounded to over 4 million (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011). Currently, there are 565 federally recognized AI tribes and nearly 200 documented native languages spoken (U.S. Department of the Interior, 2011).

The Chickasaw represent one of the many AI tribes that endured such hardships at the hands of White Europeans and the U.S. government. In the late 1830s, forced removal from their native homelands in the Southeastern U.S. across the Mississippi River into the widely unknown Indian Territory (present-day Oklahoma) – a journey known as the Chickasaw Trail of Tears – is just one example of a hardship the Chickasaw endured (Paige, Bumpers, & Littlefield, 2010). Treaty arrangements between the U.S. government and the Chickasaw often were not upheld and relocation expenses were not fully reimbursed. Once established in the Indian Territory, Chickasaw youth were placed in boarding schools where they were not permitted to speak the Chickasaw language, nor engage in Chickasaw cultural practices. Instead, the youth were expected to speak English and adopt the mainstream White culture (Cobb, 2000).

As a tribe, the Chickasaw have to a large extent recovered from their adversities and have preserved much of the Chickasaw culture. Having retained aspects of the Chickasaw culture may differentiate the Chickasaw from other AI tribes, although some cultural aspects may be similar to other AI tribes, particularly other Southeastern AI tribes. However, the Chickasaw creation story (Galvan, 2011), Chickasaw art, the Chickasaw language and Chickasaw religious practices, such as stomp dances tied to an annual ceremonial calendar, help to differentiate the Chickasaw from other AI cultures. Today, the sovereign Chickasaw Nation (CN; Gibson, 1971; Jahoda,

1975) is a federally recognized AI tribe that has jurisdiction in 13 counties located in south central Oklahoma (Appendix A). The CN has also established museums and cultural centers that preserve their history and culture (Gorman, 2009), a web-based Chickasaw television network (Lance, 2011) and a $145 million, 358,000 square foot medical center aimed to serve Chickasaws and other AIs (Nayar, 2010). Despite this recovery, Chickasaws and their families are not well represented in the academic literature. Having not been confined to a reservation, their experiences of historical trauma and resilience may be different from other reservation-bound tribes (see Jervis & the AI-SUPERPFP Team; Whitbeck, Adams et al., 2004). For these reasons, they represent an AI tribe worthy of more research attention.

Statement of the Problem

While there are some general similarities among AIs and their families, such as being respectful of nature and valuing family and extended kin, elderly wisdom, generosity and interdependency (Aragon, 2006; Sutton & Broken Nose, 2005; Willmon-Haque & BigFoot, 2009), there remains an unacknowledged rich cultural diversity across tribes, thus making AIs a heterogeneous group (Tafoya, 2005). Research on AIs has been quick to extend findings specific to one AI tribe to other AI populations. Some research on AIs has accounted for tribal uniqueness and has applied findings to their tribal context (Deacon, Pendley, Hinson, & Hinson, 2011; Hossain, 2001; Paul, 2003) or to compare across group differences between tribes (Jervis, Beals, Croy, Klein, Manson & the AI-SUPERPFP Team, 2006; Manson, Beals, Klein, Croy, & the AI-SUPERPFP Team, 2005; May, Van Winkle, Williams, McFeeley, DeBruyn, & Serna, 2002). Still, these studies remain the exception in the family and social science literature. Therefore, more research is needed that recognizes the uniqueness of each tribe and that honors their diversity.

The study of AIs' experience of historical trauma (Sotero, 2006; Yellow Horse Brave Heart, 2004) is still emerging and is a construct that is still not fully understood. Research on historical trauma has focused on the experiences of AIs residing on reservations (Whitbeck, Adams et al., 2004; Jervis & the SUPERPFP Team, 2009) or whom represent a tribally heterogeneous sample participating in sobriety maintenance programs (Myhra, 2011). The experiences of historical trauma among rural and urban AIs not residing on reservations and that identify with one tribe are still not known.

To date, family science research has tended to focus more so on the negative or problematic aspects of family life (Fincham & Beach, 2010). This is even more apparent in the literature on AIs, as it is saturated with findings that underscore the negative or problematic dimensions of AI family life. For example, this literature has given great attention to AIs' experience with family violence (Duran, Oetzel, Parker, Malcoe, Lucero, & Jiang, 2009; Harwell, Moore, & Spence, 2003; Libby, Orton, Novins, Beals, Manson, & the AI-SUPERPFP Team, 2005; Probst, Wang, Martin, Moore, & Samuels, 2008), substance abuse (Lobo & Mortensen Vaughan, 2003; Lonczak, Fernandez, Austin, Marlatt, & Donovan, 2007; Szlemko, Wood, & Thurman, 2006) and mental illness and suicide (Libby et al., 2005; May et al., 2002; Shaughnessy, Doshi, & Jones, 2004). Research that follows a deficit-based model may not provide a complete illustration of the AI experience. Since research that seeks to understand the factors that contribute to health and wellness within AI families is lacking, many positive and resourceful qualities within these families remain generally unknown to family practitioners and social scientists. Research that sheds light on the qualities that contribute to resilience within AI families, particularly in response to historical trauma, is needed (Evans-Campbell, 2008).

Only recently, and still scarcely, have AI researchers turned their attention toward resilience in the AI population (Denham, 2008; Grandbois & Sanders, 2009; LaFromboise, Hoyt, Oliver, & Whitbeck, 2006; Stiffman, Brown, Feedenthal, House, Ostmann, & Yu, 2007). However, these preliminary studies have used limited sample sizes and focus on specific units of the family (e.g., adolescents and elders) and therefore do not account for the resilient and protective factors that occur across several generations within a family unit.

Purpose and Research Questions

There are several purposes to the current study. First, this study will recognize the uniqueness of AI families across tribes and to move toward a strength-based approach to research with this population. The qualities common to Chickasaw families have not been well-established nor has our understanding of how Chickasaw families thrive and prosper despite their experiences of historical trauma been developed. Finally, this study will explore the transmission of resilience across generations in Chickasaw families. Such a strength-based study moves away from previous deficit-based research efforts that have guided previous research on AIs and their families.

Given the points noted previously, this study will be guided by the following questions:

1) Who are Chickasaw families?

2) What are Chickasaw families' experiences of historical trauma?

3) What are the lived experiences and factors of persistence that contribute to Chickasaw families' resilience?

4) How is Chickasaw families' resilience transmitted across the generations?

Chapter 2 - Literature Review

This literature review conceptualizes historical trauma and resilience and discusses current research findings related to each in the AI population. A review of Chickasaw history and the research findings on this tribe are provided. The limitations of these studies are noted throughout the literature review.

Historical Trauma

Yellow Horse Brave Heart (2004) defines historical trauma as "cumulative emotional and psychological wounding, over the lifespan and across generations, emanating from massive group trauma experiences" (p. 7). Historical trauma is a collective experience most often felt by a group of people who share a common racial, ethnic or religious identity (Evans-Campbell, 2008). Such trauma is likely to occur across generations when there are catastrophic losses to one's population and culture, most notably through genocide and/or ethnocide (Sotero, 2006). Duran and Duran (1995) and Yellow Horse Brave Heart and DeBruyn (1998) recognized the psychological impact that years of intense racism, oppression, ethnocide and genocide have on AIs. They labeled this experience as "intergenerational posttraumatic stress disorder" (Duran & Duran, 1995, p. 30) and "historical unresolved grief" (Yellow Horse Brave Heart & DeBruyn, 1998, p. 56). Over time, terms such as collective trauma, intergenerational trauma, soul wound, multigenerational trauma and historical trauma have been used to define this phenomenon (Evans-Campbell, 2008; Jervis & the AI-SUPERPFP Team, 2009). However, historical trauma has emerged as the most widely used and accepted terminology to define this experience (Jervis & the AI-SUPERPFP Team, 2009).

The experiences of Jewish Holocaust survivors and their succeeding generations provided the original context for understanding how trauma can be transmitted across surviving generations (Kellerman, 2001). The study of historical trauma and the responses to it (Yellow Horse Brave Heart, 2004) has since been included in the literature on AIs. Historical trauma in the AI population was conceptualized from over 20 years of observations, research and clinical practice, which has helped draw a clear distinction from posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD; Yellow Horse Brave Heart, 2004). It has been suggested that current definitions of PTSD in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (4th edition, text revision; American Psychiatric Association, 2000) are restrictive, and additional diagnoses that include trauma that has resulted from years of sustained racism and oppression be included (Sanchez-Hucles & Jones, 2005). For instance, Duran and Duran (1995) have noted adding the additional diagnostic category of "acute and/or chronic reaction to colonialism" (p. 6). Such a distinction has led others to pursue culturally appropriate mental health services aimed at treating historical trauma (for example, Gone, 2004, 2009; King, 2009; Morgan & Freeman, 2009; Shepard, O'Neill, & Guennette, 2006; Tafoya, 2005; Yellow Horse Brave Heart, 2004). AI researchers also have used historical trauma as a means for conceptualizing other individual, familial and societal problems in AIs and their communities (for example, Jervis & the AI-SUPERPFP Team, 2009; Jones, 2008; Oetzel, Duran, Jiang, & Lucero, 2007; Whitbeck, Adams et al., 2004).

Within the AI population, historical trauma is said to affect the individual, familial and tribal levels (Cole, 2006; Evans-Campbell, 2008), yet it is not currently known what percentage of AIs experience historical trauma and the varying degrees in which it occurs. Examples of historical trauma include the transmission of the grief and suffering felt from the loss of AI culture, land, language and traditional spiritual practices (Whitbeck, Adams et al., 2004).

American Indian Historical Trauma

Preliminary research findings have shown that White European colonization efforts on AIs have had adverse effects on this group (Gone, 2009; Myhra, 2011) and AIs suffering from historical trauma experience high rates of loss (Whitbeck, Adams et al., 2004). These losses would include the loss of native homelands, language, spiritual practices, family and community ties and cultural wisdom (Whitbeck, Adams et al., 2004). Thinking of such losses often led to AIs feeling anger and depression and experiencing historical loss was predictive of alcohol abuse among AI men and women (Whitbeck, Chen, Hoyt, & Adams, 2004). Still, others felt a sense of guilt for having not passed on their native language and remained hopeless that it would ever be revitalized (Whitbeck, Adams et al., 2004). Others felt the loss of their native identity, felt disconnected from current societal norms and felt that racism, trauma and genocide would be experienced by future generations (Myhra, 2011).

One method used by White Europeans to rid AIs of their language and cultural heritage was the placement of AI youth into boarding schools (Yellow Horse Brave Heart & DeBruyn, 1998). Here, AI children were often neglected or physically abused for speaking their native language (Gone, 2009; Yellow Horse Brave Heart & DeBruyn, 1998). Such experiences are known as historically traumatic events (Evans-Campbell & Walters, 2008). Other historically traumatic events experienced by AIs included, among others, sterilizing women, flooding indigenous homelands, community massacres and forced relocation (Evans-Campbell & Walters, 2008). Many AIs have repressed such experiences (Gone, 2009).

Limitations of Historical Trauma Research

The bulk of historical trauma scholarship has been theoretical and conceptual (for examples, see Bradford, 2007; Duran & Duran, 1995; Evans-Campbell, 2008; French, 2003;

Grandbois, 2005; Grant, 2008; Sotero, 2006; Weaver & Congress, 2010). Research on AI historical trauma has elicited the historical trauma experiences of AIs residing on reservations, primarily in the upper Midwest (Whitbeck, Adams et al., 2004; Jervis & the AI-SUPERPFP Team) and individuals participating in sobriety maintenance programs (Myhra, 2011). No research has studied historical trauma in a rural or urban setting using a specific tribal sample and no research on historical trauma has used an intergenerational sample of participants, yet this is needed to better understand historical trauma's intergenerational patterns and effects on families (Myhra, 2011).

Resilience

Resilience is defined as "a *dynamic process encompassing positive adaptation within the context of significant adversity*" (Luthar, Cicchetti, & Becker, 2000, p. 543, italics original). As a construct, resilience has been somewhat confusing (Patterson, 2002) and thereby its utility has been questioned (Tolan, 1996). However, by and large, it has been concluded that resilience is a useful construct worthy of further consideration in the research literature capable of further contributing to understanding how individuals and families excel despite encountering adversarial circumstances (Luthar et al., 2000; Patterson, 2002; Waller, 2001; Walsh, 2003; Werner & Johnson, 1999).

Conceptualizations of resilience have evolved over time (Waller, 2001). For instance, resilience was traditionally viewed as an individual trait, or what Waller (2001) referred to as "within-person factors" (p. 290) that contributed to positive adaptation to stress. Families were viewed as sources worthy of only contributing to one's adversarial circumstances or unfortunate life events (Walsh, 2003). However, over time scholarship on resilience has moved toward conceptualizing resilience within a broader, ecosystemic or biopsychosocial framework (Waller,

2001). Such a shift seeks to understand resilience as a result of the complex interplays between individuals and their families and other systems, which could include community contexts and one's cultural identity (Waller, 2001; Walsh, 1998, 2003). Patterson (2002) has referred to the family as the "bridge" that connects individuals to these other entities (p. 352). As a result, families have been viewed more recently as positive sources that help contribute to resilience (Walsh, 1998, 2003). Now, families are being used as the unit of analysis in resilience research studies (Patterson, 2002), and this has led to a family resilience framework that allows for resilience to be understood at the larger family level (Walsh, 2003).

Families themselves have shown to be resilient, yet also families are capable of fostering resilience within individual family members. Characteristics of resilient families include individual family members having open and flexible relationships and feeling connected to one another, having ample social and economic resources available to them, adopting a positive outlook, sharing religious affiliation and engaging in spiritual activities and problem-solving in ways that are constructive and collaborative (Waller, 2001; Walsh, 2003). A family resilience framework also moves beyond understanding only parent-child relationships and includes the role of sibling and extended family relationships in contributing to resilience (Walsh, 2003). Within this context, families can be considered vital resources that contribute to resilience.

American Indian Resilience Theory

From a cultural standpoint, there are different ways to conceptualize resilience. To date, scholarship that points toward an understanding of resilience within the AI culture has been limited. It has been suggested that from an AI worldview, resilience is understood to be a relational construct that operates through the four interconnected forces of mind, body, spirit and context (Cross, 1998). More specifically, mind includes one's intellect, emotions, memory,

judgment and experience; body includes one's genetic make-up, nutrition, age and condition; spirit includes one's spiritual practices, dreams and stories and grace; and context includes family, culture, work, community and history (Cross, 1998). These same four forces pertinent to understanding the resilience of AIs have also been used to conceptualize overall health and wellness in this same population (Hodge, Limb, & Cross, 2009). From this relational world view, balance and harmony are said to occur through the interconnectedness of these forces (Cross, 1998; Hodge et al., 2009). This creates opportunities for resilience. As Cross (1998) speculates,

> So what contributes to family resilience? It is not the extended family. It is not the spirituality. It is not the role of the father. It is the complex interplay among all of those things. It is the balance. It is the harmony that we can achieve in having all of those different things come together (p. 154).

Thus, to understand resilience in AI families requires more than only understanding transmissions across generations but the interaction among mind, body, spirit and context.

American Indian Resilience Research

Preliminary research has demonstrated that AIs are in many ways resilient to historical trauma; however few of these studies have taken a fully relational perspective in conceptualizing resilience. In one such resilience study, AI elders noted their resilience stems from family members and other extended kin, their tribal communities and from each other (Grandbois & Sanders, 2009). In addition, resilience was noted as being rooted within AI culture, as something that had been transmitted from previous generations and is established through "oneness" of spirit with all creations. These elders also pointed to the fact that resilience should be studied and understood within the context of the AI worldview.

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Other studies have researched sources of resilience in AI youth and adolescents (LaFromboise et al., 2006; Stiffman et al., 2007). AI youth identified resilient factors within themselves and embedded in their families, social and environmental networks (Stiffman et al., 2007). The adolescents noted resilient factors of dependability, showing love and support and having fun. Another study found enculturation, maternal warmth and community support predictive of youth succeeding in school and having limited behavioral problems, despite living in adverse households (LaFromboise et al., 2006). Enculturation, defined as "immersion into one's culture" (Evans-Campbell & Walters, 2008) was found to be the strongest predictor among the three. Enculturation was also found to be a protective factor that significantly reduced the risk of alcohol abuse (Whitbeck, Chen et al., 2004). Additionally, participating in traditional cultural practices reduced symptoms of depression (Whitbeck, McMorris, Hoyt, Stubben & LaFromboise, 2002). Collectively, these findings contribute to the notion that resilience in the AI population should be understood from a relational perspective that encompasses mind, body, spirit and context.

Only one study attempted to conceptualize resilience to historical trauma within the context of a multiple generation family (Denham, 2008). The findings from this study support the notion that resilience, like historical trauma, is transmitted throughout generations of AI families as stories of resilience are shared to younger generations. The emphasis placed within the four-generation family that was studied was on ensuring that younger generations understood their familial and tribal history.

Limitations of American Indian Resilience Research and Findings
Despite the findings of these resilience studies, there are several limitations that extend across this narrow literature. For instance, several resilience studies have only researched

specific units within the family, such as AI elders (Grandbois & Sanders; 2009) and AI adolescents (LaFromboise et al., 2006; Stiffman et al., 2007). While important, these studies fail to consider how families themselves are resilient and how resilience is transmitted throughout generations. One elder participant of the Grandbois and Sanders (2009) study noted,

> To look at something as a concept of resilience, it's difficult to look at it because I don't know that it's an individual characteristic. We're a social group, and we're a group that depends on each other for our identity and who we are. Our resilience comes from each other… (p. 574).

One resilience study did attempt to understand resilience using the family as the unit of analysis; however the study had a sample size of only one four-generation family (Denham, 2008). This makes it difficult to generalize and to draw substantial conclusions from the study. Finally, none of these studies have researched resilience to historical trauma in Chickasaw families.

The Chickasaw

The Indian Removal Act of 1830 led to the displacement of many AI tribes originally located east of the Mississippi River (Coles, 2006; Foreman, 1953). Along with the Creek, Cherokee, Choctaw and Seminole, the Chickasaw were considered one of the "Five Civilized Tribes" first targeted by the U.S. government to be removed to the new Indian territory (Coles, 2006). Prior to their removal, the Chickasaw resided in what would now be referred to as the Southeastern U.S., specifically the regions of northwest Alabama, northern Mississippi, western Tennessee and western Kentucky (Gibson, 1971; Jahoda, 1975; Paige et al., 2010). In the pre-removal era, there was approximately 5,000 to 6,000 Chickasaws inhabiting this territory (Gibson, 1971). After a series of strained relationships with the U.S. government leading up to their removal, the Chickasaw were eventually forced to relocate west of the Mississippi River in

what is now considered south central Oklahoma. Their relocation, known as the Chickasaw Trail

of Tears, and of which occurred from 1837-1850, was highlighted by significant hardships that

included food spoilage, loss of livestock, depletion of Chickasaw funds through fraud and early

death through starvation, dysentery, smallpox and other tragedies, such as drowning (Paige et al.,

2010). It is estimated that 1,000 Chickasaws died during this removal (Coles, 2006). Given the

population estimates prior to removal, collectively these figures suggest that approximately one-

fifth to one-sixth of the Chickasaw population was lost during this time. A series of failed

promises by the U.S. government to fully compensate the Chickasaw for their homelands and

their relocation expenses, and to do so in a timely manner, were additional hardships faced by the

Chickasaw after they established themselves in their new Midwestern territory (Paige et al.,

2010).

The Chickasaw and Family Science Research

There are two reasons why Chickasaw families are worthy of more attention in the

research literature. First, unlike reservation-bound AIs who have received more research

attention, the Chickasaw are not confined to a reservation. Mostly concentrated in south central

Oklahoma, they are also less likely to be classified as urban. Since Chickasaw families do not

reside on a reservation, access to resources for this group is structured differently and they are at

a greater likelihood for being acculturated into the mainstream culture. However, it is unlikely

they would be as acculturated as urban AIs. This creates the possibility that historical trauma and

resilience within the Chickasaw might be distinctively different from other tribes restricted to life

on reservations or urban AIs who may be geographically and emotionally isolated from tribal

governments and other tribal members. Second, the Chickasaw represent one AI tribe worthy of

more research attention, as they represent one of many tribes that have not been represented well

in the research on AI families and mental health. Only one study has emerged that researched the current state of Chickasaw families (Deacon et al., 2011). A healthy Chickasaw family identity was found to be rooted in the belief that families partake in traditional native practices, maintain a strong adherence to the undertakings of the CN, are formally educated, rely on other family members and spend quality time together (Deacon et al., 2011). There also was great emphasis placed by participants on the importance of extended family networks. For instance, using a card-sort, 93% of respondents indicated a strong Chickasaw family is an extended family and 91% agreed that aunts, uncles, grandparents and cousins account for a Chickasaw family (Deacon et al., 2011).

These descriptive findings illustrating a modern picture of Chickasaw families are important, but are, however, somewhat limited. The employed card-sort methodology prevented the researchers from asking follow-up questions, thus the authors noted this contributed to the generally descriptive nature of the findings (Deacon et al., 2011). Finally, the authors also noted more in-depth studies that shed greater light on these qualities and how these family qualities assist in the prevention of historical trauma and resilience are needed (Deacon et al., 2011). Thus, there is a need for more research that can bring greater clarity to the unique qualities of Chickasaw families, their experiences of historical trauma and the factors that contribute to family resilience.

Chapter 3 - Method

The purpose of this study was to develop an understanding of an experience that is unique to Chickasaw families that is not yet known, and therefore a phenomenological methodology was most appropriate (Moustakas, 1994). Furthermore, it has been recommended that more research on family resilience be guided by qualitative methods (Patterson, 2002). This chapter provides an overview of the phenomenological method, the study sample, recruitment, interview and analysis procedures and the researcher's personal stance.

Phenomenology

The phenomenological method assumes that knowledge is subjective, relational and socially constructed (Dahl & Boss, 2005). Considering the participants live with the phenomenon under study, participants in phenomenological studies are viewed as having expertise about the phenomenon. This requires the researcher to work closely with the participants and phenomenon in an effort to understand the phenomenon from the perspective of those experiencing it. The role of the researcher in relation to the participants is one of a facilitator that co-constructs the emerging reality about the phenomenon. Given the acknowledged expertise of the participants, the researcher assumes a learning position in which s/he must seek understanding. This process of seeking to understand is known to a phenomenologist as V*erstehen* (see Patton, 2002).

Because knowledge is relational, the role of the researcher as the enquirer inevitably puts her/him in a position of affecting the construction of participants' reality. The researcher is thus viewed as a research instrument that naturally influences all phases of the research process (Dahl & Boss, 2005). Stemming from this assumption is the underlying principle of Epoche (Moustakas, 1994). Epoche is a state of being that allows one to be transparent and requires one

to examine and describe objects or phenomenon as if they are being viewed for the first time. Therefore, all matter related to the phenomenon under study is approached by the researcher with a sense of openness. Since the phenomenological enquirer works closely with the unknown and unexplored, it is essential that s/he enter the Epoche to ensure the phenomenon under investigation is being captured for what it truly is and how it is actually experienced by the participants. The phenomenologist makes no claims at seeking true objectivity, and therefore recognizes the subjective nature of the research, which paradoxically helps to objectify the process. Here, the phenomenological enquirer must bracket her/his experiences and/or assumptions pertaining to the phenomenon under study to minimize the extent bias might influence the construction of participants' reality. Bracketing and entering the Epoche is facilitated through being a transparent enquirer. One way of being transparent as a researcher is to disclose her/his personal stance related to the investigation and to explore and re-explore the role the enquirer plays in the study (Moustakas, 1994).

The phenomenological method further requires a rigorous process whereby the researcher spends ample time in the field closely observing and interacting with those who experience the phenomenon (Dahl & Boss, 2005). Participants tend to be interviewed at great length and more than once in an effort to understand the meaning of a particular phenomenon as they define it (Dahl & Boss, 2005; Hycner, 1985; Moustakas, 1994). Having multiple contacts with participants and observing them in their natural setting assists in the phenomenological enquirer's effort to explore the phenomenon in greater depth and to gather rich, thick descriptions of the phenomenon as defined by the participants.

Study Participants

Study participants consisted of Chickasaw families that had at least three generations of Chickasaw family members present for an open-ended, in-depth family interview. Thus, the minimum possible number of participating family members for each interview was three. Participants of all ages were allowed to participate and accounted for the three generation minimum requirement; provided they were able make a substantive contribution to the family interview. Chickasaw family members were defined as those being registered citizens of the CN. CN citizens were those having either full or mixed blood quantum of Chickasaw heritage and that had ancestors that were traced to the Dawes Report of 1887. Such persons had a Certificate of Degree of Indian Blood (CDIB). A $100 gift card was given to the family at the completion of the family interview as an incentive for their participation.

Family members eligible to participate extended beyond grandparent, parent and child status and therefore included other extended Chickasaw family members, which included aunts and uncles, great-grandparents, cousins and family relationships with Chickasaws through marriage. This broad inclusion criteria honored AI and Chickasaw conceptualizations of the family, as extended kin, those who live in one's home and those who assist in the raising of children tend to be considered family (Deacon et al., 2011; Sutton & Broken Nose, 2005). The researcher gave equal value to the input of all contributing family members participating in the interview.

Statistical Overview of Participating Families

Nine (*N* = 9) Chickasaw families participated in the current study. Of the nine families, eight families had three generations represented at the family interview and one family had four generations represented. The number of family members present for each interview ranged from

four to nine (*Median* = 5, *Mode* = 5). Across all nine family interviews, a total of 51 individual family members participated in the study, which ranged in age from 8 to 86 years (*M* = 36.4). Thirty-two participants were female and 19 were male.

Narrative Overview of Participating Families

Family number one identified as a rural family and was interviewed at the home of a first generation family member located in rural northeast Texas. Three generations of family members participated in the interview. The eldest participating family member attended the Chilocco boarding school from 1942 to 1944. The state of Oklahoma removed a 10 acre rock from the original land allotment of a family ancestor to build the current state capitol building. The family was never reimbursed. The second generation family member learned of the study through the recruitment flyer and served as the contact person for the family.

Family number two identified as a rural and urban family and was interviewed at the home of the second generation family member located in rural south central Oklahoma. Four generations of family members participated in the interview. The eldest participating family member attended the Sequoyah Vocational School from 1947 to 1951. This family had relocated from a highly urban area on the West coast to south central Oklahoma approximately 10 years prior to the time of the interview. The second generation family member learned of the study through the recruitment flyer and served as the contact person for the family.

Family number three identified as a rural family and was interviewed at the home of a third generation family member located in rural south central Oklahoma. Three generations of family members participated in the interview. The second generation participant was separated from her father, a first generation participant, throughout childhood. The second generation

family member was referred to the study by another CN employee and served as the contact person for the family.

Family number four identified as an urban family and was interviewed at the home of a second generation family member located in an urban community in Oklahoma. Three generations of family members participated in the interview. The youngest participating family member had severe medical problems and collectively the family was involved in caring for his medical needs. The second generation family member learned of the study through the recruitment flyer and served as the contact person for the family.

Family number five identified as an urban family and was interviewed at the home of a first generation family member located in an urban community in Oklahoma. Three generations of family members participated in the interview. The eldest participating family member attended the Chilocco boarding school from 1953 to 1957. Her home was destroyed by a tornado in 1999 and all family photographs and relics to that point in time had been lost or destroyed. The second generation family member learned of the study through the recruitment flyer and served as the contact person for the family.

Family number six identified as an urban family and was interviewed at the home of a first generation family member located in an urban community in Oklahoma. Three generations of family members participated in the interview. The family did not learn they were Chickasaw until approximately 2008 and at the time of the interview were in the process of reconnecting with their Chickasaw culture and their extended kin. The first and second generation family member learned of the study by having met the researcher at a speaking engagement at a Chickasaw cultural event. The first generation family member served as the contact person for the family.

Family number seven did not identify as a rural or urban family and was interviewed at the home of a first generation family member in the rural outskirts of an urban community in Oklahoma. Three generations of family members participated in the interview. The family owned a small business in which the second and third generation family members worked. The family was very jovial with one another and met weekly for a family meal that included all three generations. The second and third generation family members learned of the study by having met the researcher at a speaking engagement at a Chickasaw cultural event. The second generation family member served as the contact person for the family.

Family number eight identified as a rural family and was interviewed at the family's home in which all three generations of participating family members resided in rural south central Oklahoma. Three generations of family members participated in the interview. The family's uncle, who represented the second generation present for the interview had a very active role in raising his niece and nephews who represented the third generation of family members. The first generation family member learned of the study through the recruitment flyer and served as the contact person for the family.

Family number nine identified as a rural family and was interviewed at the family's home in which generations two and three resided in rural south central Oklahoma. Several family members were raised on a tribal reservation not associated with the Chickasaw. The family participated in traditional AI cultural practices and was the only participating family who had Chickasaw family members present for the interview from both sides of the family. The second generation family member learned of the study through the recruitment flyer and served as the contact person for the family.

Recruitment and Interview Procedures

I (researcher) employed several different recruitment efforts to collect the sample for the current study. A recruitment flyer (Appendix B) was created and distributed across different CN entities where Chickasaw citizens and CN employees often frequent, such as Chickasaw elder sites and employee training rooms. I posted the recruitment flyer on a CN webpage and distributed the flyer through a Chickasaw citizen listserv. Further, I made appearances at Chickasaw cultural events to speak about the research study and to distribute flyers. I also recorded a public service announcement about the research that aired on a Chickasaw community radio station broadcasted from Ada, OK. Finally, a few Chickasaw citizens I knew referred "information-rich cases" (Patton, 2002) to me (p. 230). As potential participants responded to my invitation I provided additional information about the study and stated the expectations of their participation (Appendix C). This was most often done over the telephone, but also included e-mail correspondence or was discussed in person.

Once a family was recruited, I coordinated the family interview through one family member who I considered the contact person for the family. In all cases, this was the same person who first contacted me about participating in the study. This family member assisted in identifying additional family members likely to participate and helped coordinate the location, date and time of the family interview. I often exchanged several phone calls or e-mails with the contact person as a way of establishing rapport and increasing the likelihood the family would follow-through with the interview. Rapport was further established with a few families by interacting with them at a cultural event or at a language class prior to the interview. These interactions familiarized the family and me with one another and led to additional discussions in the family interviews that were brought up by these encounters.

The interviews were held in as natural a setting as possible so I could be immersed in the participants' natural environment, as the phenomenon under investigation "should be studied *where it naturally exists and from the actor's own perspective*" (Dahl & Boss, 2005, p. 64, italics original). All interviews occurred in the home of a family member where the other family members frequently gathered. Entering the participants' environment enabled me to gather additional observational data from the surroundings, which included family relics, photographs and artwork.

At the onset of each interview, participants aged 18 and older provided their written consent to participate in the interview and a parent or legal guardian provided consent for anyone below age 18 (Appendix D). After receiving consent to proceed with the interview, participants completed a two page demographic questionnaire (Appendix E).

The time I spent with each family ranged from approximately five to eight hours. During that time, families participated in open-ended, in-depth interviews that were audio recorded. Total audio recorded interview time for each family ranged from 2.5 to 6 hours ($M = 4$ hours). Additional time spent with the family that was not recorded was used to meet additional family members, join with the family and sometimes to prepare and eat a family meal. This additional time spent with the family aided in gathering additional observational data, adding to and organizing field notes, reflecting on previous interviews and informing additional interview questions.

A semi-structured interview guide (Patton, 2002; Appendix F) was used to organize my interview questions. This reflexive tool ensured replication across interviews and allowed me to capture the uniqueness of each interview by deviating from the interview guide when necessary. This also enabled me to include new interview questions that emerged from having spent ample

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time in the field (for example, "What is something that you like about your family?") or to exclude questions that tended to yield limited responses (for example, "Can you share a story with me about how another family managed to overcome challenges they faced in this community?"). Using a semi-structured interview guide is consistent with the exploratory and emergent nature of qualitative research studies (Patton, 2002). Some interview questions in this study's interview guide were informed by previous scholarship on historical trauma and resilience (Cross, 1998; Whitbeck, Adams et al., 2004).

Immediately following each interview, I summarized my field notes in narrative form as a way of clarifying my experience with each family and to gain a sense of each interview's whole (Hycner, 1985). Next, I transcribed the audio recordings from eight of the nine family interviews (a graduate assistant transcribed one family interview). The verbatim transcripts from all nine family interviews totaled 581 single-spaced pages typed in 12-point Times New Roman font.

In phenomenological research, data saturation occurs when no new findings emerge from additional interviews and this is often reached after having interviewed between one and 10 participants (Starks & Trinidad, 2007). For this study, saturation was reached after having interviewed nine families. Once data saturation was reached, I ceased recruiting efforts and no new families were interviewed, thus bringing an end to the field work.

After the field work was completed, a cover letter (Appendix G) and an outline (Appendix H) of the study's preliminary findings was compiled and mailed to the original contact person in each of the nine families. This step, known as member-checking (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), was taken to ensure the preliminary findings accurately reflected the participants' views and brought greater objectivity to the data analysis. The cover letter explained that the

family had an opportunity to clarify, correct, extend or confirm the preliminary findings by contacting me directly. I interpreted any unreturned responses to mean the family found the preliminary findings to be reflective of their stories.

Data Analysis

Several authors have outlined data analysis and coding procedures for phenomenological studies (Gilligan, Spencer, Weinberg & Bertsch, 2003; Hycner, 1985; Lindseth & Norberg, 2004; Moustakas, 1994). These major processes may be referred to as the phenomenological reduction (Moustakas, 1994). Given the intentionality of having interviewed three and four generation Chickasaw families with the need to understand the families' experiences with the phenomenon under investigation, the unit of analysis for this study was the family.

The first step of analysis included a naïve reading of all nine transcripts derived from each family interview to obtain a sense of each interview's whole (Lindseth & Norberg, 2004). Next, I sought to identify textual descriptions that captured the essence of the phenomenon. Here, I identified general meaning units in the transcribed text (Hycner, 1985). General meaning units included forms of nonverbal communication, a word or a series of words or a phrase that helped to describe or understand the family or the phenomenon better. General meaning units were identified without giving any consideration to the research questions. Next, I considered the general meaning units in relation to the research questions, thereby collapsing these findings into relevant meaning units that coincided with a particular research question. At this stage, I-poems (Gilligan et al., 2003) were identified within the transcripts to more deeply understand the meaning to which individual family members gave to their experiences. At this stage, general meaning units that did not illuminate a particular research question were omitted. I then collapsed the relevant meaning units into meaning clusters that centered on a particular category.

Once meaning clusters were categorized, I then conceptualized similar clusters and further collapsed these clusters into a central theme (Hycner, 1985). The themes represent the major findings of the study.

Trustworthiness

Qualitative researchers employ several methods to ensure for the reliability and validity of their work. In qualitative research, this is referred to as bringing trustworthiness to the research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Starks & Trinidad, 2007). Lincoln and Guba (1985) subscribe to the four maxims of credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability, which they refer to as indicators of rigor in qualitative research. A minimum of two indicators of rigor must be used to ensure for trustworthiness. The current study employed the three indicators of credibility, dependability and confirmability.

Credibility was achieved by having spent prolonged time in the field observing and working closely with the study participants in an effort to build trust and to understand the phenomenon from their own perspective. In some instances, I spent time getting to know the families in other locations, such as at a language class, prior to the interview. Credibility also was achieved by completing member-checks that allowed the participants to amend, correct and/or confirm the preliminary findings of the study. Finally, the data analysis was triangulated by using two additional investigators, one serving as an expert on qualitative methods, the other serving as an expert on Chickasaw culture, of whom is Chickasaw and also a Chickasaw speaker. These steps helped ensure for greater objectivity and accuracy of the findings.

Confirmability was achieved by leaving an audit trail of field work. The audit trail consisted of field notes, transcripts, interview summaries, data analysis products, family relics

received from the family and signed receipts of participant incentives. The audit trail confirmed I adhered to proper and ethical research methods throughout all phases of the study.

Dependability was achieved by a participating inquiry auditor, my major professor, that oversaw the data collection and analysis phases. The inquiry auditor verified I made appropriate research procedures by documenting interview dates and times with study participants and documenting the other previously mentioned duties were completed.

Ethical Considerations

AIs have a history of being exploited by non-AI researchers (Christopher, 2005). As a result, recommendations have been offered to non-AI researchers to ensure that AIs and their communities are treated fairly and equitably throughout all phases of the research process. Specifically, these seven recommendations include the researcher knowing and understanding historical relations between AIs and White Europeans, demonstrating knowledge of specific issues unique to each tribe, inviting AIs to be involved with the research, granting data access to AI tribes, ensuring that AIs benefit from the research, recognizing the strength of AIs and implementing studies that validate these strengths and placing the needs of the researcher second to the needs of AIs (Christopher, 2005).

Considering I am a White European male who studied Chickasaw families for the completion of my doctorate of philosophy (Ph. D.) degree, I was committed to following these maxims outlined by Christopher (2005). For instance, as part of a previous doctorate-level class assignment I studied and reflected on historical trauma. As part of this study, I recognized the uniqueness of Chickasaw families and created a study aimed at showcasing their strengths. In February of 2011, I met with a member of the CN Division of Health Institutional Review Board (IRB) and another employee of the CN to receive input related to the necessity of more studies

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that focus on sources of AI strength and resilience. I spent ample time working for the CN and

attending cultural events prior to beginning field work as a way of furthering my understanding

of Chickasaw families and their culture. I received a letter of support (Appendix I) from the CN

Division of Youth and Family Services administrator confirming the current study supported the

division's mission to strengthen families in the CN and the findings would further inform the

services offered by the division. Finally, I assembled an advisory board, which consisted of a

five member interdisciplinary group of Chickasaws and CN employees who were encouraged to

provide feedback to me about the study's design prior to entering the field. After the study was

completed and findings analyzed, findings were disseminated to the research advisory board for

review and to receive additional feedback. The advisory board members found the findings to be

consistent with their own experiences and with Chickasaw culture. Collectively, these actions

taken ensured I did research "with" and not "on" the Chickasaw people (Christopher, 2005).

Prior to entering the field, I completed six online training modules through the Kansas

State University (KSU) IRB that certified my eligibility to conduct research with human subjects

(Appendix J). The current study was reviewed and approved by the KSU IRB (Appendix K) and

the CN Division of Health IRB (Appendix L) prior to making recruiting efforts and entering the

field. Having the project approved by both IRBs made certain Chickasaw families would be

protected at all times.

Personal Stance of the Researcher

I am a White European male with no AI affiliation. At the time of completing this study,

I was a Ph. D. candidate in the KSU School of Family Studies and Human Services and

concurrently the program manager in the CN Office of Strong Family Development. While a

graduate student at KSU, I studied and researched marginalized populations and also developed

and implemented two undergraduate courses on family diversity. It is through teaching and researching aspects of diversity and working clinically with minority families that has increased my sensitivity to diversity. In my writing, research, teaching and clinical practices I embrace aspects of diversity and am committed to understanding the effects of power and privilege on these groups.

While I have a general interest in diversity, I have been drawn more specifically to understanding more about AI family life. Of all the racial and ethnic groups in the U.S., I believe this group has been oppressed and socially marginalized more so than any other minority group. I believe the U.S. government and the mainstream U.S. culture have downplayed the U.S.'s treatment toward AIs. I believe that any efforts to minimize the hardships endured by AI families throughout centuries are morally wrong and negligent. Therefore, I acknowledge and validate the hardships experienced by this disenfranchised population and I am committed to understanding more about the AI experience from their own perspective. Further, I am devoted to leading more research projects that identify sources of positivity and resilience in AI families so that a more complete picture of the AI experience can be disseminated across AI communities and in the academic literature.

I recognize that many AIs distrust Whites and associate Whites with oppression. Importantly, I am aware of these factors and how they relate to aspects of power and privilege, marginalization and the underprivileged (McGoldrick & Hardy, 2008). I recognize that the racial differences between myself and the Chickasaw families interviewed for this study may have impeded the quality of the family interviews. However, I believe that by following the recommendations outlined by Christopher (2005) and identifying myself as both a doctoral candidate at KSU and an employee of the CN assisted me in gaining entry to the field of study

and helped to build rapport and trust with the Chickasaw families interviewed for this study. I further believe that non-hierarchical research methods (Gehart, Tarragona, & Bava, 2007) and collaborative stance (Anderson, 1997) helped improve the quality of the interviews.

Chapter 4 - Findings

The findings from this study seek to answer the four research questions. Data analysis yielded 19 meaning clusters, which were further categorized into four central themes. The four central themes, 19 meaning clusters and brief samples of relevant meaning units are presented in the sequential order of the research questions. To help place participant exemplars in context, these finding are labeled by the participant's family number (F#), generation rank (G#), sex (M or F), and age (#). All names and locations presented in the findings have been changed to conceal a family's or an individual family member's identity.

Chokka-chaffa' Nanna Mọ́ma Ímmayya/The Family Is Everything

The first research question asked "Who are Chickasaw families?" The findings that answer this question are detailed under this first central theme of "Chokka-chaffa' Nanna Mọ́ma Ímmayya/The Family Is Everything" and is comprised of seven meaning clusters. Chickasaw families identified themselves as being heterogeneous, involved, proud, family-oriented, extended, spiritual and having faced challenges. Collectively, these findings capture the common qualities of Chickasaw families that showcase their diversity, pride, and their focus on family, community and spirituality. Further, the findings indicate that Chickasaw families do not see themselves as flawless or immune to hardships. Families referenced many common challenges, such as internal conflict like disagreements and miscommunication, experienced within their own families. Importantly, families indicated a marked ability to overcome or "bounce back" from such problems, often using the very same qualities that help to define their family experience, such as focusing on the importance of family relationships and spirituality. Therefore, these Chickasaw family qualities should not be understood in isolation. Instead, each

gives important meaning to the other and assists in reinforcing, or sometimes strengthening,

other qualities. For instance, spirituality helped keep family members feeling closely connected

to one another, which reinforced their family-oriented approach to facing everyday challenges.

Likewise, a family's involvement in cultural practices or educational pursuits helped to instill

greater pride in their families. The seven meaning clusters detailed below capture in greater

detail the unique experiences of Chickasaw family life described by the participating family

members.

Heterogeneous

Family members described themselves and their families as being highly diversified, so

much so that to illustrate a parsimonious picture of a "Chickasaw family" would be inaccurate.

Instead, a complex, evolving and even incomplete picture that captures the heterogeneous

composition of the families is most fitting. To do so would capture the uniqueness of Chickasaw

families that appreciates their diversity and validates their fluidity. The heterogeneity existed

within each family, but even more so when considering the experiences and composition of all

nine families. The heterogeneity of the families seemed to be diversified across four key

domains: generation, marked by innate differences based on one's generation rank within their

family; race, marked by differences in Chickasaw or other AI blood quantum and phenotype;

geography, marked by difference in family location, mostly urban or rural settings; and culture,

marked by differences in preferred choice of cultural practices and the extent to which a family

involved themselves in such efforts. These domains were not separate from one another, but

instead were more readily found to influence, or reinforce, the other. For instance, the extent to

which one could engage in cultural practices or access services offered by the CN was often

heavily influenced by one's geographical location. Urban families living outside the CN tribal

jurisdiction faced more challenges seeking cultural engagement and services than did rural families. A brief sample of relevant meaning units that summarize the heterogeneity of Chickasaw families include, "there was a time where Indians were being ashamed, like grandma," "they didn't want no one to know they were Indian back then," "I don't think your appearance should matter," "we're back in Oklahoma and I feel normal again," "I'm Seminole, Chickasaw and Irish," "what's the *look* of traditional Indian?," "pow-wows are not Chickasaw culture," "we're four of the 'Five Civilized Tribes,'" "isn't a *whole lot* of Indian, I mean, the way we grew up – urbanized," "growing up in her day was *bad*," "it's just fortunate that you actually have a degree of that blood," "we're part Cherokee," "we all look so different," "I'm not *dark enough* to fit into the Indian crowd," "she looks the darkest out of all the grandchildren," "I was never embarrassed or ashamed to be American Indian," and "if we were full blood Indians, I think that would be cool."

Generation

Within most families, elder family members identified as having lived a majority of their lives at a time when it was deemed unfortunate to be Chickasaw or other AI. As a result, they shared stories of themselves and of their ancestors that described attempts to conceal their Chickasaw or other AI race and heritage. This contrasted greatly with third and fourth generation family members who were more likely to identify as having lived their entire lives while it was acceptable to identify as Chickasaw or AI, and in some instances, even beneficial to be Chickasaw or AI. This led younger generations to be more prominent in expressing their Chickasaw or other AI identity, which led many of them to be more knowledgeable about the Chickasaw language and culture than their parents or grandparents. Many elders described stories of losing their Native language at boarding school, or being encouraged to only learn

English by their parents. This was a striking difference compared to younger generations of Chickasaw family members, many of whom were enrolled in Chickasaw language classes. As one youth described of her experience learning the Chickasaw language, "I think it's kind of cool" (F2G4F10).

Still, there were other marked differences based on one's generation rank within their family. For instance, one elder described his experience as a youth as problematic due to his race,

> When I was growing up, it was, uh, you didn't want to be an Indian. Uh, in school I wasn't allowed to, I loved to play basketball, and I wasn't allowed to go out and, like during recess, and play basketball…I wasn't allowed to play with the other kids.
>
> (F3G1M70)

Again, there was a striking contrast with his experience as compared to a third generation adolescent from another Chickasaw family who reflected on his current school experience, "We don't get messed with, because if you mess with one of us you mess with all of us" (F1G3M17). This adolescent's experience shows the public unification of AI youth at his school to combat racism, whereas elder generations of Chickasaw family members seemed to describe their experiences as being isolated from their AI peers, which led to further withdrawal from their communities. The above elder who described his painful school experience during adolescence eventually dropped out of school and moved out of state. This appeared to be less likely of a potential occurrence for third and fourth generation family members.

Another elder expressed attempts throughout her life to conceal her Chickasaw identity, but referenced a stark contrast to her granddaughter's experience. She was pleased to see a cultural shift where younger generations were embracing their heritage,

Now, like, one of my granddaughters, when she graduated (high school) she wanted one

of her class pictures to be dressed in Indian costume. Well, I was kinda proud that she

wanted it. I guess that she was proud of it or she wouldn't have wanted to do it. She

wasn't hiding, trying to hide the fact that she was Indian. (F1G1F79)

This elder had the senior class photo of her granddaughter dressed in Indian clothing displayed

proudly on a shelf in her home. Her use of the word "costume" to describe her granddaughter's

clothing further highlight the generational differences between elder and younger generation

family members, as such a derogatory term to describe AI clothing would have been familiar to

her generation. It is unlikely that Chickasaw or other AI youth would use such terminology

today.

In general, younger generations seemed to feel more comfortable and freer to publicly

claim and display their Chickasaw heritage, whereas elder generations seemed much less

prominent in claiming or displaying such identity. Some first and second generation family

members were just now feeling safe to claim their Chickasaw heritage, which in many cases, was

inspired by observing their younger generation family members eagerly display it so proudly.

Race

Families also recognized the racial differences found within their own individual

families. These differences became even more pronounced when considering the racial

differences across all nine families. Only one participant identified as being full Chickasaw,

therefore all other participants had mixed blood quantum. Likewise, participants also had varying

phenotypes, many of which varied within their own families. Overall, family members noted that

claiming their Chickasaw race meant also claiming other racial identities, whether these other

races were of other AI or non-AI descent. As one participant noted, "In all fairness I am part

White. You know, I can't, to be, to be Chickasaw is to accept all my ethnicity. And I am part Irish and Dutch Irish, Black Dutch" (F3G2F48). Family members comprised of other AI races, in addition to their Chickasaw race, occasionally attended tribal functions sponsored by other tribes, or were raised in families that practiced a multiplicity of other cultural practices.

Geography

The Chickasaw family experience also seemed to vary based on the family's geographical location. Urban families living outside of Chickasaw tribal jurisdiction referenced geographical barriers to accessing tribal services, which occasionally led families to pursue services offered by other tribes, when possible, or from non-AI entities. Urban families saw south central Oklahoma, particularly the towns of Ada and Tishomingo, as the hub for Chickasaw culture and services. Rural families living in or near Ada and Tishomingo noted easier access to tribal services and living in environments that were more enculturated. These geographical differences also had racial undertones, as described by one participant whose family had relocated from a highly urban environment on the West coast to south central Oklahoma,

> I'm not dark enough to fit into the Indian crowd. It's like I don't have enough hair…I
> don't wear OU (University of Oklahoma) gear, um, so I'm, like, the other end of the
> pendulum. Like out there you're Indian. You're the only one and I'm the ambassador for
> the tribe and out here I'm a White guy. (F2G3M35)

He would later describe how the family's relocation to south central Oklahoma created greater ease for increased affiliation with Chickasaw history, culture and his Chickasaw relatives,

> When we came out here and I lived here ten years ago…that was the catalyst for wanting
> to learn about the past and, you know, find actual, you know, the actual history and find

out how, you know, what set us different from every other, you know, homogenized

imagery of what an Indian tribe is. You know, teepees and pow-wows, and, you know,

the head dresses and all that stuff. Learning where you fit in in the whole spectrum. That

was, it was good to be able to identify and know where we fit *in* in that. You know, in the

scope of Indians. And meeting people here and meeting people that you're actually

related to distantly, you know, it's nice to get their take on the culture and stuff. And it's

obviously way more saturated here, because this is the heart of it. The further away you

get, there's nothing. It's, you're Chickasaw and that's it. (F2G3M35)

Another family residing in an urban setting in Oklahoma, but at the time of the family interview

was anticipating moving to Ada in the near future was enthusiastic about the increased

opportunity to engage in cultural events for all generations in their family. As one family

member described,

The kids, you know, they'll be able to study the history. You know, where they came

from. The struggles, the strifes, the good times, the bad times, everything. And they'll

know exactly. There won't be any doubt. That just excites me. That will help define them

as individuals, as well as family. (F6G2M34)

As a result of families having lived in such diverse geographical locations, the settings in

which these families lived created myriad experiences. Both rural and urban families participated

in cultural events or accessed CN services. However, all families living outside of Chickasaw

tribal jurisdiction expressed a desire to have more opportunities to engage in cultural events or

utilize services offered by the CN that were in closer proximity to their family.

Culture

Families also seemed to vary by their level of Chickasaw or other AI cultural engagement. Some families were heavily involved in following traditional cultural practices as compared to others who at the time of the family interview were in search of becoming more enculturated. Still, most families fell somewhere in between. The varying degree to which families participated in Chickasaw or AI cultural practices was also tied very closely to racial, geographical and generational differences. For instance, one Chickasaw family was raised on a non-Chickasaw tribal reservation in the northern plains and currently participated in spiritual cleansing ceremonies, known as "sweats." However, participating in sweats is considered by most to not be a Chickasaw cultural practice. Their experience having lived on a northern plains reservation led them to find value in such practices.

Worth noting, however, is that all families felt a calling to access tribal services and engage in Chickasaw cultural practices. Many felt that doing so honored ancestors and supported future generations – a critical link between those that had passed and those yet to come. Nevertheless, engaging in cultural practices helped many family members to create a more complete and fulfilling Chickasaw identity, as was described by one participant,

> And the things that we have in our culture give us the identity of being Chickasaw and, uh, I think we're doing our culture a very big disservice if we don't try to follow those things and, uh, so a lot of the time I'm really ashamed of myself and sometimes maybe not feeling like a true Indian, but, uh, I'm really working toward it, so, because I like having that sense of identity. I think it's, it makes us really awesome. I think it's cool. (F9G3F22)

Several families stated directly or seemed to imply that Chickasaw and other AI culture was fluid. Many felt that younger and future generations would continue helping restore Chickasaw

culture. For instance, a change in population demographics and continued growth of the CN that was expected to bring about increased opportunities to participate in cultural practices. As one participant suggested, his grandchildren and great grandchildren will continue to experience continued cultural shifts,

> Pretty soon…you'll see another turn in our culture…It's like, you know, they're (grandchildren) Indian. Okay, when their children grow up, when their children grow up, you watch their culture, our culture would change so much that their children will be accepted as Chickasaws. As true Chickasaws, because the culture is changing now. (F3G1M70)

His thoughts reiterate the notion that Chickasaw families are indeed heterogeneous in composition and that they are likely to become increasingly more fluid.

Involved

Family members were active participants in an array of endeavors, such as caring for one another, shaping their communities, participating on athletic teams, establishing their careers and practicing their culture. The involvement in such activities was represented across all generations of family members. Their involvement in such activities helped to defeat harmful stereotypes of Chickasaw or other AI families as being drunk, lazy and living off assistance – all stereotypes directly mentioned by several families. A brief sample of relevant meaning units that summarize the extent to which Chickasaw families were involved in such efforts include, "we know what's going on in their lives," "we're more of a musical family," "I got to learn and stuff about the Nation and what it offers," "I'm the student rep for the Native American Student Association," "they all go to church, they go to camps, they have lots of friends, school activities, they don't miss them," "I'm minoring in Native American Studies," "Dad was always there helping Poppy

put up Christmas lights," "everybody played soccer at some point in time," "we were all in the Native American Club at school," "we go to all the games together," "I went to work when I was 14 years old and I've been working ever since," "we were on the Youth Council for the Chickasaw Nation," "we're in parades," "I'm doing the Oklahoma Intercollegiate Legislators," "I worked for the Chickasaw Summer Youth," "we'd go to the different Unity Conferences," "we do corn stalk shooting," "they both do beading now," "sports keep them going," "I won the graphic division down at the Chickasaw Festival with my artwork," and "I coached them in softball and I played ball, also."

During family interviews, elder family members were observed caring for their grandchildren and great grandchildren, while middle generation family members would also care for the youth and their elders. Younger family members, or at times their parents speaking on their behalf, indicated participation in drama, music or art clubs and Chickasaw culture and sports camps. Family members saw great value in keeping youth involved in various activities and clubs offered within their communities, as they saw these as excellent ways to develop maturity and interpersonal skills. One mother raising seven children described well her reasons for exposing her children to many opportunities during their youth: "My goal was for the kids to experience as much as I can get them into so that they can figure out what they like, what they don't like and so they can get direction" (F7G2F51). The plethora of youth recreational activities offered by the CN excited some family members to the point of wanting to encourage their extended Chickasaw family members and friends to participate in these opportunities, also. One such participant described her excitement with the amount of opportunities for youth by wanting to get other extended family members involved,

With the Chickasaw stuff, let's get our kids into it. I'm excited for all these camps and stuff and I'm like, 'Let's get our kids in all these camps and stuff.' So, I want to, if I'm gonna take after Dad and stuff I wanna show my family, too. Like, not even just my kids, but my cousins and my sisters with, 'Okay. Let's do this.' (F4G3F25)

Family members of all ages expressed a desire to learn the Chickasaw language, and some family members indicated having already enrolled in language classes to learn their Native language. For instance, one family met at a local church one night a week to learn their Native language. Both the parents and the children participated in the class, as it was this family's goal to have younger generations learn the language, as well. Other families attended cultural classes and were committed to restoring certain aspects of their culture. Involving themselves in such activities helped to reinforce their family-oriented focus, as these were opportunities for multiple family members to attend and helped contribute to leading healthy lifestyles.

Still, other family members expressed active involvement in furthering their education or advancing their careers. They felt these goals were valued and supported by the CN, as many family members actively pursuing such goals made frequent reference to the CN offering financial assistance with tuition and providing additional educational materials, such as laptop computers. First and second generation family members felt the CN also valued and supported education for young children by referencing book programs and incentive programs for children in grade school, high school and even college. Importantly, family members' involvement in such endeavors, coupled with the CN's support of such pursuits, reinforced healthy lifestyles and family values, which they saw as strengthening the bonds within their own family, building a stronger CN and helping to defeat stereotypes about Chickasaws or other AIs within their communities.

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Proud

Chickasaw families expressed a great deal of pride for family accomplishments, the individual accomplishments of family members and ancestors, their family's stories and legacy, the CN and its leadership and the Chickasaw culture. A brief sample of relevant meaning units that summarize the pride felt by Chickasaw families include, "I take pride when I wear it," "Dad started 'Chickasaw West,'" "I'm so proud of y'all," "we're proud of where we came from," "the legislators used to come to *our* house the night before the pow-wow," "he was a special guy to everyone," "if we cook pashofa, I think of my grandmother," "I'm proud that he's my Governor," "Chickasaw is *awesome*," "yesterday he said he wanted to dress like Papa for church," "proud that we are an Indian family that has done well," "I'm so proud of our legislature, of our Governor, of our people," "I am so proud to be Chickasaw I wish everybody could be Chickasaw," and "there's still a lot of good things in this world and our heritage and culture is one of them."

Families took great pride in persons holding leadership positions in the CN. Family members often identified the CN Governor, Bill Anoatubby, and other key elected officials as having a vision for the CN. As they saw it, these persons were fighting for Chickasaw rights, growing the CN by leaps and bounds and were upholding the mission of improving the quality of life for Chickasaw citizens. As one participant described,

> I'm so proud of our legislature, of our Governor, of our people that's out there that are trying to make it better for us. I am so grateful for them continuing to look and try to better, better, make it better for us for those ones that were held back and put down and stood down, because there was no existing place for us. (F8G1F49)

Families expressed a great deal of pride knowing their family unit, or an individual family member brought about changes within their community or within CN policies. One such

family started the first Chickasaw Council – a group of Chickasaws residing outside tribal territory in a particular location who partner with the CN – to bring increased services to Chickasaws in their immediate area. One family member, whose deceased Chickasaw father started the first Chickasaw Council, expressed the pride felt by her family for this achievement,

> And look. *And look* how the tribe has grown and they do help people outside the Nation. And they have services at-large for people who live outside of the 13, you know, counties. And we like to think that *our dad started that.* (F2G2F59)

Experiencing pride was not limited to just one or two generations, but was felt across all generations of family members. Grandparents and parents spoke highly of scholastic and athletic accomplishments achieved by younger generations, and likewise, younger generations spoke highly of accomplishments achieved by their elder family members. One family expressed great pride for the leadership roles that their three youngest generation family members were displaying in their community and their school. The first and second generation participants in this particular family described the depth to which they felt pride in learning their youth were sticking up for their underprivileged peers in their school. This, as they each described, reassured each of them that they were performing admirably as the parental figures for their youth,

> F8G1F49: I didn't know this until people come to tell me this and I get so choked up and it's the first time you'll hear me be quiet, because I can't say a word.
>
> F8G2M27: It makes her so proud that she probably would break down and cry.
>
> F8G1F49: I would and I have.
>
> F8G2M27: Cause you hear stories about, 'Your grandson helped my kid out so much.' It makes her so proud. I take it as we're doing our job.

In many cases, younger generations were proud of the fact their elder generations "made it," such as having recovered from experiences with historical trauma and racism, reaching financial independence during difficult economic times or keeping the family intact to the present day. Within one particular family, the grandmother and granddaughter each expressed aspects of pride for one another and their accomplishments,

> I am soo proud of them. I am so proud of them. I am real proud of both these girls. And my three grandchildren in Kansas City. When I go up there and watch them. And I do go up there often. They try so hard, they try so hard to get a homerun or to do it, you know? I am just so proud of them. You know, it just makes my heart sing. (F5G1F73)

While her granddaughter noted,

> My grandma just not to give up even when things get hard, cause she's probably the strongest woman I've ever known. We had to write letters in my English class, 'Who's the person who most influenced your life?' And I wrote about grandma. It makes her cry every time she reads it. (F5G3F18)

Family members were also proud to display their Chickasaw heritage to others and, most often younger generations, wanted others to recognize their heritage and their accomplishments. One third generation adolescent wore a CN tee shirt to the family interview and noted that he wore the shirt proudly, because he liked others to know he was Chickasaw. Another third generation family member expressed pride in her scholastic achievements in college by earning a Chickasaw sash, an award given to Chickasaw college graduates for exceptional grade point average,

I still got to wear the sash, so I was pretty proud of it. I was the only one who was

walking around with that type of sash. I didn't get any of the others…And so I was pretty

proud when I got something like that. (F4G3F25)

A fourth generation family member from a different family was prideful in displaying her

dancing shawl used at pow-wows, which was handmade by her Chickasaw great-grandmother.

Knowing the shawl was made exclusively for her use gave her special attachment to this relic,

I think it says something neat because usually it would always be me, my Nanna and my

Papa always going to the pow-wows and dancing. I just think it's really special to me and

I'll never give it away, because it's mine. (F2G4F10)

Both the sash and the dancing shawl were proudly displayed by both participants during the

family interview. The close proximity within which these items were kept and their ease in

which they could be accessed by themselves and other family members, showed that even

though the materials were no longer of any real practical use, they were still very much alive in

the hearts and minds of the families.

Finally, in some instances, pride felt by families seemed to be the result of not only the

accomplishments of family members, but the meaning behind the accomplishment itself. For

instance, knowing that younger generations were carrying out the values that previous and elder

generations had instilled in them was sometimes seen as more important than the

accomplishment. One such elder expressed pride in her granddaughter for her participation in a

highly prestigious cultural practice, but even more so because she publicly represented the

family's core values in an honorable fashion,

I was so proud of this one (granddaughter) whenever she ran for (Chickasaw) Princess

and what she wrote about herself…She introduced herself, she introduced her parents,

I'm the eldest daughter, I'm Ronald and Darlene's daughter, I'm the eldest sister to and

she listed them all, her siblings. And to me that was the best. The family history. That

was the best one that I read and she's the only one that listed them off. So, I told her she,

she's the princess in our family no matter what those judges thought. She is. (F9G1F68)

Family-oriented

Families described themselves as being oriented toward fostering close, healthy

relationships with one another. Emotional closeness, warmth and affection, quality time together,

praise, respect and openness were all valued by the families. They also described themselves as

being protective of one another. A brief sample of relevant meaning units that summarize the

orientation toward family described by Chickasaw families include, "that's what we live for, my

husband and I, is our kids," "we were just blessed that we got a little brother," "I love family,

obviously," "within the culture there's a big feeling of family," "family is a major thing," "if I

had my way, everybody would live in a communal thing where we all had our houses," "I'm *so*

close to them that I can't *not* come over," "we're all part of each other – a big old tree," "this is a

kid-friendly house," "good, bad or indifferent, we just love one another," "I would start feeling

depressed after so long not talking to Mom," "we don't really think of ourselves, we think of

everybody else," "we can tell each other anything and not have to worry about it," "we're very,

very big on family," "it's an inner-longing to have everybody together," and "I always remember

grandma and grandpa always talking about how important family is."

The families described themselves as taking care of one another and that raising children

was a collective effort, in which all family members played a role in raising future generations.

As one family member described of his sisters caring for him during his youth, "They always

took care of me. One would get me dressed, one would feed me and one would braid my hair and

send me off to school" (F9G3M36). In some cases, child-rearing practices even applied to extended family members.

Still, other happenings described by the families, and observed by me, were also communal in nature. For instance, given the length of the interviews, family members often prepared a family meal. Family members brought food to the family member's home where the interview occurred, and/or multiple generations of family members worked collectively to prepare the meal. In one such family interview, all three generations of family members took turns during the interview preparing the meal. Several families actually requested that the family interview be held on a particular day or time of the week when family members typically gathered together to share a meal and spend quality time with one another.

The family-oriented mindset of the families seemed to be a cultural trait, or something that had spread from previous generations of family members. In some instances, second and third generation family members felt a calling or a duty to instill the previously mentioned values in their current families. Indeed, several families even recalled ancestors whose last "message" to the family was to "keep the family together," "keep the family strong" or "always protect the family." The family-orientation assumed by all seemed to be especially reinforced by first and second generation family members who not only spoke of the importance of family, but modeled such values for younger generations. This was described by one third generation family member who expressed an innate drive to spend quality time with her family, as this behavior was modeled by her parents,

Now, it's me and my sisters. I call them on a daily basis. I call my mom on a daily basis. I always come over here (parents house) and hang out. That's just how we grew up and I think that's how Dad kinda taught us, too, Dad and Mom, because he's so close to his

parents and his brothers and stuff are. And so I see that all the way around our family. (F4G3F25)

Family members also prided themselves on treating each other equitably and respectfully. In many instances, family members spoke of the importance to put the needs of the family itself, or other family members, before the needs of one's self. One youth described such practices in her family by noting these qualities were not necessarily practiced in other families,

> We don't take advantage of each other. Like, I know with, like, my boyfriend's family, like, it's rough with them and sometimes people in his family take advantage of you, but I know we don't do that. Um, we just want what's best for one another and we don't really think of ourselves, really. We think of everybody else. (F5G3F18)

Finally, families saw themselves as being physically affectionate and emotionally close to one another, so much so that there was a connection felt by family members that was unlike their connection to non-relatives. One participant expressed the notion that saying "I love you" was not necessarily spoken throughout Chickasaw families in the past and present. Instead, as she described it, love was something felt from family members and was not regularly expressed verbally in most families. She more fully described this phenomenon and also expressed the conviction to verbally remind her children and grandchildren that she loved them,

> It wasn't the fact that my family members never told me they loved me, but I knew they did. We just don't talk about it. Indian families just don't say, "I love you.' You never heard that word. You just didn't express it, but we knew. But I made sure that my family and this, my kids and my grandkids, they heard it all the time. That, 'I love you!' 'I love you, too!' or '*I love you!*' Don't be ashamed. Don't be ashamed. Don't be embarrassed. That's powerful. That is very powerful. (F8G1F49)

Another family noted always greeting and leaving one another with a hug and making a point to say, "I love you." In this particular family, I observed the fourth generation family member, who had to leave the family interview early, hug each family member, including me, before she left the home. Another family chose to describe their family as a "tree," and further described each part of the tree as symbolic for a key element of their family: the roots, representing love and stability; the trunk and limbs, representing the family's connection and support of one another; and the leaves, representing the individuality of each family member. Again, such qualities were modeled during the interview itself, as one youth in this family was moved to tears of joy during this discussion, whereby his grandmother physically consoled him and offered positive feedback and praise by assuring him, "That's awesome. That's pretty neat, Bubba. That's pretty neat. Aww. This is wordless" (F6G1F52).

Extended

Families defined "family" as including more than just immediate family members, and therefore a Chickasaw family was seen as including extended or distant relatives. Aunts, uncles, cousins, nieces and nephews were all considered family. In some instances, close friends or community members were also seen as part of the family. These persons were often included in important family events and gatherings. A brief sample of relevant meaning units that summarize the extended nature of Chickasaw families include, "we function as a community with a family," "extended families," "it's cool to have a hundred cousins running around," "we had extended family and some of them I don't think they were our relative," "we just adopt everybody into this family," "we really don't necessarily have to be blood related," "I have a friend, I call him 'brother,'" "we want to include the entire Chickasaw Nation as the family," "we always had nieces and nephews with us *all the time*," and "it's cool to have a big family."

Families saw their inclusion of extended family members and friends in their family as a quality unique to the Chickasaw or AI culture. One such family member noted this stark contrast between her Chickasaw family and non-AI families,

> We function as a community with a family. Extended families. You know. To them (Whites), a family is a mother, father and a kid. To us, families is all of us. You know, that's how we function. We rely on everybody. (F3G2F48)

Another participant described a similar phenomenon that she determined was unique to the Chickasaw or other AI culture, but went further to explain not only was it a cultural trait to value extended family, but she learned this value from having observed her elder family members exercise it,

> When I was growing up and was young like they are, um, we had extended family and some of them I don't even think they were our relative, but my grandmother always took somebody in and kept 'em. And, um, it seems like everybody was our cousin. And so we always played with kids that were our age. And some of them I know was our cousins, but some of them to this day we call them our cousins. And, um, but, grandma just kind of kept different ones that needed a place to stay. (F5G1F73)

Many third generation family members also felt an innate drive to transmit the valuing of extended family members to their young children. One such participant was pleased to see that her son, aged two, was already noticing the family's importance of extended kin and that he seemed to be fostering such values at a very young age,

> And it even shows, like, my kids, how close family should be and stuff… I can see it and he's only two. And, he's like, he had a little program the other day and I was like, I was like, 'Your Aunt Lacy's gonna come' and then he starts naming off, is Sally gonna come?

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His cousin. Is, um, Noel gonna come? His other aunt. And then the other ones. And then

he goes, 'Is Bam-maw and Trevor and Poppa gonna come?'(all relatives). Like, he knows

that they all come to this stuff, like his birthdays. And so, like, even a two year old knows

how we are and how close we are…the way he thinks already is awesome. He knows that

family is key. (F4G3F25)

Her sentiments indicate that valuing extended family members further reinforced the family-

orientation of many of the families. Therefore, the extended nature of the families was also tied

closely to the family orientation assumed by the families, whereby both qualities complimented

the other. For instance, including extended family members in the definition of family meant that

the family values described previously would also be exercised by extended family members, as

well. Thus, emotional closeness, warmth, affection, praise and support would be experienced

exponentially in the presence of extended family members. This same family member would also

describe such experiences around holidays and notable family milestones,

I just remember growing up and my dad and grandpa would dress up like Santa Claus and

me and my cousins would go out and pass candy canes out and stuff and like I grew up

really close to my cousins on their side and my cousins on my other side. So, like, we're

really close to Mom's side of the family and then my dad's side of the family. So, like,

holidays, birthdays, everything, like, it was a packed house and it was just family. And it

was awesome. (F4G3F25)

Given that families supported one another, the valuing of extended family members

meant increased opportunities for support and resources available to all. Many families felt as

though family members were the most reliable people in their lives, especially during

challenging times. One family member described the community-like mindset of his family to

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gather extended family for assistance during difficult times. He reflected on a time when his two children were seriously injured in an automobile accident several years prior to the family interview. Following the accident, each child was sent to a different hospital. One of these children (referred to below as "Trevor") had accumulated 150 days spent in the hospital as a result of the accident. He described the support received from his extended family by stating,

> The family extension doesn't just solely extend to my wife, our daughters and children, it goes out to our nieces, nephews, brother-in-laws, sister-in-laws, sisters, all members of our family will come in. And that's why I said early in the interview, 'Who do you count on? You count on family.' And it doesn't have to be my children or my parents. It can be one of my cousins, it could be one of my in-laws, it can be one of my, you know, when I told you that Trevor was adopted, his-his grandparents, uh, from the mother's side came down and took shifts and stayed with him (in the hospital). His sister from his biological mother, half sister, came in and hung out with Trevor or us to allow us to go do other things with our other children. (F4G2M59)

Extended family members were also seen as an additional resource, or in some cases the primary resource, for handling disciplinarian issues with youth. In one such family, aunts and uncles assumed the primary role for providing effective discipline for children,

> Another way we were brought up was once the kids get a certain age it *is* the aunts and uncles responsibility to do the disciplining, not the parents. And because that way it makes the kids be more respectful to the parent by the aunts and uncles doing it, because we were disciplined by the aunts and uncles. So, I mean, that's how we were brought up, so that's why I always, when something goes wrong with one of my kids I'm calling one of them (aunts or uncles) saying, 'You gotta do something with them.' (F9G2F38)

Spiritual

Nearly all participating families made direct references to spirituality, or were observed implementing spiritual practices, such as prayer, during the family interviews. Spirituality played an important role for participating families. A brief sample of relevant meaning units that summarize the role of spirituality in Chickasaw families include, "we believe in God," "our Grandfather's spirit lives up in the sky," "It was our Lord and Savior," "I smoke that pipe and I say a prayer," "this is all a grace from God," "we have our sweat lodges where we go an renew ourselves with Mother Earth," "I am blessed," "God made us for a purpose," "He will guide you, He will lead you, He will teach you, He will never leave you," "we had a very strong church family," "we do believe in a higher power," "God had his finger on the Chickasaws the entire time," "he always gives it to the Lord," "we go to church and we pray," "we're spiritual people," "he has a quarterback wristlet he uses for the plays and it has John 3:16 on it," "I'm just grateful to God for my kids and my grandkids," "it was the *divine hand of God*," and "we seek a better understanding of our Creator."

There was a wide range of beliefs and opinions about spirituality found across the families. For instance, families used different terminology to name a higher presence, some of which included Grandfather, Creator, God and Spirit. Such diverse nomenclature used to name a higher presence speaks to the varied spiritual beliefs and practices experienced by the families. Nevertheless, nearly all families expressed an active interest in seeking to know a higher being and felt this presence in their family life. For instance, most families that held meals at the family interview began the meal with a prayer, often by praying in a circle or holding hands during the prayer. Prayer was used at this time to express thanks for the food, the blessings bestowed upon the family and for the opportunity to gather together as a family.

Some families practiced more traditional Chickasaw or other AI spiritual practices, such as participation in stomp dances or cleansing ceremonies, whereas others practiced modern day Christianity. Still, other families fell somewhere in between and integrated traditional spiritual practices with mainstream cultural practices. Regardless of the spiritual practice, a common thread that ran through all spiritual practices implemented by the families was the need for giving thanks and also cleansing one's self of past wrongs or internal strife. A sense of having been "renewed" with the Creator and Mother Earth was felt by one family after they participated in cleansing ceremonies at the family's sweat lodge.

Spirituality also was seen by some as an opportunity to have a better understanding of their place within the ecosystem and to experience a closer connection to one's surroundings. For one such family member, a connection to the Creator, as he often referred to it, created additional meaning and purpose to his life that was found in relating to others around him,

> I think a lot of it is our spirituality as far as being close to the earth and all of the other living things are thought to be or understand, but it gives us that closeness to all the other, not creatures, entities I guess you could say. How they view the rocks and the animals, how they're sacred to us. I mean, living in this whole universe, I guess. We just have a more closeness as to how we are as human beings. (F9G2F38)

Spirituality was also seen by some as a resource that provided healing during difficult times. However, seeking spiritual guidance was not necessarily something done individually or in isolation, but was encouraged by elder family members who played a pivotal role in teaching their children about spirituality's ability to provide healing during times of grief over deceased family members,

That's something that's gonna make them stronger and especially in their spirituality, too,

because we believe in that their spirit still lives on. You know, when they're having that

time and missing them, you know, just pray. Pray for them and tell them you miss them

like they're sitting there right next to you and they'll know how you feel. So, that's kind

of how we teach them. (F9G2F38)

Importantly, spirituality also appeared to influence other Chickasaw family qualities

described previously, such as keeping the families involved with one another and in their

communities. Their involvement with one another then further reinforced important family

values. Spiritual practices kept family members physically and emotionally close to one another

and spiritual engagement often included the presence of extended family members. A family's

involvement in spiritual practices or living out the expectations laid forth by a higher presence

also fostered healthy lifestyles, which further helped raise youth in positive, healthy

environments.

Spirituality also brought about other benefits, as well. For some, spirituality was tied

closely to finding meaning, purpose and positivity in difficult experiences, whether experienced

by ancestors or current family members. Many families found solace in knowing that a higher

presence had guided and was still guiding the Chickasaw people. Spirituality gave one

participant a resourceful lens for which to view hardships endured during land removal by

knowing a higher being was helping his tribe flourish in the present,

It's almost like there's a divine presence that guided the Chickasaws the whole way,

because being put in central Oklahoma was such a blessing in disguise, because I-35

(Interstate 35) was built right there …it's so unique that we would have our own kind of

lifeline in the center of America being I-35, allowing us all this prosperity and, uh,

visitors and, communicate, their communication level is huge and we can get out and help others and people can reach us easily. (F8G2M27)

Trees that Bend, but Don't Break

Families did not present themselves as flawless or immune to common struggles or challenges experienced by all families. In fact, every family openly expressed occasional family conflict, financial problems, death of loved ones or periods of separation from other family members. Most importantly, however, the families showed a marked ability to overcome common hardships, often by relying on some of their innate qualities, such as spirituality and supporting the needs of others over their own. The same family that used a metaphor of a tree to describe their family expressed that at times their tree bends, but it never breaks. This metaphor eloquently captured the experiences of all participating families and their struggles, yet their ability to overcome them and move forward. In many ways, Chickasaw families were seen as trees that bend, but don't break. A brief sample of relevant meaning units that summarize Chickasaw families "bending" but not "breaking," include, "that was a *baaad* time, but we got through it," "we had to learn to be a family all over again," "we're not perfect," "that was the worst night of our lives," "we make mistakes just like the rest of them and we have our moments," "we were poor, we struggled," "we don't break, even when we're mad," "even though we get angry with each other we still get together for a football game," "we stumbled through this world," and "we just knew we had family that we would go and talk to and cry."

Families expressed times of struggle, but were often able to normalize these problems as being found in all families, not just their family or within other Chickasaw or other AI families, but families across all racial and ethnic groups. Normalizing, too, was applied to the specific behaviors or motives of individual family members, not just the experience of the entire family.

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In general, normalizing problems seemed to be an easy way for the families to move on from problems. Another way families prevented themselves from "breaking" often involved valuing open communication amongst family members. This, too, was tied closely to the family-oriented quality described previously, in which participating families believed in treating one another equitably and respectfully. Many families made clear that opinions of all family members, regardless of age or generation rank, were respected and valued. One such exchange between two family members representing the first and second generation captured this particular family's ability to normalize problems and behaviors and at the same time value open communication amongst all family members,

> F6G2M34: Well, you know, everybody has opinions. Nobody's opinion is the same. You know, nobody's gonna like everybody's opinion, but I believe we should all be able to, you know, if I have a problem I should be able to come up and be like, 'Okay. This is the problem I'm having. We need to figure it out.' Just putting your foot down and just saying, 'Okay, this is how I feel.'
>
> F6G1F52: 'I'm gonna speak honestly now.' Yeah, just say it, 'I've gotta speak honestly now.' And it's like a domino effect. Everybody goes, 'Hey, I'm gonna speak honestly, too.'
>
> F6G2M34: It's wonderful.
>
> F6G1F52: It feels like what we're supposed to do.

To her, speaking openly and honestly felt natural, as if it were something that was possibly tied to the Chickasaw culture, as well.

Other innate qualities identified by the families, such as unconditional love, were applied by family members as a way of resolving conflict. Importantly, such a quality prevented family

members from prolonged periods conflict, so much so that they're unconditional love for one another made it nearly impossible for conflict to continue,

> Mom was saying awhile ago how important the family is and how important love is. That unconditional love that we have for one another. I mean, believe me we fight, and we fight, but we're honest and we're truthful and sometimes the things that we say hurt, but we never stay mad at each other, because we know that's wasted time that we're not getting to sit together. There's some families where they get mad at each other and they don't speak to each other for *years.* (F9G2F38)

Her sentiments seemed to reinforce the notion that the family-oriented nature of the families plays a critical role in their family's ability to efficiently reconcile differences. As she saw it, prolonged conflict prevented opportunities for closeness and involvement with one another. Another participant again showed the importance of normalizing individual differences in her family, but also emphasized that love, when strong, is not deteriorated by family conflict,

> Everybody's all different. You betcha. You betcha. And it does not matter how mad anybody's made ya. It does not affect the love. It will affect your opinion of them, but it doesn't affect the love. 'Loves' a no matter what. (F6G1F52)

The physical and emotional closeness found within many of the families, coupled with putting the needs of other family members above one's own seemed to buffer against prolonged conflict. As another participant noted,

> We might not see each other for a few days, but I'm so close to them that I can't *not* come over. And so, we just resolve it really fast. If I was in the wrong, I'll admit it. I might not talk to her for a few days, but most of the time I come to the realization that she was right…But, yeah, just, I mean our conflicts get resolved pretty fast, because we are

so close. There's nothing that's been too major. Our conflicts are so minor. So stupid. (F4G3F25)

Staying involved with one another through frequent interaction that brought about emotional closeness also seemed to bring about greater acceptance of other family members and their individual traits or qualities. This gave such family members increased opportunities to become familiar with one another, such as identifying strengths, weaknesses or areas for improvement, that minor problems were accepted as is, or were normalized. Collectively, these qualities contributed to families' ability to recover from common challenges that may have bent the family's core, but did not break it.

Impalahámmi Bíyyi'ka/They Have It Really Bad

The second research question asked "What are Chickasaw families' experiences of historical trauma?" The findings that answer this question are detailed under the central theme of "Impalahámmi Bíyyi'ka/They Have It Really Bad" and is comprised of six meaning clusters. Families identified myriad losses that were incurred by family ancestors and current family members. In many instances, families identified specific losses incurred due to historically traumatic events, such as land removal and placement in boarding schools. In some instances, families noted the losses had been unacknowledged by non-AIs and by governmental entities and that some losses were still occurring into the present. In addition, many losses described by the families had racial undertones, whereby families were wronged or experienced loss due to racism by Whites. As a result of losses incurred, albeit acknowledged or unacknowledged, finished or ongoing, Chickasaw culture and the right to claim one's Chickasaw or other AI racial identity were also lost. These losses appeared to leave families and individual family members struggling to find their niche within their AI and non-AI communities. Such experiences also appeared to

leave families and their individual family members, among others, confused, angry, sad, disconnected and mourning. Many families mourned over the notion that some losses would most likely never be restored, or if so, not in their entirety. Many participants were in the process of reconnecting, or for some connecting for the first time, with their Chickasaw culture and taking back the right to exercise their Chickasaw status.

The losses identified by families in many ways were interconnected. Speaking of one particular loss led families to recognize other losses. For instance, speaking of the loss of Chickasaw homelands also led to the realization that generations of families were lost along the Chickasaw Trail of Tears, along with oral histories and cultural traditions. Thus, the losses described did not occur separate from the others, but instead were interwoven.

Within most families, the reverberations from these losses seemed to be most felt by family members in generations one and two. This was mostly due to having directly experienced a loss, such as placement in a boarding school, or having an immediate family member, such as a parent, experience land loss. Family members in generations three and four appeared to be less affected by the losses, which may be a result of having lived predominantly in an era in which it may be considered to be less shameful and more beneficial to be Chickasaw or having not yet come to the age of understanding these losses and the implications of the losses. Nevertheless, most Chickasaw families were left struggling to find their niche, fully identify with their Chickasaw culture, restore the Chickasaw language and combat unacknowledged and ongoing losses. The six meaning clusters detailed below capture in greater detail the losses and their effects described by participating family members.

Land Loss

Families recounted stories that described ancestors having experienced land loss, of which brought about additional losses. In some instances, families described the loss of Chickasaw homelands while other families described the loss of family land allotments in Oklahoma. Families also recognized that with the land loss came additional losses, which ranged from the loss of royalties to the loss of life experienced on the Chickasaw Trail of Tears. A brief sample of relevant meaning units that summarize Chickasaw families experience with land loss include, "they took her land because she didn't know what she was signing," "my great-grandmother got the 10 acre rock and they took that rock and built a capitol," "some White men came in and married 'em for their land," "relocate people and break up families," "White men married Indian women, because the Indian women got the land allotments and they ended up with the land," "my grandma's land was taken," "we were given Oklahoma and then they took Oklahoma away, so what do we have," "say you owned this and out here all I'd have to do is go buy you a gallon and a half of whiskey and before sundown I would own this land," "the removal process short-changed many generations," and "our land wasn't for sale, but they were gonna take it."

Families believed the loss of Chickasaw homelands had a direct effect on other losses, which included the loss of life, oral histories and cultural traditions. They viewed such losses as having a disastrous effect on previous, current and future generations. As one family member described below, the loss of land was not justified, which led her to believe that in many ways, the loss of land had not been fully acknowledged, nor repaid. She explains the internal frustration at such entities that attempted to justify such practices of removing the Chickasaw people from their homelands,

The removal process short-changed many generations and my generation and my dad's generation are still paying for the removal and even my kids and their kids, because you have taken a people out of their homelands. You have mounds that have artifacts. You have taken, it's like taking the British out of England and have put them in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean and telling them to live there. You took the Chickasaws out of Mississippi, out of their trade lands and their homelands and put 'em in the red dirt and told them to make a home. You took people out of their normal lands where they were born and raised, 'Now grow up here.' You took people out of their normal lands where they were born and raised, said, 'That's okay.' You know, when is this okay? This is not okay…So, yes, we have disrupted whole generations…those families, those generations, the people that died, they will never come back. So, those people are buried along that trail, but those people will never have babies. They will never grow up, and so those generations are lost. The wisdom. Their stories. Their oral traditions. Their history will never become part of the rest of us. (F3G2F48)

As she describes, the land loss left future generations with limited opportunities to know their history, culture, traditions and wisdom that would have ordinarily been handed down from their elders. The loss of such knowledge and traditions seemed to leave an absence, or void, amongst many generations that many participating families felt could never be fully restored. Further, some families felt that land removal directly disrupted and separated Chickasaw families and clans. As one family member felt, the conflict experienced by families and clans during land removal were vicariously occurring in present day Chickasaw families, including her own. She publicly self-reflected in the family interview about a difficult time in her son's life and the role that land removal may have played in understanding his motives for at one time wanting to

distance himself from the family several years earlier. To her, the reverberations of land removal were still felt within her own family,

> It took a long time to realize that self-destructive thing, too. And I wondered how much of that is, because of everybody being uprooted and taken away from your homeplace. You know, how much of that all fed into all this? And if you can imagine the strife that caused within one family if you had this group that's saying, 'Okay. It's gonna get bad. Let's just go.' And then you have another group saying, 'No, we're gonna stand here strong.' Can you imagine the strife that caused within just the *families*, let alone the clans? (F6G1F52)

> Other families more readily felt the effects of having lost the family land allotment. One

family recalled the State of Oklahoma removing a rock the size of 10 acres from a direct family ancestor's surplus land. This rock was then used to build the state capitol building currently resting in Oklahoma City. The ancestor was never approached by state officials to seek permission to remove the rock, nor was the ancestor or the family ever financially reimbursed for the use of the rock. As the family described, the rock was taken from the family. The family still kept a piece of the "10 acre rock," now considered a family heirloom, displayed in the front of the family's home as an opportunity to share this family history with future generations. The heirloom served as a testament to the family's sacrifice and "contribution" to Oklahoma. Despite the family's misfortune, they took pride in knowing their Chickasaw family contributed to such an important landmark, but still felt the loss was unacknowledged. As the youngest generation family member noted, "We should have, like, a picture, a family picture in the capitol, or something" (F1G3M17).

Other families shared different, albeit similar stories of having lost land allotments. One family elder described his efforts to locate his grandfather's original allotment, only to discover records of its transactions could not be identified,

My grandfather, he was allotted land. I just found out this past week that the land he owned, that, uh, I'm the only surviving member of the family. I mean, closest to my dad. And, uh, we still own the roll rights to that land. And I didn't know this until I called Fort Worth and I talked to people there at the BIA (Bureau of Indian Affairs). And they have a file there on my grandfather showing what land he owned. He owned 35 acres near Tishomingo. One allotment 35 acres and then he owned 25 acres the other allotment. And in Connerville he owned, uh, I think it was 130 acres. I talked to a lawyer and they are, we're trying to, they're trying to find records where it was sold. Nobody can produce any records where it sold, the land. And it says on the papers that, uh, they rented the land and there was no royalty rights that went with the land for rent. And I guess that's the way they did it back then. (F3G1M70)

His experience demonstrates the extent to which governmental entities played in taking back land allotments given to Chickasaws. As this family member saw it, this is land that could not be reclaimed, despite his many efforts to work with the Bureau of Indian Affairs. This, again, demonstrates another loss that could not be recovered, nor claimed. Still, two other participants from two different families recalled accounts of ancestors being deceived out of their land. As they each explained this was due to ancestors having limited education and use of English. One such family elder noted that her father, like many others, lost their land through covert tactics by non-Natives to take land away from Chickasaws. Many ancestors who received the allotments could not speak English, and therefore often signed away their land rights unbeknownst to them,

or land lost due to his alcohol dependence. She described both of these as reasons for her father

losing his allotment,

> He did moon-shinin'. In fact, he moon-shined so much he lost all of our land. He was
>
> drinkin' and all and there was some people around there named 'Dackard' and they
>
> wanted the land, so I guess they gave him the booze and he signed it over to them. So, we
>
> lost all of our land, because of his drinking. And it was all marked off and everything. We
>
> went back and tried to get it and couldn't…They wasn't educated, so they didn't know
>
> how to hold on to it. They let the guys that knew more take it away from them. So, he lost
>
> all of our land. (F4G1F79)

Thus, tactics used by non-AI individuals and governmental entities preyed on Chickasaw's

limited knowledge of English and Western ways of handling property negotiations, as well as

alcohol dependence.

Language Loss

Families portrayed feelings of great unrest and grief over having lost the Chickasaw

language. This was because nearly all families saw the Chickasaw language as the most unique

component of their culture and was the quintessential attribute that differentiated them from all

other AI tribes. They also felt that language was a gateway into accessing deeper parts of the

Chickasaw culture. While fluent Chickasaw speakers still remain, none of the participating

families identified having a fluent speaker in their respective family. Therefore, participating

families felt the Chickasaw language was lost for them personally and there was a strong

likelihood it could not be recovered within their own family. A brief sample of relevant meaning

units that summarize Chickasaw families experience with language loss include, "my mother

even forgot her Indian name," "you had to speak English," "they really tried to lose it," "he was

not allowed at school, so he lost it," "without language you don't have a culture," and "not being allowed to speak their language has kind of affected some spiritual beliefs."

Nearly all families recounted stories of having parents, grandparents or great-grandparents to have at one time spoken the Chickasaw language. However, ancestors, or in some cases, elder family members who participated in this study, lost the ability to speak, read, or even recognize any aspects of the Chickasaw language. This was closely tied to having lived at a time when it was encouraged and considered advantageous to speak English and assimilate into mainstream culture, simultaneously concealing or removing all aspects of Chickasaw or other AI identity. This also occurred at a time when family ancestors and current family elders were placed in boarding schools. Families recognized the boarding schools as having a direct effect on the loss of language. They also identified having not had the opportunity to speak Chickasaw if even attending traditional public school. One family elder captured these phenomena precisely, "When I was young I wasn't allowed to speak the Chickasaw language even in my own home. That was forbidden. When you went to school you was forbidden to speak any other language beside English" (F3G1M70). Another elder representing a different family described in detail her and her now deceased husband's experience at boarding school. She noted the school's mission to assimilate Chickasaw youth into mainstream culture by way of instituting English-only policies,

> He (husband) only spoke Chickasaw, but he was not allowed at school, so he lost it. You were not allowed to talk to each other or anybody in Chickasaw. You had to speak English. They really tried to lose it. Even though we were an *Indian* school, they tried their best to get rid of all the Indian aspects. They were trying to modernize us. (F2G1F79)

Many families expressed an inner longing to be reconnected with their Chickasaw language. In some cases, it was not even directly tied to needing to speak the language itself, but to even have the opportunity to have it heard spoken by others. One family elder noted her grief from having fewer family members and friends available to her to hear the Native language,

> When my grandmother died she was the last speaking Indian that I had a relationship with. So, that was really hard, because I remember going to church with her down at Blue Springs and they would sing, you know, in whatever language. In Creek, or Seminole, or whatever, you know? They would sing down there and I miss that. And so every now and then you'll go to an older person's funeral and they sing. And they'll sing in the Native tongue, but, um, that's what I miss. (F5G1F73)

In many ways, this inner longing to learn or associate with the Chickasaw language was due to a language's ability to truly access one's culture. Language was viewed by many families as the entry point to finding more deeply rooted aspects of the Chickasaw culture, as was described by one family member,

> Our language is our power and that's what makes us unique from even other tribes. That's where our strength comes from is being able to have that power to communicate with each other in our own language. And it's just unique and so that's why now I'm really, I wished I would have listened to him (grandfather) a lot more and actually learned. (F9G2F38)

She, like other participants, felt regret and internal strife for having not learned the language when it was more accessible to them.

Despite the extent to which the Chickasaw language has been lost and the daunting task of restoring it, many families were committed to learning the Chickasaw language. Several

families attended language classes and several families had enrolled youth in language classes. The material learned in these classes was reinforced in the homes, whereby young children were encouraged to practice the Chickasaw alphabet or counting in Chickasaw. This, too, made for a stark contrast from previous generations, in which speaking Chickasaw was forbidden in many Chickasaw homes in years past.

Cultural Loss

Families portrayed feelings of great unrest and grief over having lost many key aspects of the Chickasaw culture. Similar to other losses, the limited access to the Chickasaw culture often left families unsure of themselves and their family identity. A brief sample of relevant meaning units that summarize families and their members experiencing the loss of the Chickasaw culture include, "they tried to take the Chickasaw out of him at school," "we learned the jitterbug and waltz and fox trot, but not *one* Native *any*thing," "we didn't do any Indian art," "it was culture shock, being in an institutional environment," "we never experienced our Native American heritage," "they were trying to modernize us," "I didn't know my heritage," "I didn't know nothing about being Chickasaw," "I didn't even know there was a tribe named Chickasaw,'" "it's my heritage and it's lost," "we would have been more in touch with the Chickasaw culture," and "we lost the stories."

Like the loss of language, families identified boarding schools as having a direct effect on the loss of Chickasaw culture. Again, family elders told additional stories of themselves, or their parents, having been mandated to adopt dominant cultural practices or gender roles while attending boarding school. As one family elder who attended boarding school noted, instructional material used at the schools did not include aspects of Chickasaw or AI ways of life, but instead reinforced dominant cultural practices valued at the time,

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In homemaking, we had a McCall's pattern book or a simplicity to pick our pattern from and we got to embroider tea towels for the teacher and she would pay for our pattern to make our dress. And it wasn't, there wasn't nothing Indian about anything in that pattern book. And I don't even remember making a big deal about Thanksgiving…I don't remember anything Indian about it. It, it never came up…I could do a lot of things that I learned there, but none of them were because we were Indian. (F2G1F79)

Considering much of the Chickasaw and other AI heritage and cultural practices were passed orally from one generation to the next, the boarding school experience severed the intergenerational link within families that prevented later generations from learning key aspects of their heritage, which further prevented the passing of such knowledge onto future generations. For many current family members, this left them feeling neglected or "short-changed," which many saw as continuing to harm future generations,

Not growing up with my grandmother, um, teaching me anything about the heritage or the culture, I thought I was short-changed in that respect. Um, so therefore, these kids were short-changed, because I didn't know. I'm just learning things now at my age through the things that are offered to us now…So, these kids were not taught in Indian stuff. They were just kind of grown up in the White world. (F5G1F73)

She, like other participants, felt that although there were still opportunities to become involved in Chickasaw culture in the present day, there were natural barriers that made re-engaging in the Chickasaw culture difficult. Some identified their age as a barrier by noting it was more difficult to learn new things as one got older, while others noted geographical barriers, such as those living outside of Chickasaw tribal jurisdiction, to accessing cultural events on frequent enough occasion. There were barriers to learning the Chickasaw language, too, such as age, proximity to

language classes and the limited number of people with which the language could be shared and practiced. One participant described the challenge she felt identifying with her culture,

It just kind of makes me feel bad sometimes thinking about it. And it's like, well, maybe I really don't, um, have a place in here and that makes me angry mad, because it's my heritage and its lost. It's like, it's like climbing up, I mean, you've climbed on mountains, right? You know that nervous feeling you get and you're not real sure if it's a real tricky, it's a real tricky path? You're not real sure if you're gonna set your foot down something's gonna give. So, you're gentle everywhere you go, everywhere you place your foot you're super gentle, because you never know when it's gonna fall out from under you. It's gonna slip and you're gonna fall back down that mountain. (F6G1F52)

Although she was committed to learning the language and attending cultural classes and events, she felt hesitant to completely invest herself into the "unknown." As she felt, emerging herself in her cultural heritage was a complicated process filled with missteps, uncertainty and fear of the unknown.

Identity Loss

The collective losses felt by families seemed to lead to the family unit or individual family members having lost their Chickasaw or other AI identity. Some individual family members experienced this loss more than other losses and seemed to be most commonly experienced within generations one and two. A brief sample of relevant meaning units that summarize families and their members experiencing the loss of the Chickasaw or other AI identity include, "I didn't have the opportunity," "they tried to annihilate *who we are*," "we lost our place," "I was never allowed to be Indian," "I was always 'White,'" "we were called 'Chicken-shit Indians,'" "I always knew I was different, I just didn't know why," "I really don't

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have a place in here," "we were Indian [*tearful voice*], but the Indian in my family was gone," and "we didn't really *grow up* Indian."

The loss of the Chickasaw or other AI identity had a resounding effect on the families and individual family members. The loss of the Chickasaw language, homelands and culture left a void within the families, that many felt could never be fully restored. For many, these losses appeared to leave a confused identity, whereby some felt "wrong" for being Chickasaw. One such participant described her experience being raised by her White biological mother and White step-father. As a result of racial tensions in the 1960s, her Chickasaw father was wrongfully incarcerated, which ultimately led to his separation from the family and her mother's decision to remarry. She recalled her step-father making racial slurs directed at her as a child. Decades later, this participant was still grieving these childhood experiences that at times left her struggling to find a healthy identity for herself,

> I just didn't fit in. And, um, which really, it just, it didn't fit right, it didn't feel right. I didn't understand why I was getting called that (chicken-shit Indian). And, uh, I didn't know my heritage. I didn't know why I was being called that…I didn't know nothing about being Chickasaw. I didn't understand Chickasaw. I didn't even know what Chickasaw was. I didn't even know there was a tribe named 'Chickasaw.' It was like, 'Y'all are just making that up. 'What is Chickasaw?' It's like, 'Who are the Chickasaw?' Nobody knew what Chickasaw was. And, it's like, 'There's no such thing as Chickasaw!' (imitating childlike voice). (F3G2F48)

Tearful as she spoke of such experiences, her trauma suffered at the hands of her own family led to an even more confused identity that she was currently working to restore. She cited re-establishing a close relationship with her Chickasaw father, emerging herself into the Chickasaw

culture and associating herself with other Chickasaws as helping to create a more positive image

for her. Other families, too, felt compelled to "take back" their culture so as to assume a more

complete, positive or healthy Chickasaw identity for themselves or their family. For many, this

meant emerging themselves into the Chickasaw culture and further involving themselves in other

types of Chickasaw-related experiences. This included, among others, learning the Chickasaw

language, socializing and networking with other Chickasaws, traveling with elder groups, taking

bus tours to experience ancestors' experience on the Chickasaw Trail of Tears and making

Chickasaw arts and crafts.

Unacknowledged Loss

Families identified losses they felt had gone unacknowledged by their non-AI

counterparts. In many of these instances, families felt as though specific non-AI individuals, or

non-AI communities or entities did not acknowledge the losses incurred by their families. A brief

sample of relevant meaning units that summarize families and their members experiencing

unacknowledged losses include, "some of the travesties that's happened to the people, the

government has done in broad daylight," "we're not in the history books," "they say that was so

long ago, so why do you still dwell on that," "they don't understand, because the tribes give back

to the states," "we still talk about slavery in school," "they say of Hitler, 'How dare *he*?' *How

dare* (Andrew) *Jackson*?," and "I think we should be getting royalty."

Unacknowledged losses experienced by the families left family members feeling

confounded and angry that such atrocities had not been recognized, nor validated, by non-AIs

and non-AI entities, such as public schools and local, state and federal governments. As the

families felt, the unacknowledged losses were a reflection of ignorance and racism in their non-

AI communities. They also felt as though the efforts made by the CN to restore AI and non-AI

communities, and the state itself, were not recognized by non-AIs. Thus, not only were losses unrecognized, but contributions made by the CN that benefited AIs and non-AIs also went unacknowledged. One such participant described her struggle of having to combat such ignorance and fight to have her tribe's losses, and contributions, acknowledged,

> I think a lot of times they don't understand. I just think they don't understand, because the tribes give back to the states. I mean, don't get me wrong, we give the state a *ton* of money. You know, but because they're not seeing it in a way they want to see it and our kids, they don't get free education, they get *some* money to go to school, but people say, 'Oh yeah, it's because you're Indian you'll get your free education.' Well, it's not like that. I mean, and not all tribes are the same and I think people are just uneducated, you know? And, so, its just having to deal with their ignorance sometimes about what the tribes do get and what the tribes do give. You know, they just don't understand.
> (F5G2F49)

Her daughter drew parallels between the AI experiences of loss, trauma and genocide and the experiences of Blacks enduring slavery. However, she felt the atrocities suffered by Blacks had been acknowledged by dominant culture and governmental policies were put forth to protect such atrocities from re-occurring, whereas she felt that AIs had not received the same remuneration,

> When they took our land, then the people, you know, they say that was so long ago, so why do you still dwell on that? Well, that was part of history. And we still talk about slavery in school. We still, we have, um, child labor laws, you know, if you're under 14 you can't work, so why can't it be the same for Indians? There was slavery and now they

have laws against slavery. They took our land and now we have laws that allow us to

make money and to give money to our people. It's the same thing. (F5G3F16)

She also felt that AIs had the right to mourn their losses, regardless of how long ago the losses

occurred. Her experience with others questioning or challenging her right to mourn was

questioned by non-AIs. She, like many other participants, felt pressured by non-AIs to "move

on" or "let go." Thus, even the right to mourn losses or the general treatment of AIs was

squandered. This served as another example of having losses and the true experiences of

Chickasaws and other AIs unacknowledged, which seemed to reinforce families' minority status

and their struggle to bring about cultural awareness within their communities.

Ongoing Loss

Families felt that while some losses occurred in previous generations, many losses were

still occurring. They also felt that some losses, unless systemic changes occurred within their

non-AI communities and within dominant culture, were perpetual. A brief sample of relevant

meaning units that summarize families and their members experiencing ongoing losses include,

"some of the thoughts that are perceived from 500 years ago are still out there," "they even laugh

about it now about calling me a 'chicken-shit Indian,'" "to participate in the land run was like

dancing on our forefathers' graves," "my generation and my dad's generation are still paying for

the removal and even my kids and their kids," "what would we be like now if we hadn't been

moved," "we have disrupted whole generations," and "their history will never become part of the

rest of us."

Similar to unacknowledged losses, families saw ongoing losses as a reflection of

ignorance and racism in their non-AI communities. Again, families felt confounded and angry

that harmful stereotypes of Chickasaws and other AIs were still pervasive in mainstream culture.

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They also seemed to have little hope that such attitudes toward Chickasaws and other AIs would change in the near future. Thus, they were left feeling that their experiences would likely be felt by future generations of Chickasaw family members. For instance, one participant described her experience with non-AI in-laws, who put down the AI experience,

> They had a lot of preconceived notions about Indians and that was based on one person that they had in and out of their lives. They just thought, you know, all Indians leached off of everything…They thought every Indian got a house. Um, ever Indian lived off commodities…They thought, like, you got checks each month for being Indian…Just damn Indians buying everything up. (F3G3F30)

Another participant noted Whites continued to question tribal sovereignty and the current rights given to AIs. The continued questioning of AI practices, their lifestyle, their economy and general endeavors left families discouraged and concerned that these types of structural problems in their communities and at-large would continue. This, as they felt, would be challenges that younger and future generations would have to endure. As she describes in greater detail,

> The things that the government gives us, the government gave it to us, so if we take advantage of it then they need to know that that's okay, too. I mean, that's why I think of the casinos, too, is that the government told us that that was the way we could earn money, was by the casinos and by tobacco. And though I don't agree with either one of those, you know, that's what the government said we could use to make money, then I have no problems with us making money, because that's what the government said that we could have. And what's ironic is the White people now are saying, 'The Indians are making too much money off this stuff! We need to start taking some of that money.' No.

This is what we're allowed to do. You can't take this from us today…they did take our

land and now they're more mad about the fact that we persevered. (F5G2F49)

In the same way that unacknowledged experiences reinforced the families' minority status and

left families disheartened that systemic changes would occur in their communities, so, too, did

the belief that loss or experiences would remain invalidated in perpetuity. Families felt they

faced a constant, uphill battle that would be left to endure by younger and future generations of

family members.

Chikashsha Poyacha Ilaa-áyya'shakatį́'ma/We Are Chickasaw, and We Are Still Here

The third research question asked, "What are the lived experiences and factors of

persistence that contribute to Chickasaw families' resilience?" The findings that answer this

question are detailed under the overarching theme of "Chikashsha Poyacha Ilaa-

áyya'shakatį́'ma/We Are Chickasaw, and We Are Still Here" and are comprised of five meaning

clusters. A historical legacy of resilience carried throughout Chickasaw bloodlines, maintaining a

positive outlook, being determined, fierce loyalty to family and a close connection to the CN

were identified as factors that contribute to Chickasaw families' abilities to overcome adversity.

Not only did the families show a marked ability to recover from common challenges found in all

families, they also demonstrated their ability to overcome more significant and substantial

problems that had the potential to disrupt families across generations, such as boarding school

admittance, incarceration, severe illness, natural disasters and single parenthood. Such challenges

required families to exhibit more than their usual and customary approaches to resolving conflict

or disagreements. Higher levels of adversity required families to take additional measures or

exhaust additional resources to resolve or recover from more complicated challenges. For these

Chickasaw families, they often relied heavily on one another and the CN for assistance. Families and their individual members also remained driven to work-through challenges and remain positive in the face of adversity. Still, many other families noted that the ability to positively adapt to challenges was a Chickasaw cultural phenomenon that was "in the blood." The five meaning clusters detailed below capture in greater detail the factors that contribute to Chickasaw families' resilience.

It's in the Blood

Families felt that resilient qualities existed within Chickasaw bloodlines and were an important mechanism found within Chickasaw culture. Resilience was seen as existing within Chickasaw heritage so much so that families felt it was passed from generation to generation. Thus, in some ways, resilience was seen as something that ran through Chickasaw bloodlines. A brief sample of relevant meaning units that summarize resilience as being a Chickasaw hereditary trait passed from one generation to the next include, "in the old traditional ways, Native American families took care of their children," "resiliency is a Native American quality," "what is engrained in us is we protect our own," "they took care of their elders," "it's the Indians' heritage doin' it," "it's in our blood, it's in our genes," "if Native Americans would instill in their families the old ways you'd have better families, better relationships" and "part of it was born."

Many families referenced specific hardships that their Chickasaw ancestors endured during the Chickasaw Trail of Tears. Some of the hardships identified were the death of loved ones, starvation and starting anew in the Indian Territory. Many families felt their ancestors' survival in the Indian Territory and the Chickasaw government's ability to remove all of the Chickasaws out of their original homelands as a key indicator of the resilience of the Chickasaw

people. Many felt the long lineage of resilience began with the ancestors who survived the journey, or may have even predated such experiences. As current families reflected back on the experiences of their ancestors, they felt their ancestors possessed resilient traits that led to not only their survival, but also their ability to thrive in the new territory. As one participant described these resilient traits continue to exist within Chickasaw families today,

> You have to have a strong sense of resilience to go through something like that and still be able to take care of your family and take care of yourself and the other people around you and, um, I think just from then on it never went away. (F9G3F22)

> Some families identified traditional Chickasaw or other AI values brought about healthy

lifestyles, healthy family relationships and the ability to recover from hardships. Families noted that elders and youth were valued within their culture and that making sure these generations were cared and provided for brought about wellness for these generations. This would help to buffer against hardships. Also, specific Chickasaw or other AI cultural traditions or practices, some of which were spiritual in orientation, brought about personal and family wellness and also enabled one to recover from hardships. As one elder explained, practicing traditional Chickasaw or other AI spirituality brought about serenity and a more positive and healthier perspective,

> You know, when times get, you know, where it's kind of like it's unbearable, I go off and I smoke that pipe and I say a prayer. We have our sweat lodges where we go and we renew ourselves with Mother Earth. And, I think by practicing the, uh, Native American traditional ways it makes a better person out of you. You know, you forgive. You learn how to forgive. You learn how to, uh, you learn how to look with your heart, listen with your heart and make decisions with your heart. (F3G1M70)

Having a healthy and positive outlook was seen as being closely tied with traditional spiritual

practices and beliefs. As one participant elaborated, growing closer to the Creator made it easier

to let go of past hardships, which ultimately led to a more positive and resourceful worldview,

> One of our resilience, to go back to that, is actually knowing our place with the Creator
>
> and not chasing power, because that's what a lot of people want. They want power. You
>
> know, and they think power is happiness and, uh, you can have money and that's power,
>
> but the true power is finding the center of the universe and the center of the universe is in
>
> every person. It starts with who you are and wherever you go that's the center of the
>
> universe is right there, because it's just you and God. (F9G2M36)

Some participants often felt out of place or out of touch with dominant non-AI cultural norms

and values. However, family members immersed in Chickasaw or other AI culture found greater

clarity with their own norms and values. For them, they felt a sense of belongingness knowing

that other Chickasaws held similar beliefs or worldviews. Knowing and understanding the

culture allowed some to normalize their own beliefs, behaviors or problems, which they felt led

to a more peaceful existence. One participant in particular did not learn she was Chickasaw until

age 48. As she continued her quest for learning more about her Chickasaw heritage, she was able

to reflect back on previous times in her life when she felt out of touch or out of place with non-

AI worldviews,

> The more I learn about the culture, the more it's clicking in. I learn something, I get all
>
> excited. I'm all giddy inside. I'll learn one aspect of our heritage and it's like, 'Well, hey!
>
> Now I understand. I understand why I reacted that way. I understand, because that was
>
> most of my confusion, 'Why am I reacting like this whenever everybody else is reacting
>
> like *that*? I don't understand, you know, about myself. It is in our blood. It is in our

blood. The same thing that makes us get deep. The same thing that makes us shake on the

inside when we get close to a revelation. That's what it is. (F6G1F52)

Collectively, these experiences seemed to imply that resilient qualities can be found within

Chickasaw bloodlines. Families felt an innate force that enabled them to have a positive and

resourceful worldview, which they saw as being connected to the Chickasaw culture. Their

traditional spiritual and cultural practices provided them with the tools necessary to recover from

past hardships and lead a more healthy and positive existence.

Positive Outlook

Families identified the need to have a positive outlook on life as a way of responding to

challenges or hardships. The need to think positively was most often cited by families when

talking about the historical losses endured by their families. A brief sample of relevant meaning

units that summarize Chickasaw families' ability to develop a positive outlook during times of

hardship include, "you have a better outlook in life if you have a sense of humor," "the only way

we're going to be one is to forget," "hardships part of being a human being," "yesterday ended at

midnight last night," "teaches them how to laugh at themselves and not take everything so

seriously," "give thanks to what you have," "the main thing in life is to enjoy it every day,"

"life's what you make it," "not worry about what you don't have," "have a sense of humor,"

"there may not be a tomorrow," and "what has made our people so resilient is because of our

sense of humor."

Families were open about the challenges they faced as individual family members or as a

collective family unit. A recurring challenge they faced was the grief felt from losses

experienced by their ancestors and current family members. As a way of coping with this grief,

families identified the importance of accentuating the positive and minimizing the negative in

these circumstances. There were several ways families chose to accentuate the positives in their lives. One was readily reminding themselves of the fact that their ancestors did in fact "make it." This was often explained as ancestors not only arriving in Indian Territory, but also surviving once they arrived. This was also closely tied to families identifying rich cultural and spiritual traditions still used within Chickasaw families today. Knowing that not *all* their people perished and not *all* of the language, oral histories and culture were lost helped families appreciate what still remained. One participant explained the importance of accentuating the positive,

> Look at all the good things that we've accomplished since then, because, I mean, I know
> I hate that our ancestors had to suffer in order for us to see that we needed to keep going,
> but look at what they went through for us. You know, like, look at all the good things
> we've accomplished since that. Focus on the good stuff instead of the bad stuff. It's of
> course okay to know all that and it's good to learn it, because then you know not to repeat
> it or anything like that, but focus on the good things rather than the bad and then
> everyone's just better off. You know, I don't think you should dwell on stuff like that.
> That's not healthy at all. (F9G3F22)

Families also felt that a way of bringing about a more positive and resourceful outlook was tied to forgiving persons in their life who had wronged them or who had caused pain or suffering. For some, this was defined as "letting go" of these experiences and finding ways to move forward. One elder, who had been wrongfully incarcerated throughout his life due to racial tensions stemming from the 1960s described the importance of putting hardships in the past and maintaining a more positive and resourceful outlook on the future,

> You have to go back and find all the good times, the good things in your life and you take
> all the bad things and go out in the backyard and bury them, because if you relive that

bad thing every day you're not gonna ever make any progress…You have to let go and

say, 'Hey, I made it. Even though it was bad, I made it.' So, now I'm gonna enjoy life

and you let go. (F3G1M70)

In some instances, families spoke directly to the importance of forgiving Whites for having

directly inflicted pain and suffering on the Chickasaw people. Such families recognized that

Chickasaws and other AIs have the right to grieve how they choose and feel the way they do, but

they felt that continuing to blame external entities, such as Whites or the government were

unhealthy and unproductive. For the participating families, they felt that moving forward meant

forgiving others of their wrong-doings and becoming intrinsically motivated to change one's

current life situation. One participant explained this in his own words,

People blame a lot on what has happened in our past…It's real unfortunate, because you

can't blame the White people for what's going on right now, you know? They all, listen,

at this time, on this day, if you're not happy, it's not their fault. If there's something

wrong in your life right now, it's not what happened a hundred years ago. It's not the

White man. (F9G2M36)

Another participant shared a similar view, in that he noticed that not all families held his

same positive and optimistic outlook. He explained his frustrations as a former high school

teacher working with AI youth, because he felt too many of the children were being raised to

believe that their current life situation was predetermined for them and that there was little they

could do to overcome their struggles. He explained his approach to working with such youth

where he would encourage them to see that they had the power to change their situations

themselves,

I don't know what their parents were teaching them, or what they were saying, other than

blaming their lot in life for the fact that the government stole their land 150 years ago.

And I would have to tell them. I would say, 'Look. Yes, this happened. And I would not

disagree with you. And, yes, we were wronged, but *you* got a chance to go do something

now. I mean, you can't change what happened then and it's not gonna change today, but

you can change what you do with your life. You can continue to sit here and blaming

what happened, or you can continue to try and move forward.' (F5G2M45)

Families seemed to imply their positive outlook was closely related to the Chickasaw

culture, thus implying that thinking positively was a cultural mechanism that had existed in

previous generations of Chickasaw families. Many believed their ancestors remained positive

and hopeful during land removal and that their ability to reframe negative experiences into

positive ones was what contributed to their ability to thrive in Indian Territory. In many ways,

this positive outlook familiar to Chickasaws was viewed as a driving force that continues to help

the CN and Chickasaw families aspire today.

Determination

Families felt they and their individual family members had a knack for persevering at all

costs. Perseverance was seen as a refusal to quit, a reluctance to settle for the status quo and

going to whatever lengths necessary to bring about positive changes for their own family or for

other Chickasaws. Families' refusal to be denied in many ways personified the "pull yourself up

from your bootstraps" mentality. A brief sample of relevant meaning units that summarize

Chickasaw families and their individual family members determination to persevere when faced

with adversity include, "it's a tribute to the fact that they weren't going to be denied," "just start

it out from their own hard work," "well, let's find out what we can do ourselves," "it's up to

you," "they have achieved from being smart, intellectual and strong women," "she always seems to come out on top," "fight for what you believe in," "the one word that I would say describes my mom is 'perseverance,'" "I went into that tribe not knowing nobody but using my handshake, my word and keeping my promise," "knowing what I wanted and being Chickasaw," "we're unmovable in our convictions, our determination, our future mindsets," "I'm not gonna give up," "she's had a lot of challenges along the way, but she's come through those challenges," "you don't quit, you don't give up," "determination not to give up," "fighting for what you want and what you believe in," "we're tired, but we won't ever quit," "that's what our family does – you fall down and get right back up," and "we wouldn't have all this if one person not stepped up."

As family members reflected on their individual and family histories, they identified many times throughout their lives when themselves or the family faced adversarial circumstances. Most often these challenging times were recalled by elder family members. This was most likely due to having more life experience than their family members, having lived through more challenging economic times and not having the benefit of relying on CN services for assistance. Therefore, many family members viewed their family elders as consistently persevering no matter the circumstances. One participant described his mother as the personification of the word "perseverance," because she had found ways to overcome domestic violence and a natural disaster. The family also noted her working two and three jobs throughout her life to ensure her family's needs were provided. Other than her own intrinsic determination to persevere, the family was not able to identify any resources or other factors that contributed to her success as a mother and citizen. In many cases, families described individual family members as having an uncanny ability to see things through to their finish or to come out on top of difficult situations. One elder family member recalled several instances throughout her life

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where she had to "keep on keepin' on," as she called it. One of her earliest memories of facing adversity was being sent to boarding school, where she elaborated on her experience and her refusal to let it get the best of her,

> I just missed home, family, friends, everything familiar. I just missed it all. And I just wanted to die. I think that's what did it for me. Ultimately, I think that's what gave me the backbone and I knew I could do something I had to do whether I had to do it or not. Just keep on keepin' on. And it's up to you. Nobody can do it for you. And *that's* the secret. It's up to you. (F2G1F79)

Years later, as a military wife, this same elder recalled facing economic hardship while raising her children while her husband was deployed. She was driven to better her family's situation without relying on the military or others for assistance. Instead, she depended on her own intrinsic drive to provide for her family at whatever cost necessary. This I-poem captures her ability to find and keep a job at a time when she did not have a formal education or adequate work skills,

> I got paid
>
> I paid the house payment
>
> I'm waiting
>
> I'm waiting
>
> I'm lookin' at the freezer
>
> I got down to four days of food
>
> I said, 'I need to borrow money'
>
> I also got out the newspaper
>
> I needed

I started that job

I could feed my kids

I was *damn good* at it

I *knew*

I had to be

I had to talk these people into this

I did (F2G1F79)

Another participant, also the eldest family member in her participating family, described a similar experience at a time in her life when she was 18 and a single mother. Wanting to become less dependent on her parents for support, she described her experience garnering employment without a formal interview and at a time when she had little life experience, no formal education and few work skills,

I had no talents. I had no skills. I had no schooling, but I could draw. And I did pretty good at that drawing, you know. So, I gathered up all of my artwork and put it in a little portfolio… I said, um, 'I'd really like to come work for you. I could do you a good job.' And I said, 'I can show you my artwork. This is, this is what I've done in the past and I can draw anything you put in front of me.' And, uh, he must, it must have tickled him, cause he said, 'Well, there's a lot of red tape involved, but consider yourself hired.' I thought, I was so excited. I was ecstatic. I was just a kid. (F6G1F52)

She directly referenced this experience as being a turning point in her life where she was able to become more independent and launch her career. Yet another similar experience was had by another participant who further elaborated on her experience attempting to find employment when she was a single mother responsible for raising her four children,

It comes down to this. I went into that tribe not knowing, not knowing nobody, but using my handshake, my word and keeping my promise. And knowing what I wanted and being Chickasaw. And from that, I've paved the way that my strong children can make their names. So now, they have paved their way and from their way comes their children. And are we a dominating force? When it comes down to it, yeah. (F3G2F48)

As this participant thought, her drive to be successful made a difference for the entire family, especially younger generations. Thus, an internal drive to overcome adversity had implications for positively influencing the entire family, its lineage and its legacy.

A refusal to be denied was also closely related to a refusal to be silenced. Many families identified family ancestors or current family elders who "spoke up" on behalf of themselves, their families or other Chickasaws. In most cases, speaking up was used as an effective means for challenging the status quo of governmental or tribal policies. One family described two family ancestors who were instrumental in changing CN policy to include citizens at-large to receive the same benefits and services as Chickasaws living within the boundaries of the CN. They wrote letters and made phone calls to tribal officials that changed this policy. In the process, the family ancestors founded the first organized group of Chickasaws living outside of Chickasaw tribal jurisdiction that worked alongside the CN to increase services to their area. A similar experience was found in another family whose family elder recalled directly vocalizing her concerns to the CN Governor about not receiving services in her area,

That's what we told Governor Anoatubby, the first time he had a Listening Conference, um, I told him, I said, 'Yeah, you cross that bridge at Norman and you're no longer a Chickasaw and that's not right.' And he said, 'No, it isn't.' And after that we started getting, you know, he started working on stuff for us. (F5G1F73)

Both of these families were proud of the efforts made by their ancestors and elder. Their ability to forge ahead at every opportunity to make a positive impact for Chickasaws was held in high regard for these families. Thus, knowing their family members worked hard to overcome challenges reinforced the pride the families had for their elders, ancestors and their family's legacy.

Fierce Loyalty to Family Members

Family members displayed signs of being "fiercely loyal" to one another and the family unit. This loyalty was often described as an intrinsic drive to support one another at all costs and placing the immediate needs of "the family" and its individual members above the needs of one's self. This fierce loyalty to family seemed to be present at all times, but to a more substantial degree whenever significant adversity struck the family or specific family members. A brief sample of relevant meaning units that summarize the fierce loyalty that family members felt toward one another and the family itself include, "she was at the hospital, basically, 24-7 ," "I didn't leave his side," "in the good times, we're there; in the bad times, we're there," "I slept in the chair in his (son) living room over the weekend," "she (mother) was my 'rock' and she went to the hospital with me every day," "I'm real protective of my kids," "you don't leave anybody behind," "that fiercely loyal type of thing," "some families just give up on people and stuff like that, but I don't think we do," "150 total days he (son) spent in the hospital and nobody ever left his side," "we also support each other in *bad* times," "be there for one another, be there for your brother, be there for your sister," and "the bottom line is she will come and help."

A few families now had adult family members who years earlier faced legal, financial or substance use problems during adolescence or early adulthood. The family unit played a critical role in helping these family members overcome these problems and return to healthier lifestyles.

Out of loyalty to the troubled family member, family members made financial sacrifices to ensure their family member could receive appropriate care to restore a healthier lifestyle. One particular family member shared his experience as an adolescent having to attend a facility out of state, whereby his mother and brother endured financial hardship to help him during this time,

> I had to go to a place in Springfield, Missouri for three months. I was 16. But, she had to help me pay what it was I was going through and, um, I didn't know this for a long time (holding back tears), but, um, she couldn't pay her electric bill. So, her and my younger brother had to, I don't know how long they had to sit without electricity, but they, they did it, cause they were helping me (pauses) do what I needed to do at the time. (F5G2M45)

Although at the time he may not have understood the sacrifices made by his family, his emotionality as he recalled this experience during the family interview indicated that he now currently understood the loyalty that his family had to him and the sacrifices they endured. He later described his mother as the most significant and influential person in his life, "without question," as he stated it.

Four families interviewed had adopted nieces, nephews or grandchildren into their nuclear family. Therefore, several family members were serving as the legal guardian or custodial parent for one or more children in their family. This was sometimes due to having other family members lead unhealthy lifestyles that presented challenges to raising children on their own. Families interviewed that had such situations occur felt a calling to "step up" in the best interests of all family members – the youth and their respective biological parents. Family members recognized that adopting youth would pose personal sacrifices and potential problems within their already formed nuclear family, but out of loyalty to support extended family

members and family youth, deemed the sacrifices small in comparison to the potential hardships faced by the youth being removed from the extended family-of-origin. One participant described he and his wife's loyalty to their biological nephew, whom they adopted and was considered their son,

> It was obvious Mom and Dad were not ever going to be able to be in a position to take care of him in the near future. So, they came to the family and asked if we could do anything. So, my wife and I looked at each other and said, 'There's no way this kid's going into the system.' So, we started the process of, uh, adopting him so he's now our son. (F4G2M59)

A similar, albeit different, experience was described by a current family elder representing a different family as she recalled caring for her son at a time when he suffered from alcohol dependence. Her frequency with which she recalled "staying" with him exemplifies her commitment to her son receiving the appropriate care that he needed and that he would not further harm himself, even if it involved making personal sacrifices to herself,

> He didn't want to go. *I didn't leave his side*. I slept in the chair in his living room over the weekend and his wife came and stayed with me. I would not leave his side until I turned him over to the hospital. And the counselor told me to get myself out of there and leave him alone, it wasn't my problem and he would never grow up if I didn't just let *him* face it. And I'm thinkin', 'He would have never grown up if I hadn't been strong enough to get him there. He would have gone out and killed himself in the car or something.' But, I didn't leave him. I wouldn't leave him. I had his car keys and I kept them until he got out of rehab, because I loved him enough to fight and argue…So I just stayed with him. And when he got sober I *still* stayed with him. (F2G1F79)

The power of "staying" with family members during times of significant adversity was also detailed by another family whose two children were nearly fatally wounded in a car accident approximately seven years prior to the family interview. Both of the injured family members spent prolonged time in the hospital recovering from the accident. At the time of the family interview, the youngest family member injured in the accident was still experiencing severe medical hardships and had to spend prolonged periods of time in the hospital and away from school due to multiple surgeries to restore his health. The family was strongly convicted to ensure that while hospitalized both children had someone at their bedside at all hours of the day, every day. The family felt comforted knowing that a family member or close friend was helping care for their youth. Family members, immediate and extended, provided relief for the parents of the children. The parents of the two injured children described the loyalty from other family members to help care for the children,

> It wasn't uncommon for 15, 20 people just to show up and come check on him. See how he was doing. So, you know, stuff like that. So, the accident kind of brought a lot of it together. We're, like I said, out of the 73 days we were in the hospital, I think my wife and I figured there was four nights that we were actually in the same bed together. You know, cause one had to be with another. After a few weeks, uh, the rest of the family kind of realized what we were going through, so you're grandma and grandpa from the other side started taking a shift, and sit with him. Mom and Dad came in and took a shift to stay with him to give us a little bit of a break. The girls were old enough. The daughter from Stillwater would come in and she'd spend a couple of days with either her sister or brother to, uh, you know, just be with them to give my wife and I a break, because we were bearing the brunt of it. (F4G2M59)

Still, family members demonstrated their loyalty to family members in other ways and under other circumstances. Families felt convicted to demonstrate their loyalty to all family members, when possible. Families did not speak of taking sides or choosing certain family members over others. This, too, could be related to the family orientation of the families and their valuing of extended family relationships. One family member felt strongly in working to keep her son and daughter-in-law's marriage intact. As she saw it, serving to protect the best interest of the marriage was important for the couple and also the couple's three children. Her son described this experience in his life where he battled depression and marital problems and his mother's role in saving his marriage,

> I moved away from my family and things just got worse. It got worse and worse and worse. And then I moved even further out. We moved from Connerville to Stonewall and my goodness, it just, it got even worse and at that point right before we hit bottom, our family, where it was, it probably wouldn't have been far away from us actually going our separate ways. Mom intervened. And, you know, pretty much told us, 'You're coming to live with, y'all are coming to live with me. I don't care. We will figure it out. Y'all are just, we need to stick together.' (F6G2M34)

At the time of the family interview the couple's marriage was still intact after 16 years, was restored to high levels of satisfaction and they were living with their three children in their own residence. Both marital partners explained that had the family member not intervened out of loyalty to their marriage, they most likely would have divorced.

Having known family members would be loyal to serving the best interests of others was described as a comforting feeling that often led to healing and recovery. Knowing that family members would be there to protect them, care for them and provide useful suggestions was

emotionally comforting for family members. Thus, the family provided a support system for the family, which was described by one participant as she grieved over the loss of her aunt,

> When stuff starts getting really hard we know we can lean on everyone else will be there
> to catch us and it's just a process that we have to go through. Just take it one step at a
> time and know that everybody's gonna be there to catch you if you ever feel sad or
> anything. I mean, I've had many a days where it's hit me pretty hard and my dad will
> come in there and he would just hold me and told me 'Just let it out.' Uh, they're, they're
> here for you. They're here, just pray. You know, and stuff like that, it just helps me
> recover easier knowing that him or my mom or my uncle are all gonna be there whenever
> I need them. And that just helps me recover faster from all the losses in our family that
> we've had. (F9G3F19)

Connection to Chickasaw Nation/Tribal Services

Families overwhelmingly saw the CN – mainly their employment opportunities and resources and services available to Chickasaw citizens – as playing an important role in helping their family lead healthy lifestyles and contributing to their family's ability to respond positively to adversarial circumstances. Many families shared stories of the CN directly improving their overall quality of life. The CN gave families a sense of belongingness to their community, an opportunity for second chances, compassion and an added layer of security if the family approached challenges. A brief sample of relevant meaning units that summarize the role of the CN and tribal services in creating healthy family lifestyles and helping families to be resilient in the face of adversity include, "what would we do if it wasn't for the Chickasaws," "we've always got that (CN) to fall back on," "job opportunities for me when I'm older," "the tribe actually developed all these programs that were specifically for people that lived outside the boundaries,"

"I've got a chore person, a lawnmower, a cellar," "they (CN) cater to the elders and they cater to the youth and they've still got other programs in-between," "Governor Anoatubby has done wonders for our elders and for our kids," "if it wasn't for y'all (CN) I probably would be in jail," "it's nice to have the security blanket of the tribe," "they (CN) have so many different programs that they offer," "you ask for it and they (CN) try to help you," "whenever you start working in the tribe, you start connecting with people" and "if it wasn't for the Indians (CN) I don't know what we would've done."

Overall, families living within close proximity to CN headquarters in Ada or at least within the boundaries of Chickasaw tribal jurisdiction felt a strong sense of comfort knowing they were geographically connected to the CN. Living in close proximity to the CN brought increased opportunities to access services and garner employment. Even for families living outside Chickasaw tribal jurisdiction, traveling long distances to reach such services or for employment opportunities offset the drawbacks of paying for non-tribal services or finding employment with a non-tribal entity. Family members felt as though the CN was one place they could go for equal employment opportunities and that looking for work within the CN was less threatening. One family member who lived in close proximity to CN headquarters fully summarized the importance of her close connection to the CN by citing several benefits,

> I think it's a secure feeling living within the boundaries of the Chickasaw Nation, because of all of the programs that they offer and all the services that they provide. Like, that's how my family got our house and we were on the commodity, the food commodity program for awhile and, you know, the job that I have and just the benefits that come with that job, you couldn't find that anywhere else. You know? And, it's getting to where that the business world is, like, so cut-throat that everybody has a degree now and, you

know, the tribe is one place that they *will* give you a chance. If you have a degree or not they'll give you a chance and they'll let you show them that you deserve where you're at and you deserve the position that you're in and I don't see that many other places. (F3G3F30)

Families who lived outside of tribal jurisdiction noted it was at times difficult for them to access tribal services and felt relieved or comforted upon learning of new services available to them in their geographical location. Despite their geographical distance from the CN, they, too, received services that they felt helped improve their quality of life. In many instances, they felt the CN spared them of additional burdens often experienced by their non-AI counterparts, such as high medical expenses. One elder who lived outside of Chickasaw tribal jurisdiction noted her pleasure with receiving free medication from the CN,

I know I have my medicine and I'd only be able to buy half a months of medicine because I didn't have enough money to buy the whole month's supply and now all I do is get on a phone, call them, a couple days later my medicine is at the door. (F5G1F73)

Whether families lived within Chickasaw tribal jurisdiction or outside it, families emphasized the ease in which services could be accessed. Rarely, if ever, did families find services cumbersome, difficult to access or not worth their time or effort. In fact, some families noted it was better to drive long distances and receive a service at no cost instead of receiving the cost locally by a non-AI entity and having to pay for it. As one participant noted, it only required one phone call to receive, what he felt, was a significant amount of help at a time when the family was experiencing a crisis as a result of an automobile accident that left two of their children in two different hospitals, one for a total of 150 days,

I'm part of an Indian tribe and I understand they have benefits to help us. I wonder what I

can get done? With *one* phone call. *One*. I made a phone call and got my daughter's

house payment and electric bill and my electric bill paid that month. (F4G2M59)

This particular family member felt a giant sense of relief during a difficult time knowing the CN

was helping to cover additional expenses. This enabled the family to devote more of their time

and attention to the more important medical problems at-hand. Other families identified free

medical services as something that helped alleviate financial expenditures, which also alleviated

the stress of medical problems. Free medical services were viewed by the families as a

significant benefit of being Chickasaw. As one participant noted, "Wouldn't be able to see

without the Chickasaws. I wouldn't have glasses" (F1G3M17).

In addition to free medical services, families also felt that education was strongly valued

and supported by the CN. Families felt that increased education led to an improved quality of life

and they very much felt the CN promoted an atmosphere in which Chickasaws of all ages were

encouraged to perform well academically and continue their educational pursuits. Knowing the

tribe offered educational benefits increased the likelihood that children would succeed in school

and that they would continue their education. Families felt that educational incentive programs,

such as Governor's Honor Club, encouraged their children to perform well at school. This, too,

alleviated parents of financial burdens that came with rewarding their children for good grades.

One family member elaborated on the extent to which the CN had provided educational

incentives for his adolescent son through the years,

Another thing that they do with my son on education, they have an Honor Club thing

where if you make the Honor Club they invite you to a dinner. We've gone to Incredible

Pizza, Andy Alligator's, to the Laser Zone. If he gets in the Honor Club they invite him

and they take him out to dinner that night and let the kids all play and stuff. Uh, we've

been to a couple Thunder (basketball) games. We've been to a couple Redhawk

(baseball) games. The tribe will have a 'Thunder Night' or a 'Redhawk Night.'

(F4G2M59)

Families also felt these incentives fostered additional opportunities to reinforce family values and

involve their children in Chickasaw culture. This same parent also described the extent to which

the CN helped the educational pursuits of adults seeking higher education,

Our oldest daughter…she is going back to school to get her Master's…Chickasaws are

paying for it. The whole thing. She just applied, she signed up, applied for everything,

they paid all of her tuition, all of her fees. They sent her a $150 clothing grant and they're

paying for all her books and tuition and stuff. They also sent her a laptop computer.

(F4G2M59)

Families also noted there seemed to be a free service for almost any need felt by a

Chickasaw. Importantly, families felt as though the opportunities provided by the CN were

infinite. Thus, no matter the need and no matter the frequency to which the need was

experienced, families were comforted by knowing the CN was a place for which they could

receive ongoing support. One participant described having relied on the CN for a multitude of

services for her and her family and expressed her pleasure with the extent to which the tribe has

supported her each time,

When it comes to my medical, cause I've had open heart surgery and stuff, *my* medical

needs and *my* school needs, just anything, just *needing*, they have never told me, 'No.'

And they could say, 'Are you serious? You're wanting again? Go on down the road,

Indian.' But they've never told me, 'No.' (F3G2F48)

The families also felt the CN was an entity where they were accepted for being Chickasaw. This was most often mentioned when it came to seeking employment with the CN or being employed by the CN. The CN's level of acceptance felt by the participants seemed to increase self-efficacy of family members and made it worth, in some cases, the extra effort to work for the CN. This was described by one participant, who commuted 90 minutes each way to work,

> I'm a Chickasaw employee now and they accepted me in just like a long lost brother, like, you know, I'm part of their family now. It's wonderful…I'm so comfortable working there that's why I have no problem driving from Norman to Tishomingo everyday to go to work. It's just good. I love working with everybody that I work with and they genuinely care about me and my family. I'm not *just* an employee. I'm extended family. (F6G2M34)

Further, family members felt as though the CN reinforced many of their same family-oriented values and the CN treated them as though their families did. In fact, many participants saw the CN and those associated with it as extended family. Families felt strongly that the CN's values paralleled their own family values. This, in turn, made it easier to have improved relationships with their family members, as was again described by the same participant from previously,

> They were flexible with the hours to make it easier for me and my family. Not just for me, but for my entire family…they absolutely bend over backwards to see what they could do for me, not only to make, you know, my life easier, but to make my entire *family's* life easier so that just being a family is easier. (F6G2M34)

Hooittapila/They Help One Another

The fourth research question asked, "How is Chickasaw families' resilience transmitted across the generations?" The finding that answers this question is detailed below under this fourth central theme of "Hooittapila/They Help One Another." Within the participating families, aspects of resilience were transmitted in a multidirectional fashion, in which all family members across all generations contributed to uplifting and instilling resilient qualities in one another. A brief sample of relevant meaning units that summarize the transmission of resilience across the generations by helping one another include, "I raised them to be strong, independent, to know their heart and their head," "pass it down to the kids," "they (elders) always taught me that," "a lot of the elders, they'd sit down and talk to me," "I took their (parents) advice and life started getting better for me," "I get that from my dad," "he's (nephew) actually teaching us to handle that type of thing," "I think that's where we get it is from her (mother) and from him (grandfather)," and "once the elders started talking to me really felt it in here what I needed to do."

Although families most frequently cited examples of positive, resourceful or resilient qualities being inherited from ancestors and elder generations, such a linear depiction of transmitting such attributes would be short-sighted. Family members also shared accounts of having been uplifted or inspired by family members of the same generation rank, or in some instances, by younger generations. In other occasions, many family members felt compelled to "put their best foot forward," "try their best" or "work hard" so that future generations of family members could be positively impacted by their efforts. Knowing future generations were still to come buoyed the spirits of adult family members during times of struggle. Therefore, a multidirectional transmission of resilience most accurately depicts the passing of resilience across generations.

Family members, regardless of age or generation rank, noted receiving positive attributes from their elders that fostered healthy lifestyles or directly influenced their ability to overcome challenges. In some instances, these were qualities identified as factors that contributed to family resilience, such as the determination to not give up or be denied, which was described vividly by one third generation family member,

> Each person has their own little thing, but it's just like, it's everyone has, everyone is their own person and everyone has a different personality, but I think deep down at each level, at the bottom level of everybody is the exact same fierceness that he has. And I think that's where we get it – is from her (mother) and from him (grandfather).
>
> (F3G3F30)

Her remarks speak directly to the intergenerational transmission of such qualities, as she specifically noted her grandfather's "fierceness" was now also possessed by her mother and was now a positive quality found within herself and her two sisters. On still other occasions, resilient qualities were passed to younger generations by having directly observed another family member overcome similar challenges or having heard stories of family members overcoming such challenges. For instance, knowing an elder survived boarding school or more difficult economic times helped place current hardships into perspective, which often made their own struggles easier to bear. As one family member noted of her mother's experience,

> Mom tells us stories about her when she was at government school, it's just kind of sad and depressing, but she made it through there and so through her experiences that she shared with us that only makes us strive to do better for our people so that our people just keep getting better and better in everyday lives and taking care of our families and just things like that. (F9G2F38)

Elder family members also provided opportunities for younger generations that, on many occasions, helped children and grandchildren identify and develop their talents. Thus, positive and resilient qualities were modeled by elder generations for younger generations to follow. After having observed parents or grandparents participate in athletics or cultural practices, many younger generation family members desired to continue these traditions. Many younger generation family members then went on to pursue such interests athletically, academically and/or professionally. Knowing their elder family members supported them in these efforts helped them to follow-through with such pursuits and uphold family legacies. A third generation family member recalled that his educational and career choices were heavily inspired by the hobby and career choices of his grandparents,

> All this stuff (artwork) influenced me, cause I've gone on an art career. I went to art school and I know this was a direct influence to, you know, my first saturation into doing art stuff was going and seeing grandma do stuff. (F2G3M35)

The elder generation family members who observed younger generations work hard at reaching their goals and continuing family legacies also seemed to instill pride and greater levels of efficacy in their own lives. These processes had many implications for the multidirectional transmission of positive and resilient qualities.

Younger generation family members, too, were found to directly influence elder generation family members for the better. Some first and second generation family members recognized that younger generation family members inspired them to set goals for themselves and obtain them. This was sometimes attributed to also having observed their youth set goals for themselves and become the first person in their family to reach such accomplishments. For instance, one second generation family member was inspired to enroll in college to receive her

Bachelor's degree, because her oldest daughter was the first person in their family to receive a college degree. At the time of the family interview, this second generation participant was nearing completion of her Bachelor's degree, was president of the college's Native American Student Association and was anticipating in enrolling in a Master's degree program after graduation. Another participant identified his three children as his inspiration to return to school to complete his general equivalent's degree and choose a healthier lifestyle,

> My son was the major push for me to get my GED, cause I had dropped out of high school…but it was my son asking if I graduated high school. You know, where did I go to high school? And that's what kind of pushed me into thinking about my GED. I told him I would get it, cause I wanted to make sure that I had it long before he graduated or long before he was in the same grade where I was when I decided I had enough, which was unfortunately, just, it was a terrible decision…but they're my main focus. He was my push. It's cause of my children that I quit smoking cigarettes and quit doing drugs. (F6G2M34)

Also contributing to a multidirectional transmission of such qualities was that many challenges experienced by the families had implications for impacting all family members, such as the death of a family member. All generations were affected by such losses, and therefore family members across all generations collectively supported one another's recovery. The thought of knowing other or all family members were challenged by the same hardships led to collective healing efforts. For these families, it appeared to be uplifting to individual family members knowing their experience was shared by others. These types of collective healing efforts, such as family prayer, further reinforced many of the family-oriented qualities of the families – togetherness, closeness and concern for others.

Inspiration to try new things, set lofty goals and work hard to pursue these goals was often influenced by all generations of family members, not just elder or younger generations. For instance, families that adopted extended kin, such as cousins, into the nuclear family provided family members with new experiences. A third generation participant was originally the youngest child of three in her family, but became an older sister to her four younger cousins when they were adopted into her family. This exposed her for the first time to younger children and gave her opportunities to assist for the first time in child-rearing duties. These experiences led her to consider additional educational and career options that may not have happened without this unique involvement with her four younger siblings,

I think they (adopted siblings) helped me, because if we wouldn't have had all the little ones, I don't think I would have been as open, cause I really enjoy working with children. And so my goal in life is to be a pediatrician (F7G3F16).

On other occasions, family members identified receiving strength or encouragement from family members within their own generation rank, as well. Family members who achieved such goals then, in turn, uplifted and inspired other family members to set similar goals or reach additional personal highs,

If it wasn't for my family to inspire to do the stuff that I do, I probably would have never done it. Like, the (Chickasaw) Princess (pageant) stuff. If it wasn't for my father giving me strength to go out and do what I want to do or my mom being there to fix my hair (family laughs in the background) I probably wouldn't have been out on stage at first. I probably would have just backed up and just told them all I wasn't doing it. But, it's because I knew I had my father, my mom, my cousin and the rest of my family out in the audience. They were there. They were my strength to go out there and do what I wanted

to do. And if it wasn't for my younger brothers and sisters to inspire me that I know

they're looking up to me and that I know that even though I don't know a bunch of the

kids that were out there, I know a few of them out there, now they want to try it. Some of

the girls, they want to try it. They want to get up there and they want to see if they have a

chance to do it. (F9G3F19)

Her vivid depiction of her participation in the Chickasaw Princess Pageant, a cultural practice

held in high regard within the Chickasaw community and culture, was directly inspired by all

generations of her family. Likewise, having performed admirably in such an event led others in

her generation rank, but still younger than her, to set a similar goal. This participant's cousin

shared similar feelings about family members across all generations who influenced her life for

the better. She felt the thought of knowing they contributed to creating a healthy, high-

functioning young person such as herself was also rewarding for each of them,

> It's nice to know that they were always around to, to help shape who I am, you
>
> know?...Each of them has contributed to who I have became. And I think it's really cool
>
> that they not only, I can say that I have a bunch of people that did that for me, but I think
>
> it's cool for them, too, to say 'Hey I contributed to that being right there.' That's, like, the
>
> coolest thing, ever. (F9G3F22)

She would then later describe that family members within her same third generation rank,

although much younger, played a critical role in helping her become the person she is currently.

She noted that this was a unique phenomenon, as others in her peer group found this to be

unusual, but that for her it seemed natural,

> A lot of people they find it weird that I would look up to someone who is younger than I
>
> am and I'm like, 'Why is that weird?' If they're doing something that you find admirable,

there's nothing wrong with looking up to that and, uh, I don't know. I don't think there's

anything wrong with it. People find it weird, I guess. Even the younger ones. They

inspire me to stay silly. (F9G3F22)

A similar phenomenon was found in the family who had experienced a car accident that nearly

fatally wounded two of the family members. Within that particular family, all generations were

inspired by the child's ability to endure such hardships, overcome them and even more so,

remain a positive and resourceful person in their family and community. His resilience gave

perspective to their own problems and inspired them to remain positive about his situation, as

well as other current challenges they faced or expected to face in the future.

Finally, families saw themselves as a family unit – a web of connections that existed

across all generations, which also included deceased and future generations. This meant less

emphasis was placed on specific actions or behaviors taken by individual family members and

greater emphasis placed on the implications of such behaviors by individual family members for

the entire family. Thereby, hardships or challenges were felt by all and times of joy or

celebration were experienced by all, as well. Whether by living up to family expectations,

carrying out family traditions and legacies, cooking traditional meals made by generations long

passed or keeping, sharing and cherishing family relics, the participating families felt an internal

connection for one another and were committed to supporting one another, at all costs. This

eternal connection to those older, those younger and those yet to come helped commit them

toward fostering a positive and healthy environment for all. Elder generations knew their efforts

would be honored by younger generations and likewise, younger generations knew their

accomplishments would be honored by elder family members, whether spoken or unspoken. This

internal drive to support and honor the family kept all generations of family members strong and

the family unit eternally connected. As one family elder movingly described of her artwork now

displayed in her daughter's home where the family interview occurred, family members would

be eternally connected across all generations so as to uphold the mission tasked by many family

elders and ancestors to "keep the family together,"

> This is just *fun* and they were each painted with somebody in mind. So you think of them
>
> while you're doing it and you think of them when you see it again and they think of you
>
> every time they notice, because it becomes part of the background. You don't see this
>
> stuff every day, it's just "there." But once in awhile if you zero in on it they think of me,
>
> and I certainly thought of them when I was doing it. So, it's a circle. (F2G1F79)

Chapter 5 - Discussion

To date, research on the experiences of Chickasaw families has been scarce. The findings generated from this study provide greater depth and clarity on the qualities common to Chickasaw families and also their experiences of historical trauma and the factors that contribute to their ability to persevere when confronted with adversity. A non-reservation tribe whose members reside in urban and rural communities makes these Chickasaw experiences an important addition to the research literature on AI family life.

The findings of the current study are best understood by considering their relationship to one another. Within the four central themes and across all four central themes, the findings form an interconnected web of qualities that influence and reinforce the other. For instance, the families' close involvement with one another helped foster a family-orientation assumed by the families that strengthened the family bond. This, then, contributed to other factors, such as increased pride for the family unit, the valuing of extended kin and fostering fierce loyalty to family members. As another example, the experiences of historical trauma lent way to an increased need to maintain a positive outlook and be determined to not give up when confronted with challenges. Given the backdrop of historical trauma, being determined and maintaining a positive outlook during times of adversity may be more important to Chickasaw and other AI families than non-AI families. Likewise, the experiences of historical trauma may reinforce the need for a closely-knit extended family that transmits resilient qualities to one another as a mechanism of continued survival and prosperity for Chickasaw families.

Previous research found that Chickasaw families were prideful of their Chickasaw culture and the CN and that they valued education and spirituality (Deacon et al., 2011). "Strong

families" were seen as families whose members were regularly involved with one another. The findings from the current study are consistent with these previous findings, but added greater depth. For example, families in this study were prideful of specific achievements accrued by family members, which ranged from educational to career to athletic accomplishments. Further, families elaborated more on how spirituality was used and its role in family life. Families also exhibited strength by their ability to "bend, but not break." Contributing to this was their family-orientation that featured warmth, emotional closeness, openness and respect – all inherent qualities that families used to resolve internal conflict and disagreements. These attributes were not captured in previous research.

The current findings reinforce the notion that Chickasaw families are a highly complex, diverse and ever-evolving group. Yet, the findings also help to bring some level of clarity to their heterogeneous composition. This heterogeneity was found to exist across the four domains of race, culture, generation and geography. In many ways, these domains were interconnected. For example, racial differences, such as through changes in Chickasaw blood quantum and phenotype in future generations could bring about increased generational differences between family members. Likewise, continued growth of the CN may lead to increased services and opportunities for cultural engagement, which may bring about fewer differences between rural and urban families and the extent to which they engage in Chickasaw culture.

Chickasaw families experienced historical trauma by mourning losses accumulated by their families and their tribe that date as far back as the first contact with White Europeans. Importantly, the losses did not exist separately from one another, but instead were interconnected. For instance, references to land removal and land loss led to painful reminders of generations of Chickasaws lost along the Trail of Tears, which meant keepers of oral histories

and cultural practices unique to the native homelands of the Chickasaws were lost along the trail, also. The interconnectedness of the losses may pose challenges to completely parsing out their differences, thus contributing to the complexity of historical trauma and its effects.

Not surprisingly, boarding school placements of Chickasaw family members directly led to the loss of the Chickasaw language, as this has been identified elsewhere (Cobb, 2000; Whitbeck, Adams et al., 2004). However, it is important to note that of all losses experienced, the loss of the Chickasaw language appeared to be the most substantial of all losses experienced by the families. This most likely had to do with the language being seen as the gateway into further cultural and spiritual engagement and what differentiated the Chickasaws the most from all other AI tribes. Many family members felt guilt over having not done more to keep the language alive within their own families. The loss of Chickasaw language also left families with a sense of hopelessness that it could ever be restored, which was also experienced by other AIs residing on a reservation (Whitbeck, Adams et al., 2004). Further, boarding school placement also had a direct effect on the loss of Chickasaw culture. This appears to be the first study that elaborates on the extent to which boarding schools contributed to the loss of AI culture.

The historical trauma findings are also consistent with and extend previous findings. For instance, the accumulation of losses led to many family members struggling to integrate a complete Chickasaw identity. As described in previous literature, AIs experienced conflicted messages about being AI as children and adults, which affected their ability to develop a healthy identity and their ability to parent effectively (Myhra, 2011). Participants in both studies also felt that losses were ongoing, although this was experienced slightly differently between samples. A previous study found that the poor health of current AIs was leading to continued genocide and that racism would be a continued trauma for future AI generations (Myhra, 2011). This was

similar to, although different from Chickasaw experiences, in that the perpetuation of historical

trauma was likely to stem from continued harmful stereotypes of Chickasaws and failure of non-

AIs to recognize the positive contributions made by the CN and its citizens.

A shortcoming of the historical trauma findings is that they fail to directly clarify the

effect it has had on the family unit, individual family members and other variables. For instance,

the affects of historical trauma on the quality of particular family relationships within and across

generations, childrearing, educational and career aspirations and overall daily functioning was

not captured. Thus, the historical trauma response (Yellow Horse Brave Heart, 2004)

experienced by the Chickasaw families is not completely understood. However, it is likely that

historical trauma was experienced to a greater degree amongst elder family members as they

tended to be more vocal and speak more vigorously in relation to loss. Similarly, it is plausible

that the losses of cultural and individual identity had greater effects on individual participants

than other losses, as this seemed to bring about identity confusion and lowered levels of self-

efficacy for family members who had more direct experiences with these losses, which was

experienced by participants elsewhere (Myhra, 2011). One explanation for having not captured

the effects of historical trauma, however, was that the families and their individual members in

the current study represented a nonclinical sample and were quick to identify themselves as a

high-functioning unit. Therefore, it is likely that the health and stability of the families and their

resilient qualities buffered the effects of their historical trauma. It is plausible that a clinical

sample of Chickasaws may have led to a greater understanding of the effects of historical trauma.

Although the purpose of this study was not to test AI resilience theory (Cross, 1998), the

findings lend support to the credibility of it. Three of the four domains said to contribute to

resilience were directly referenced by Chickasaw families, of which included context, mind and

spirit. Most importantly, there tended to exist a healthy balance among these domains within the families. As for context, families themselves contributed to their ability to foster resilience through their fierce loyalty to one another and their ability to transmit resilient qualities within and across generations. Resilience was also seen as a deeply rooted Chickasaw cultural phenomenon that has helped the family to persevere throughout time. Families were actively involved in shaping their communities and policies of the CN, whereby they also remained closely connected to the CN for support. As for mind, families portrayed the ability to make positive choices that brought about healthier family relationships. For instance, families were able to quickly reconcile internal family conflict and common struggles by respecting one another and valuing open communication amongst the family. The result was having more positive emotions attached to their experiences as Chickasaw family members. As for spirituality, some level of spiritual consciousness was found in nearly every family. Spirituality was viewed as a positive mechanism within Chickasaw families that led to greater involvement with one another, opportunities for emotional closeness and contributing to a more positive outlook on hardships. Of the four forces, body was least mentioned by the participants and no substantial findings emerged that shed greater light on the role of nutrition, age, genetics and overall physical health within the families. However, it appeared as though participants refrained from abusing substances or making decisions that led to poor physical health. Anecdotally, several families made reference to the important role of athletics in their family across generations, and it may be assumed that these families valued the importance of physical health, although this was not directly stated. Therefore, it is difficult to determine from the current findings the extent to which support can be given to this domain.

The factors contributing to Chickasaw family resilience fit with previous research on AI resilience, but also extend this emerging literature. Previous findings indicate that family members and individual tribes contribute to individuals' ability to persevere (Grandbois & Sanders, 2009). The fierce loyalty to family and the close connection to the CN fit with these findings within a population of AI elders. Chickasaw families further identified other resilient mechanisms, such as resilience existing within Chickasaw bloodlines. This so-called "resilient gene" existing within Chickasaws and other AIs may be one reason enculturation has shown to limit the risk of substance abuse and reduce depression in AI adolescents (Whitbeck, Chen et al., 2004; Whitbeck et al., 2002). If a resilient gene does exist within Chickasaw and other AI populations, it is likely to be illuminated by increased cultural engagement for these groups. Such may be the case, as Chickasaw families suggested that resilience was deeply rooted within the Chickasaw heritage. As they noted, following traditional Chickasaw ways of life, such as traditional spiritual practices, brought about improved family relationships and a more positive approach to life. It is important to note here that this particular finding has implications for understanding the intergenerational transmission of resilience within Chickasaw families. Given that resilience was identified as something that passed through Chickasaw bloodlines and existed within Chickasaw culture, it is possible that resilience could be passed as a hereditary trait within families and by raising younger generations to engage in traditional Chickasaw culture.

Additional resilient mechanisms found within the Chickasaw families are consistent with the factors that contribute to resilience of non-AI families. Findings from non-AI samples have indicated that close and open family relationships, adequate social and economic resources, a positive outlook and spiritual engagement contribute to family resilience (Waller, 2001; Walsh, 2003). Each of these same aspects was found within Chickasaw families. In the current study, a

positive outlook buffered the effects of historical trauma and the role of the CN provided increased socioeconomic resources, such as adequate employment and housing.

The finding of Chickasaw family members being fiercely loyal to one another and the family unit deserves some additional consideration. It is plausible that the loyalty Chickasaws feel toward one another dates as far back as land removal in the mid-1800s. The Chickasaws made great efforts to ensure that all Chickasaws were successfully removed to Indian Territory and were eventually reunited with their Chickasaw brethren in their new homeland. The Chickasaws ensured that orphans, widows and destitute Chickasaws were all removed to Indian Territory (Paige et al., 2010). In fact, present-day historians can identify by name the four final Chickasaws removed in 1850 (Paige et al., 2010). The efforts the Chickasaws made to control their own removal and ensure that all Chickasaws were eventually united in Indian Territory could be a major reason that today there exists a unified CN. Many other tribes, such as the Seminole, Coushatta, Choctaw, Cherokee and Creek tribes, were separated by force, necessity, choice or political motive. The Chickasaws' efforts to keep their tribe united show their attentiveness to the needs of the clans and individual families during removal. It is likely that this same loyalty to family has carried on into Chickasaw families today.

Pride in elders and incorporating traditional spiritual and cultural practices were identified by participants in a sobriety maintenance program as important factors for maintaining their sobriety and buffering the effects of historical trauma (Myhra, 2011). Although pride, spirituality and cultural engagement were not identified in the current study of Chickasaw families as directly contributing to their ability to overcome adversarial circumstances, the families did identify as being proud of their culture, their families and the CN. The families also incorporated varying levels of spiritual and cultural engagement in their personal and familial

lives. It is likely that such factors contributed to the overall strengthening of the Chickasaw family unit, which creates a seemingly immovable force that shielded adversity and limited the extent to which challenges were felt. Thus, to some extent, the family-orientation assumed by the families, their extendedness, their close involvement with one another and the CN, their pride and their spirituality may be viewed as additional resilient qualities, or at the very least, protective factors, for Chickasaw families. It is likely that these factors contribute to buffering the effects of historical trauma, racism, poverty and other external hardships that threaten the family unit.

Finally, this study appears to be the first of its kind to understand how resilience is passed throughout generations of AI family members. The findings from the current study indicate that a "top-down" approach to understanding the transmission of resilient qualities within Chickasaw families may be shortsighted. Instead, it emerged that Chickasaw family members of all ages and within all generations assist in contributing to the resilience of all family members. Thus, not only do younger generations learn important life lessons from elders or observe healthy lifestyles from their elders, they, too, contribute to helping their elder family members make decisions that protect the family unit and lead to healthier lifestyles. In many instances, it was the third and fourth generation family members that were inspiring elder family members to engage in their Chickasaw cultural heritage for the first time. Further still, these same processes were found to occur within the same generation of family members. It is important to note that the passing of resilience throughout the family appeared to be a reciprocal process, whereby family members helped one another without expecting something in return. Given the families' orientation toward the family unit and their close involvement, it is somewhat not surprising there seemed to be a spirit of altruism within the families.

Clinical Implications

The findings generated in the current study have several implications for working clinically with Chickasaw families in therapy. Given the family-orientation assumed by the families, their close involvement with one another and their inclusion of extended family members in their definition of "family," these findings suggest that culturally-sensitive family-based clinical services with Chickasaws are needed. Couple and family therapists (CFTs) may consider using general system theory (Bertalanffy, 1968) as a guide to conceptualizing behavioral and relational patterns within Chickasaw families to help conceptualize treatment. Others, too, have recommended a family system approach to working clinically with AIs for similar reasons (Sutton & Broken Nose, 2005). However, CFTs may want to approach specific family therapy theories with a degree of caution, as these theories were likely generated without consideration given to the uniqueness of minority families (McGoldrick & Hardy, 2008). Considering the complex heterogeneity of Chickasaw families and the important role assumed by extended family members in Chickasaw family life, family therapy theories that call for a rigid definition of healthy family functioning may pose inherit challenges to CFTs, and more importantly, Chickasaw families in therapy. Therefore, CFTs should consider how they may tailor these theories to provide culturally sensitive therapy to Chickasaw families.

These findings offer additional implications to providing culturally sensitive therapy with Chickasaw families. Families in this study experienced historical trauma by referencing myriad losses accumulated over the generations. While certainly all losses have the potential to lower one's self-efficacy and affect the quality of family relationships, the loss of Chickasaw identity and culture appeared to have the most effect on participants. These two losses in particular may have the greatest influence on common presenting problems, such as family violence, substance abuse, depression and anxiety. Therefore, assessing at intake and throughout treatment each

individual family members' level of engagement with AI culture by using the American Indian Enculturation Scale (AIES; Winterowd, Montgomery, Stumblingbear, Harless & Hicks, 2008) and the extent to which each has experienced historical trauma by using the Historical Loss Scale and Historical Loss Associated Symptoms Scale (Whitbeck, Adams et al., 2004) may be useful tools for capturing the family's level of engagement with AI culture and the extent to which they have experienced historical trauma. Although these assessments do not capture the uniqueness of Chickasaw culture and the specific ways Chickasaws have experienced historical trauma, they serve as useful starting points. Using the AIES to assist Chickasaw families with increasing their connection to AI culture may be one way to provide culturally sensitive therapy, buffer the effects of historical trauma and bring about recovery and healing (Gone, 2009).

Chickasaw families recounted many family stories throughout the interviews that at times shed light on the specific phenomenon under study. Given AI cultural traditions of storytelling and passing down family and cultural histories orally, CFTs may also wish to consider postmodern or discursive approaches to therapy (see Sutherland, 2007) with Chickasaw families. Chickasaw families in this study shared stories of hardship and struggle, yet also stories of survival and prosperity. CFTs may be wise to attune to the different meaning and emotional attachment family members give to problem-saturated family stories. Given the generational differences within Chickasaw families identified in this study, it is likely that not all family members across two and three generations will attribute the same meaning to these stories. Identifying entry points into problem-saturated stories may help Chickasaw families to unpack problem-saturated stories that may result in more positive and resourceful narratives of themselves. Thus, it may behoove CFTs to consider the discursive approaches of solution-focused therapy (de Shazer, 1985), narrative therapy (White & Epston, 1990) and collaborative

therapy (Anderson, 1997). These approaches may also offer greater sensitivity to Chickasaw conceptualizations of "family" and the Chickasaw culture.

At a pragmatic level, the findings also point toward consideration of Bowen's (1978) natural systems theory when working clinically with Chickasaw families. In the current study, Chickasaw family members who had children of their own spoke vigorously of the need to pass key family qualities on to younger and future generations, whereas younger generations seemed comfortable inheriting these qualities from their elder generation family members. CFTs should consider the extent to which these qualities, ways of being and other behavioral and relational patterns are passed intergenerationally within Chickasaw families. There exists a potential need for bringing insight and awareness for Chickasaw family members as to how these ways of being are transmitted across generations. Constructing genograms (Marlin, 1989) with Chickasaw families may help to bring greater clarity to behavioral and relational patterns within their family-of-origin with consideration given to the transmission of resilient qualities across the generations. Using a solution-oriented approach to genograms (Kuehl, 1995) may be one way to identify exceptions to family problems and healthier patterns of functioning across the family's history. It is important to note, however, that CFTs should consider certain aspects of natural systems theory that may conflict with Chickasaw culture and family norms. For instance, CFTs may mistakenly perceive the extendedness and openness of Chickasaw families as enmeshment, which may be a deeply rooted cultural and family norm that has facilitated survival for Chickasaw families throughout centuries. Harm may be caused to Chickasaw families by CFTs inadvertently dismantling the traditional Chickasaw family structure.

Chickasaw families identified many factors that contributed to their ability to persevere in the face of adversity. It is likely that Chickasaw families presenting for therapy have successfully

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solved past problems on their own or have already taken steps to solve their current problem

prior to entering treatment. Therefore, CFTs would be remiss to assume a deficit-based approach

to working with Chickasaw families. Instead, a strength-based approach, such as solution-

focused therapy (de Shazer, 1985) may assist Chickasaw families in identifying inherent cultural

and intra-familial strengths and available tribal resources to solve problems.

Findings generated from the current study revealed that spirituality was an important

component of Chickasaw family life, was practiced in various ways, helped keep family

members involved with one another and helped foster a family-orientation assumed by the

families. Others have noted the need to make spirituality an integral part of therapy with AIs

(King, 2009; Sutton & Broken Nose, 2005). Given the level of importance that spirituality plays

in Chickasaw family life, CFTs should consider formally assessing the role of spirituality in the

lives of their clients. A spiritual ecogram has emerged as a culturally sensitive and clinically

relevant tool for CFTs to use with AI families (Limb & Hodge, 2011). CFTs may consider using

such an assessment tool to gain greater clarification as to the role of spirituality in the lives of

their Chickasaw clients and how aspects of spirituality can be woven into treatment.

Research Implications

Although these findings add to the literature on Chickasaw and other AI family life, their

experiences of historical trauma and factors contributing to their resilience, continued research is

needed in several key areas. First, it is doubtful that this study captured every quality that is

common to Chickasaw families, and certainly not all AI families. While several important

qualities were identified, it is likely that there exist other qualities not captured by the present

study. Modesty, patience, calmness and generosity are other qualities that tend to be valued by

AIs (Aragon, 2006) and thus it is likely that additional studies on Chickasaw or other AI family

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life may uncover such qualities that exist within other families. Likewise, further research on

Chickasaw families may uncover additional domains that shed further light on their

heterogeneity. For instance, there may exist additional domains besides race, generation, culture

and geography that contribute to the complexity of Chickasaw families. Therefore, replication

studies, or even similar studies, with other Chickasaw or other AI families may generate

additional findings that help to illustrate a more complete picture of AI or Chickasaw family life.

Also, additional research may help to triangulate the findings of this study.

Second, future research could identify additional generational differences within families.

Nearly all families made direct references to the current growth of the CN, a movement toward

identifying or re-identifying with the Chickasaw culture and language and the increased

economic opportunities for Chickasaws. However, first and often second generation family

members came of age at a time when there were fewer economic opportunities for Chickasaws,

heightened racial tensions and the expectation to adopt mainstream cultural values. While the

current study identified these differences between generations, the effect that such generational

differences had on Chickasaw families was not completely captured. For instance, these

generational differences and their effects on parent-child and grandparent-grandchild

relationships and individual mental and physical health statuses are not known. Future research

on AI families could bring greater clarity to these generational differences and their effects on

individual functioning and family relationship quality across the generations.

Third, nearly all families spoke of tribal services available to Chickasaw citizens. It was

frequently mentioned, however, that the plethora of services and resources were available to

elders and youth. Middle generation family members, often "sandwiched" between caring for

their own parents on one end and their own children on the other, did not readily identify specific

tribal services unique to their generation. Given the tendency for AI families to value elders and youth, this may create additional strain on middle generation family members who predominantly care for these two generations. Future research should consider the level to which middle generation family members are affected by the conscientiousness to care for these other two generations.

Additional research is needed on Chickasaw and other AI experiences of historical trauma and resilience. While the current study was the first of its kind to identify the ways Chickasaws experienced historical trauma, the effects and associated symptoms of it were not clearly identified. A variety of qualitative and quantitative methods with clinical and nonclinical samples would help to determine further ways that historical trauma is experienced, its prevalence and the degree to which it is experienced across generations. Similarly, additional research using a variety of qualitative and quantitative methods with clinical and nonclinical samples would help to illuminate additional resilient qualities in Chickasaw families. It is likely that future studies may help to triangulate the current findings, but also identify additional qualities that assist families in persevering under adversarial circumstances. Additional research using multigenerational samples would help to better understand the transmission of resilience throughout Chickasaw families. Ultimately, additional studies on historical trauma and resilience have implications for improving therapeutic services to Chickasaw and other AI families.

Strengths and Limitations

This study had several strengths and limitations. The three-generation minimum requirement present for family interviews made it possible to access a greater number of family members within each family. This increased the quality and robustness of the family interviews, as I was able to better elicit the meaning to which family members across more generations and

greater age ranges gave to the phenomena. However, requiring three generations of family members to participate in the family interviews served as a deterrent for some families. Several individuals contacted me to participate in the study, but due to logistical complications, such as family members living out of state, families accounting for only two generations were not able to participate. It is possible that the inclusion of two-generation families may have still experienced the phenomena and added to the quality of the study.

The protocols for non-AI researchers outlined by Christopher (2005) were closely adhered to throughout the duration of this study. This helped to bring about an increased likelihood that Chickasaw families were receptive to me and the study's focus. As I was a non-AI outsider to the Chickasaw experience it is possible that families took on a "teaching" or "instructing" role in the interviews, thereby giving additional explanations or examples to assist me in better understanding their experiences. This may have increased the depth to which families described the phenomena. However, as an outsider, families may not have felt comfortable providing complete details of family experiences. This may have prevented full details of experiences or additional stories from being shared in the interviews that could have increased the richness of family interviews.

Since families were interviewed in a group setting where all participating family members were interviewed conjointly, family members often assisted one another in describing the phenomena in greater detail by recalling vivid details of different family members' experiences. The group setting also helped me to observe the interactions between family members that would not have been captured if family members were interviewed in isolation. However, the group setting of the interviews may have posed limitations consistent with the disadvantages found in focus groups (Piercy & Hertlein, 2005). For instance, the ideas of one or

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two family members may have influenced the thoughts or opinions of other family members, which may have steered the family interviews in a unilateral direction that was inconsistent with the experiences of other family members.

An important strength was that the aim and scope of the study in some ways mirrored Chickasaw families. The study's design, which involved input from Chickasaw community members and key stakeholders, assisted in making the study "a family affair" that paralleled the family-oriented, involved and extended nature of Chickasaw families. The isomorphism between the study and Chickasaw families respected the CN, Chickasaw families and Chickasaw culture, which may help lend an additional layer of credibility to the findings.

There were two direct limitations to this study. First, families were self-selected for this study. Outside of requiring a CDIB with the CN and the three-generation requirement, there were no other inclusion criteria required for participation. Families did not partake in a thorough screening process that required them to complete instruments measuring the quality of family relationships or the extent to which they directly experienced historical trauma. Therefore, not all families may have had direct experience with the phenomena under investigation. Second, families often identified key family members that were not present for the family interview. This was often due to geographical distance from the interview site or other logistical problems, such as work schedules, that prevented these family members from participating. As a result, their personal narratives and the meaning to which they gave to the phenomena were not directly captured in the family interviews. Instead, at times their experiences were shared second-hand by other family members.

Conclusion

As a non-reservation bound AI tribe whose citizens reside in urban and rural communities, the Chickasaw represented one group of AIs worthy of more research attention. By conducting in-depth phenomenological interviews with three- and four-generation Chickasaw families, this study sought to identify the qualities common to Chickasaw families, Chickasaw families' experiences of historical trauma and the factors that contribute to Chickasaw families' resilience and their ability to transmit resilience within their families. It was found that Chickasaw families were a heterogeneous system that rested upon the four domains of race, generation, geography and culture. The families held a natural orientation toward the family unit itself, whereby the families valued emotional closeness, warmth, respect and openness. Families were involved with one another and were active participants in strengthening their own families and communities. Other qualities, such as families being prideful of individual family members and accomplishments and valuing extended kin and spirituality also emerged. Further, families were confronted with challenges, but showed a marked ability to "bend, but not break," often citing the very same qualities, such as involvement, pride and an orientation toward family, as contributing to their ability to solve problems and keep the family unit intact. The families experienced historical trauma by mourning the loss of land, language, culture and identity and that losses went unacknowledged. The losses were also seen as perpetual, thus likely to affect younger and future generations of family members. The families indicated that despite hardships, resilience was seen as a trait found within their Chickasaw heritage. Other factors that contributed to families' resilience included maintaining a positive outlook, a spirit of determination, fierce loyalty toward family members and a close connection to the CN. Finally, families showed resilient qualities were passed in a multidirectional pattern throughout all generations of family members, whereby family members from all generations supported and

uplifted one another. These findings add to the emerging body of literature on Chickasaw family life and AI experiences of historical trauma and resilience. These findings lend support to working clinically with Chickasaw families from a culturally-sensitive family system orientation. Further research is needed to better understand the uniqueness of Chickasaw and other AI families and their experiences of historical trauma and resilience. Doing so has the potential to improve therapeutic services that can assist in restoring the lives of Chickasaw and other AI families.

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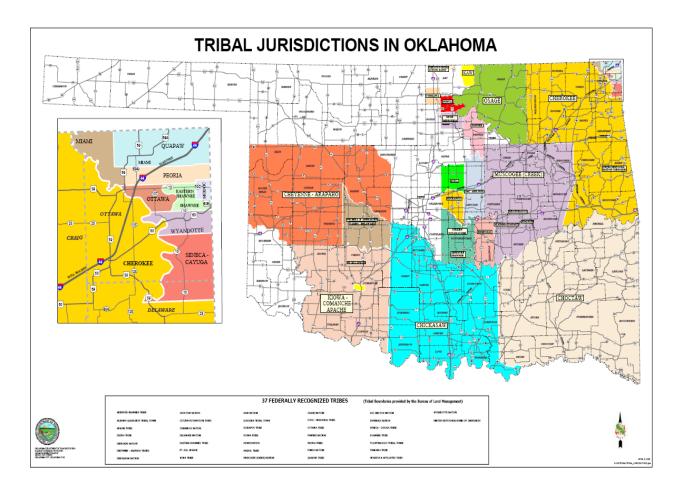
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Appendix A - Tribal Jurisdictions in Oklahoma

TRIBAL JURISDICTIONS IN OKLAHOMA

RESEARCH OPPORTUNITY FOR CHICKASAWS

Please help the Chickasaw Nation Division of Youth and Family Services Family Resource System learn more about:

- The important qualities of Chickasaw family relationships.
- How the Chickasaw removal has affected present day Chickasaw families.
- The important qualities that make Chickasaw families strong and resilient.

Who is eligible to participate in the study?

- Any person who is a registered citizen of the Chickasaw Nation (proof of Chickasaw citizenship required) and has family members that represent three different generations (for example, grandparent, parent and grandchild) present for two research interviews.
- Interviews will be conducted in a family member's home.

Does the family receive an incentive for participating in the study?

- Yes, each participating family will receive a $50 gift card after each interview and is eligible to receive up to $100 total in gift cards. Each interview will last approximately two hours.

How will this research be used?

- The research findings will help to improve the family and social services offered to Chickasaw families by the family resource system.

This study has been approved by the Institutional Review Boards of the Chickasaw Nation Division of Health and Kansas State University

To participate in the study or to receive more information, please contact:
C. J. Aducci, M. A.
Program Manager
Office of Strong Family Development
Division of Youth and Family Services
The Chickasaw Nation
at 580.235.7853 or 580.436.1222
or by email at CJ.Aducci@chickasaw.net

Appendix C - Initial Phone Consultation Template

Hi _____,

My name is C. J. Aducci and I am currently employed in the Office of Strong Family Development with the Chickasaw Nation. I am also a Ph. D. candidate at Kansas State University. For my dissertation project I am attempting to understand what qualities account for a Chickasaw family and how are Chickasaw families resilient to historical trauma. Your family's participation in this study will help to inform the work of researchers and mental health practitioners. The Chickasaw Nation Division of Health Institutional Review Board and the Kansas State University Institutional Review Board have approved this study.

This study would require me meeting with three generations of your family for research interviews. This could include grandparents, parents, children, grandchildren, aunts, uncles, cousins and other extended kin. If your family chooses to participate, they will be asked to meet on three different occasions. The first two meetings will be centered on answering interview questions, and the third meeting is designed for us to discuss some of the preliminary findings from the first two interviews. This third meeting will be more informal. Your family will receive a $100 gift card for their participation.

If your family chooses to participate, then I would need to identify the family members who may be interested in participating. Could you please provide me with your name and contact information, as well as the names and contact information for other family members who may be interested in participating? [Record family members' phone numbers and email addresses and provide my contact information with the family member]

Thank you for your interest in the study. I will be in further contact with you regarding interview dates, times and locations. Should you or your family members have further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at (___) ___-____.

Thank you again for your time.

Appendix D - Informed Consent

An Ethnophenomenological Study of Historical Trauma and Resilience in Three-Generation Native Chickasaw Families

Dear participants:

You are invited to participate in a study that will explore aspects of family identity, historical trauma and resilience in Chickasaw families. Your participation will contribute to our further understanding of Chickasaw families. This study has been approved by the Kansas State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) and the Chickasaw Nation Division of Health (CNDH) IRB.

Participation will entail meeting with all members of your family who consent to participate at a time convenient for all members. We will meet at least two times. The meetings are expected to last between three and four hours. After each meeting, portions of our conversations will be transcribed and reviewed by the researcher.

The conversations during our meetings will be audio and video recorded. Such recordings will only be accessible to the researcher who will erase the recordings after completing the study. The information that you provide at the meetings will remain anonymous whereby your identity will be protected and if needed, pseudonyms will be used to identify you or your family.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You may choose to cease participation at any time for any reason without penalty. You are encouraged to ask questions at any time prior to, during and after our meetings.

You must be 18 years old or older to participate. If you are a minor, but would still like to participate, you may do so if you have consent from your parent or legal guardian.

This study is being led by C. J. Aducci, a doctoral candidate in the School of Family Studies and Human Services at Kansas State University and currently the Program Manager in the Office of Strong Family Development, Division of Youth and Family Services of the Chickasaw Nation. This study will partially fulfill the requirements for Mr. Aducci's doctoral dissertation. This study is conducted under the supervision of Dr. Joyce A. Baptist, Assistant Professor of Marriage and Family Therapy at Kansas State University and Dr. Waymon R. Hinson, Associate Administrator of the Family Resource System of the Chickasaw Nation. If you would like to see the results of this study, you may contact C. J. Aducci at CJ.Aducci@chickasaw.net.

If you have any questions or concerns prior to, during or after this study, you may contact Bobby Saunkeah, Chair of the CNDH IRB at Bobby.Saunkeah@chickasaw.net or at (580) 421-4532.You may also contact Dr. Gerald Jaax, Associate Vice President for Research Compliance, Kansas State University IRB for the protection of Human Services at comply@ksu.edu or at (785) 532-3224 or Dr. Rick Scheidt, Chair, Kansas State University IRB for the Protection of Human Subjects, at rscheidt@ksu.edu or at (785) 532-1483.

By signing below, you agree to the terms and conditions listed above and nominate yourself to be a willing participant in this study.

Print name: _____

Sign name: _____   Date: _____

Print name: _____

Sign name: _____   Date: _____

Print name: _____

Sign name: _____   Date: _____

Print name: _____

Sign name: _____   Date: _____

Print name: _____

Sign name: _____   Date: _____

Print name: _____

Sign name: _____   Date: _____

Print name: _____

Sign name: _____   Date: _____

Appendix E - Demographic Questionnaire

Age: _____

Sex: _____

Who are you in your family? (Please circle any of the following that describes how you *best* see yourself in your family or your place in your family)

Great-grandparent   Aunt   Other: _____

Grandparent   Uncle

Mother   Cousin

Father   Niece

Son   Nephew

Daughter   Grandchild

Highest level of education achieved: _____

Personal annual income: $_____

Religion/Spirituality: _____

Certificate of Degree of Indian Blood (CDIB): Yes or No

Please list any other race(s), if known: _____

Please circle one of the following:

   Do you classify yourself as a <u>rural</u>, <u>urban</u> or <u>other</u> type of American Indian? Please list

   other: _____

   Do you consider your family to be <u>rural</u>, <u>urban</u>, combinations of <u>both</u> or <u>other</u>? Please list

   other: _____

Were you or another relative placed in a boarding school? Yes   or   No

If yes, approximate year(s) of boarding school residence: _____

Have you attended Chickasaw cultural events or ceremonies with your family? Yes   or   No

If yes, in the space below please briefly describe which ones and the frequency attended:

_____
_____
_____
_____

Appendix F - Interview Guide

A. Getting to know and understand the family:

1. Who are the members of your family and how are they related to each other?

    Probe:

    Who does your family turn to for decisions or advice?

2. How would you describe the relationships between family members in your family?

3. Compared to other families from other tribes, what makes your family different?

4. In general, how would you describe your Chickasaw family?

    Probe:

    What are the strengths that your family possesses?

5. What conditions facilitate health and wellness in your family?

6. What would I need to know to be a strong Chickasaw family?

    Probes:

    What has helped you remain strong?

    What does being strong mean to your family?

7. How does residing in different areas (urban and rural centers) influence your family experiences and how you cope with problems?

    Probe:

    Tell me your experiences living in a rural or urban community.

B. Identifying the family's historical trauma and resilience:

1. What kinds of things were most challenging for you growing up Chickasaw?

2. If you think of your Chickasaw family/community over the generations, what has changed?

3. What have your family lost over the years since having been displaced?

4. Could you describe a time when either one of you individually, or together as a family felt a sense of grief related to the loss of:

   - Your native history?

   - Your native homelands?

   - The Chickasaw language?

   - Your elders and their wisdom?

   - Traditional spiritual practices?

   - Chickasaw culture?

5. Of what your family has lost, which loss is the most painful or difficult?

   Probes:

   What does it mean to have suffered these losses?

   How often do you or your family think about what you've lost over the years?

   When you or your family thinks of these losses, what comes to mind?

   How does your family handle these thoughts/feelings?

6. How has what was lost changed who your family and community?

   Probes:

   How has your family and community coped with what has been lost?

   How have the experiences with the loss of your culture made your family stronger?

   Do you think your family and community have gained anything in this process?

7. How has what your family lost changed how others outside of your community perceive you and your family?

> *Probe:*
>
> How has this affected you and your family?

8. How has the Chickasaw Nation, your culture, community or religious functions, etc. helped your family remain strong despite your losses?

9. How does your family cope with everyday events and generate problem-solving strategies and solutions?

   > *Probes:*
   >
   > How have the strengths that your family possesses helped with solving problems?
   >
   > What does your family do when difficulties present themselves?
   >
   > What would your family say when these difficulties happen?
   >
   > Who talks about it the most? The least?
   >
   > Who is mostly likely or responsible to find a solution to problems when they occur?
   >
   > How do others respond to these solutions?
   >
   > What family responses are most helpful?
   >
   > How was your family's response helpful?

10. What contributes to your family's ability to regenerate or bounce back from adversities?

    > *Probes:*
    >
    > How has their historical losses and hardships helped in developing/strengthening the family's ability manage adversities today?
    >
    > What other factors contribute to your family's ability to remain strong?

11. If your family has faced challenges, can you share with me a story about how your family grew up well in this community despite those challenges?

12. Can you share a story with me about how another family managed to overcome challenges they faced in this community?

13. How does your family remain hopeful about the future?

14. What has your family learned from these hardships?

15. What does your family do to keep mentally healthy?

   - Physically healthy?

   - Emotionally healthy?

   - Spiritually healthy?

16. Does your family have a sense of control over life?

   Probe:

   How does having/not having a sense of control affect your family's life?

17. What are your personal and family's goals and aspirations?

C. Identifying the family's intergenerational transmission of resilience:

1. What has your family learned from family elders, or those who may have already passed on, about being Chickasaw?

   Probes:

   What qualities or types of family relationships did these elders place the most emphasis?

   How were they able to place such strong emphasis on these qualities?

2. What would be important for the younger generations to know about being Chickasaw?

   Probes:

   What family qualities are the most essential to pass on to younger generations in your family?

How would your family ensure that this is passed on?

How do these factors contribute to your family being strong?

Other than from family elders, what has your family learned from the Chickasaw Nation that has been passed down through the generations?

How does your family ensure that the future generations remain proud to be Chickasaw?

D. *Understanding the importance of family artifacts and photographs:*

1. What are examples of items or collectables (or song, poem, etc.) that have special meaning or importance to your family?

   Probes:

   What meaning does your family give to this item (or song, poem, etc.)?

   What makes this particular item so important to your family?

   How does this item reflect your family's experience being Chickasaw?

   How does this item reflect your family's experience living in this community?

   What did your elders teach about this item?

   What would be important for younger and future generations to know about this item?

   (Repeat questions with each item or collectible presented by the family).

2. Choose a photograph that your family likes the most and the one you like the least. Tell me about these photographs.

3. Pick the photograph that shows what is good about your life. Now pick the photograph that shows what is really difficult about your life. Why did you pick these images? Tell me about them.

4. Which photographs show what you really enjoy about living in this community and what you really dislike about living here? Explain them.

5. Is there any other photograph here that you would like to talk about?

6. Is there any other photograph here that you would not like to talk about? Why is this?

Appendix G - Member-checking Cover Letter

the Chickasaw Nation

Bill Anoatubby, Governor
Jefferson Keel, Lt. Governor

Division of Youth & Family Services

December 7, 2012

Chokma!

I hope this letter finds you and your family doing well during this special time of year!

I am writing to inform you that the research study that you and your family participated in is now nearing completion. Your family made a significant contribution to the study and the findings generated from the study will help other Chickasaw families.

A total of nine Chickasaw families were interviewed for the study. The preliminary findings have been generated and an outline of the findings can be found in the enclosed pages.

As a valued participant in this study, you and your family now have the opportunity to express your feedback about the findings. Your input is very helpful to ensuring the findings are accurate. Sometimes study participants do not think the findings of a study accurately reflect their own experiences. It is an important part of doing research that your experiences were actually captured from the family interviews. Therefore, please take an opportunity to read and review the enclosed pages that outline the findings. If possible, please share and discuss these results with your additional family members that participated in the interview with you. Their feedback is important as well.

If you or your family disagrees with any aspects of these findings, it is important that you contact me to voice your concerns. Or, if you have general questions about the findings or would like to receive additional information about the findings, please contact me and I am happy to discuss the results with you.

You can reach me by phone at (___) ___-____ or by email at CJ.Aducci@chickasaw.net.

I look forward to hearing from you!

Anowa chipisala'cho,

C. J. Aducci

231 Seabrook Road · Ada, OK 74820 · 580-310-6620 · Fax 580-310-6626

UNITED WE THRIVE

150

Appendix H - Preliminary Outline of Findings

Preliminary Outline of Research Study Findings

Research question #1 asked, "Who are Chickasaw families?"

The findings seem to indicate Chickasaw families are…

Heterogeneous: In composition, specifically by racial, cultural, generational and geographical differences

Involved: In family life, work, education and Chickasaw culture

Proud: Of family legacy, of one another, of Chickasaw culture and the Chickasaw Nation

Family-oriented: Towards love, understanding, respect, closeness and warmth

Extended: Distant relatives and close friends as a valued component of the family

Spiritual: A close connection to a Creator with whom they give thanks and praise

Trees that bend, but don't break: Encounter hardships, but have the ability to resolve conflict and keep the family together

Research question #2 asked, "What are Chickasaw families' experiences of historical trauma?"

The findings seem to indicate that Chickasaw families have experienced…

Land Loss: Chickasaw removal led to the loss of homelands and family-owned land allotments

Language Loss: Chickasaw removal and boarding school has made it difficult for families to learn or re-learn the Chickasaw language

Culture Loss: Loss of language, homelands, spiritual and cultural practices and oral histories have made it difficult for families to access all areas of the Chickasaw culture

Identity Loss: Loss of Chickasaw culture have made it difficult for families to find their niche in their community

Unacknowledged Loss: Losses have never been acknowledged nor validated by others

Ongoing Loss: Losses are expected to continue, which will affect younger and future generations

Research question #3 asked, "What are the lived experiences and factors of persistence that contribute to Chickasaw families' resilience?"

The findings seem to indicate that Chickasaw families overcome significant challenges or hardships by…

It's in the Blood: Families are able to overcome challenges because it is engrained in their cultural heritage

Positive Outlook: Families find the positive in challenging situations and maintain a positive or optimistic outlook on the future

Determination: Families and individual family members are determined to persevere and find unique ways to overcome challenges on their own

Fierce Loyalty to Family: Families stick together and support one another through challenges

Connection to the Chickasaw Nation: The Chickasaw Nation provides services and equal employment opportunities that assist families in overcoming challenges

Research question #4 asked, "How is Chickasaw families' resilience transmitted across the generations?"

The findings seem to indicate that Chickasaw families transmit resilience to other families by…

Circularity: Resilience follows a circular flow, in which family members of all ages and across all generations support and inspire all other family members, regardless of age or generation rank

Appendix I - Division Administrator Letter of Support

the Chickasaw Nation

Bill Anoatubby, Governor
Jefferson Keel, Lt. Governor

Division of Youth & Family Services

September 21, 2011

Chickasaw Nation Division of Health Institutional Review Board:

I give my full support and approval for the research proposal submitted by C. J. Aducci, Program Manager in youth and family services' office of strong family development.

Mr. Aducci's research proposal, titled "An Ethnophenomenological Study of Historical Trauma and Resilience in Three-Generation Native Chickasaw Families" supports the mission of the division of youth and family services to strengthen families in the Chickasaw Nation. The results from this study will make a strong contribution to further informing the services provided by our division.

Mr. Aducci is a Ph. D. candidate in the School of Family Studies and Human Services at the Kansas State University (KSU) and he has formed a partnership between his marriage and family therapy program at KSU and the division of youth and family. He will be using the results from this study to complete his doctoral dissertation. All Chickasaw Nation policies will be carefully followed regarding all research performed. I support Mr. Aducci in his efforts to collaborate with the Chickasaw Nation as a way of assisting him to complete his doctorate degree.

Please contact me if I can be of further assistance.

Respectfully,

Jay Keel, Administrator

Appendix J - Certificate of Completion of Training for Research Involving Human Subjects

Kansas State University

Certificate of Completion of Training for Research Involving Human Subjects

History of Research Abuse of Human Subjects: This online training and education module describes the historical basis for institution of mechanisms to protect interests of human subjects in research. Among other notorious cases, the module details Nazi-era abuses culminating in the Nuremberg War Crimes tribunal, and the circumstances surrounding the Tuskegee Syphilis Study.

Introduction to Human Subjects Research and the Multiple Project Assurance: This online training and education module is a general introduction and overview for personnel intending to conduct human subjects research at KSU. It addresses the provisions of the KSU Multiple Project Assurance (MPA), and provides several case studies that illustrate some of the situations commonly encountered in human subjects research. It also gives a brief overview of 45 CFR 46 and the Belmont Report, and re-emphasizes the reasons for their adoption

KSU Multiple Project Assurance: This online training and education module provides a detailed overview of the KSU MPA. A key element of this module is a decision tree for determining what constitutes human subjects research. The module also explains what activities are exempt from IRB review, adequate research protocol format, IRB evaluation criteria, and provisions for collaborative research.

Ethics of Research with Human Subjects: This online training and education module deals with ethical principles bearing on human subjects research. The module is based on the American Psychological Associations' publication "Ethical Principles in the Conduct of Research with Human Participants." It provides a detailed explanation of the key terms of autonomy, beneficence, nonmalfesance, justice, trust, privacy, confidentiality, and research integrity. The module also provides a detailed overview of informed consent principles and requirements.

Identifying, Assessing, and Minimizing Risks of Social and Behavioral Research: This online training and education module is adapted from a presentation by Jeffrey Cohen, OHRP. It addresses issues of risk in behavioral research.

The Belmont Report: This online training and education module is an in-depth review of the Belmont Report. Among other topics, it addresses the issues of respect for persons, autonomy, beneficence, justice, and informed consent. The module also reviews pertinent aspects of risk assessment.

Name: ____Christopher Aducci____   **University Research Compliance Office**

Date: _____3/24/2010_____   _____~*April Kaiser*_____

Appendix K - KSU IRB Approval Letter

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY | University Research Compliance Office

TO: Joyce Baptist
FSHS
212 CCC

Proposal Number: 5979

FROM: Rick Scheidt, Chair
Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects

DATE: September 22, 2011

RE: Approval of Proposal Entitled, "An Ethnophenomenological Study of Historical Trauma and Resilience in Three-Generation Native Chickasaw Families."

The Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects has reviewed your proposal and has granted full approval. This proposal is **approved for** <u>one year</u> **from the date of this correspondence, pending "continuing review."**

APPROVAL DATE: September 29, 2011

EXPIRATION DATE: September 29, 2012

Several months prior to the expiration date listed, the IRB will solicit information from you for federally mandated **"continuing review"** of the research. Based on the review, the IRB may approve the activity for another year. **If continuing IRB approval is** <u>not</u> **granted, or the IRB fails to perform the continuing review before the expiration date noted above, the project will expire and the activity involving human subjects must be terminated on that date. Consequently, it is critical that you are responsive to the IRB request for information for continuing review if you want your project to continue.**

In giving its approval, the Committee has determined that:

☒ There is no more than minimal risk to the subjects.
☐ There is greater than minimal risk to the subjects.

This approval applies only to the proposal currently on file as written. Any change or modification affecting human subjects must be approved by the IRB prior to implementation. All approved proposals are subject to continuing review at least annually, which may include the examination of records connected with the project. Announced post-approval monitoring may be performed during the course of this approval period by URCO staff. Injuries, unanticipated problems or adverse events involving risk to subjects or to others must be reported immediately to the Chair of the IRB and / or the URCO.

Appendix L - CN IRB Approval Letter

the Chickasaw Nation

Bill Anoatubby, Governor
Jefferson Keel, Lt. Governor

Division of Health · 1921 Stonecipher Boulevard · Ada, OK 74820 · 580-436-3980

October 5, 2012

CJ Aducci, MA, LMFT
Office of Strong Family Development
Division of Youth and Family Services
The Chickasaw Nation
231 Seabrook Road
Ada, OK 74820

Dear Mr. Aducci:

On September 5, 2012, the Chickasaw Nation Division of Health Institutional Review Board (CNDH IRB) reviewed the recruitment flyer proposal that you submitted entitled "An Ethnophenomenological Study of Historical Trauma and Resilience in Three-Generation Native Chickasaw Families". The proposal named you as the principal investigator. It is the judgment of the board that the rights and welfare of participants will be respected, no more than minimal risk is involved and that the research study including the consent process is consistent with the requirements of 45 CFR 46 or 21 CFR 50 and 56 as amended. The board therefore has voted to **approve** the proposed recruitment flyer.

This letter documents approval for:
Recruitment Flyer: **An Ethnophenomenological Study of Historical Trauma and Resilience in Three-Generation Native Chickasaw Families**

This approval is granted for a period of one year, until **September 30, 2013**, and must be reviewed annually. Authorization is contingent on compliance with all Chickasaw Nation research policies and procedures. No changes can be made to the research protocol without receiving prior written authorization from the CNDH IRB. The CNDH IRB may require the researcher to amend the original application, limit the scope of research activities or rescind the research permit should research conditions change during the course of the project. Any data collection, research results, manuscripts or abstracts must be submitted and approved by the CNDH IRB prior to use for publication or presentation in any form.

If you have any questions, please contact Michael Peercy at the address listed below or at (580) 272-2737.

Chickasaw Nation Medical Center
1921 Stonecipher Blvd.
Ada, OK 74820

Sincerely,

Bobby Saunkeah, Chair
Chickasaw Nation Division of Health
Institutional Review Board

Ardmore Clinic	Durant Clinic	Purcell Clinic	Tishomingo Clinic
2510 Chickasaw Blvd.	1600 N. Washington	1438 Hardcastle Blvd.	815 E. 6th Street
Ardmore, OK 73401	Durant, OK 74701	Purcell, OK 73080	Tishomingo, OK 73460
580-226-8181	580-920-2100	405-527-4700	580-371-2361

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