

# NATIONAL CHILD WELFARE RESOURCE CENTER FOR TRIBES

**Masking Traumatic Experiences  
The Use and Oversight  
of Psychotropic Medications  
in the Treatment of Trauma and  
Abuse  
Protocols to Care  
of the Dependent Child**



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# Our most precious resource is our children

- ◆ Dependent children in foster or family care must be optimal in our diligence to provide an environment of caring that seeks healing of traumatic events rather than quelling the symptoms for another time



# GAO Study Of Five States Regarding Medication Of Foster Children

- ◆ a large percentage of foster children were receiving psychotropic medications at much higher levels than FDA approved for the use of such medications
  - A significant percentage of these children were on five medications or more
  - incidents of foster children on psychiatric medications was 5% higher than non Foster care
  - In some states foster children were 57% more likely to be on five medications or more
  - Foster children less than one year old were twice as likely to be on psychiatric medications

(ABC News)



# What Do We Know About Increased Experience Of Native Children

- ◆ A much higher rate are in the foster care system, possibly 25% or higher
- ◆ Tribal systems are less equipped to have strong input into the medication decision process
- ◆ Tribal courts are typically less equipped by budget, tribal authority and process
- ◆ Tribal courts and families typically feel less empowered in the decision making process

# The Responsibility is Ours

- ◆ We must be diligent in this care
- ◆ Their future is literally in our hands
- ◆ What will guide such decisions
  - Traditions
  - Process
  - System of care
  - Tribal Authority



# Federal Legislation now Emphasizes Oversight of Psychotropic Medication for All Dependent Children

- ◆ Public Law 110-351, The Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008, amended Title IV-B of the Social Security Act to require Tribes and States receiving Title IV-B, subpart 1 funds develop a plan for ongoing oversight and coordination of health care services for children in foster care, including mental health, behavioral health and dental health needs.

# The Health Care Oversight and Coordination Plan must now include:

- ✓ A schedule for initial and follow up health screenings
- ✓ How health needs will be monitored and treated, including emotional trauma associated with a child's maltreatment and removal from home
- ✓ How medical information will be updated and appropriately shared
- ✓ Steps to ensure continuity of health care services, including establishing a medical home for every child in care



# Oversight plan, continued

- ✓ Oversight of prescription medicines including protocols for appropriate use and monitoring of psychotropic medications
- ✓ How the tribe actively consults with and involves physicians or other appropriate medical or non-medical professionals in assessing the health and well-being of children in foster care, and determining appropriate medical treatment for children
- ✓ Steps to ensure that components of transition plan development process that relate to health care needs of children aging out of foster care are met

# Tribal Plans

- ◆ Tribes were required to submit (to their federal regional ACF office) the Health Care Oversight and Coordination Plan in their Title IV-B Annual Program Services Plan by June 30, 2012.
- ◆ All tribes receiving IV-B funds are required to address how the plan requirements are being met for tribal children in foster care.
- ◆ The Tribe must also address how they are involved with their children in State health care oversight processes for their tribal children.

# NRC4Tribes Psychotropic Oversight Workgroup

- ◆ The Children's Bureau has asked the National Resource Center for Tribes to learn more about how tribes are providing oversight of psychotropic medication for Native children in foster care.
- ◆ A workgroup has been developed which includes tribal child welfare directors, Indian Health Services staff, tribal leaders and others.
- ◆ The workgroup has provided recommendations for surveying tribes about their needs in developing oversight plans.

How do psychotropic medications impact children? Why are oversight plans needed?



# Behavioral Responses Are A Part Of A Child's Response To Abuse And Neglect

- ◆ Aggressive behavior
- ◆ Acting out in an effort to return to the known, or their family
- ◆ Unconscious or driven acting out
- ◆ Dissociation, spiritually checking out
- ◆ Behavioral upheaval

# What Should We Expect?

- ◆ Response sets to abuse survivorship
- ◆ Response sets to placement adjustment
- ◆ Response sets to issues of attachment

# Response Sets To Abuse And Neglect

- ◆ Anxiety
- ◆ Increased vigilance
- ◆ Problems of activity level
- ◆ Anger
- ◆ Powerlessness
- ◆ Dissociation, loss of spirit
- ◆ Substance abuse

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# Response Sets to Placement

- ◆ Anxiety multiplied by absence of safety
- ◆ Powerlessness of helplessness
- ◆ Anger displaced

# Response Sets To Issues Of Attachment

- ◆ Unconscious lashing out
- ◆ Behavioral regression,
- ◆ Over compliant behavior
- ◆ Problems of learning

# What Is The Systemic Response To The Child's Issues Or Behaviors?

- ◆ Case Manage
  - ◆ Hope in the providers of care
  - ◆ Medically manage the behaviors
  - ◆ Hope for healing
- ◆ This is simply not enough

# The Role of the Court

- ◆ Protect the child from abuse
- ◆ Primary: protect from abusive home
- ◆ Secondary: Protect from systemic abuse
- ◆ Tertiary: protect from misguided services response

# Our Role is to?

- ◆ Have a process to guide services
- ◆ Develop a process to thoughtfully inform the court
- ◆ To carry the responsibility of culturally informed response
- ◆ To speak for the child

# The Role of Tribal Structure is to:

- ◆ Insure culturally appropriate responses to abuse
- ◆ Insure a competent system of care
- ◆ To speak for our future

# Considerations in Psychotropic Drug Protocol development

- ◆ Develop a thoughtful process for consideration and advisement
- ◆ Develop and insure a process of court consideration
- ◆ Inform the process of the of how to develop competence in this consultation

# A Tribal System Of Caring Of The Abused

- ◆ Is there a codified system of care that relates to the oversight of psychotropic pharmacological medications?



# Planning for the Process

- ◆ Discussion

Questions? Comments?



# National Child Welfare Resource Center for Tribes



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