

Like many events in the world around us, the issuance of this journal marks the beginning as well as the end of a series of efforts. In this case, I am referring to efforts to coordinate, disseminate, and thereby maximize the impact of research, training, and program development with respect to the psychological well-being of American Indians and Alaska Natives. This is one of the major purposes of the National Center for American Indian and Alaska Native Mental Health Research; it also was a primary function of its predecessor, the White Cloud Center. Both saw a journal such as this as a catalyst which can hasten the accomplishment of the above goal.

Having been associated with the White Cloud Center, specifically, as Research Director, I often reflect upon the expectations that surrounded it, the activities which were pursued, and subsequent successes as well as failures. Clearly, that program's successes included the *White Cloud Journal*. Since the close of my association with the White Cloud Center in October, 1981, I have fielded hundreds of inquiries from providers, planners, policy makers, and investigators who seek reprints, back issues, and current publication information about the *White Cloud Journal*. It seems difficult to believe that a relatively specialized journal, with a circulation of never more than 700 copies, and which entailed a total of ten issues over three volumes could have made such a major impression on so many different sectors of the mental health field. That it did speaks to the quality of the articles and to the editorial labors of Ann Goddard at the Oregon Health Sciences University and, subsequently, David Tarver at the University of South Dakota.

The continuing interest in the *White Cloud Journal*, nearly three years after the last issue, also reflects the need for a forum specific to the mental health of American Indians and Alaska Natives. People desperately want information about the kinds, frequencies, and causes of the psychiatric and psychological problems that affect Indian/Native people, about the factors that place members of this special population at high risk for such problems, about the reliability and validity of screening and diagnostic techniques, about approaches to treating these problems in culturally appropriate ways, about the factors that influence the use of existing services, about the prevention of alcohol, drug abuse, and mental disorders, and, ultimately, about means of promoting the emotional health and psychological well-being of the communities to which they belong or in which they serve. The present journal, *American Indian and Alaska Native Mental Health Research*, is intended to fill this gap and to begin to address this need.

The National Center hopes that this journal will make available useful, stimulating ideas and data that will encourage additional studies and

reports. We intend to offer an authoritative selection of articles to investigators who know little or nothing about Indians/Natives and to Indian/Native scholars desiring to extend their knowledge and understanding. Moreover, the journal should be useful to providers of mental health, alcoholism, and drug abuse services by describing new, innovative interventions and by sharing insights into program effectiveness. These goals are consistent with the National Center's commitment to research and development in American Indian and Alaska Native mental health.

Mental health is a broad term relating to all of the social, behavioral, and health sciences, including psychology, psychiatry, nursing, sociology, anthropology, social work, and some aspects of education, medicine, history, and law. The stress here is upon the factors that affect the mental and social functioning of American Indians and Alaska Natives. Authors wishing a detailed guide to appropriate topics should refer to the *Publication Manual of the American Psychology Association (3rd Ed.)* and its description of the areas covered by the association's various journals. Any of those topics are acceptable.

Authors should systematically examine the literature to determine the contribution that they can make. They should stress new data, comparison with previous data, and relevance to American Indian and Alaska Native mental health. Theoretical articles must be especially thoroughly referenced in order to focus the discussion on empirical findings and substantive knowledge rather than personal opinion or conjecture. The quality of an article's content should be guided by the *Publication Manual*, pages 19-22.

This issue of the journal contains four articles. The first, "Emerging Tribal Models for the Civil Commitment of American Indians," by Manson, Bloom, Rogers, and Neligh, highlights the procedural difficulties inherent in providing necessary psychiatric treatment to mentally ill American Indians who reside on reservations and who may pose a danger to either themselves or others. The authors describe the civil commitment models developed by five reservation communities and review the socio-legal issues that surround them. The federal, state, and tribal responsibilities in matters of this nature remain an important topic of debate and affect the welfare of many Indian communities. The second article, "Health Beliefs and Regimen Adherence of the American Indian Diabetic," by Miller, Wikoff, Keen and Norton, focuses on factors influencing compliance with biomedical recommendations for controlling diabetes among Indian patients. The authors consider the possible contribution of demographic and medical variables, of personal attitudes, of others' beliefs, and of assorted coping methods to following a prescribed treatment regimen (e.g., diet, medications, physical activity, smoking and stress modification) and consequent health status. The interface of health and behavior among Indian and Native people constitutes a significant, timely area for inquiry, and is gaining momentum from a national initiative that has brought about

new funding priorities within the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the Alcohol, Drug Abuse, and Mental Health Administration (ADAMHA). The third article, "The High Achieving Sioux Indian Child: Some Preliminary Findings from the *Flower of Two Soils Project*," by Sack, Beiser, Clarke, and Redshirt, reports select results of a large scale, longitudinal study of the relationship between the emotional well-being and academic performance of Indian and non-Indian children from a number of communities in the United States and Canada. Prompted by a local request that equal attention be given to the children's strengths and accomplishments, the authors undertook the analysis of tentative differences between a small sample of high and low achieving Oglala students from the Pine Ridge Reservation. This effort and the larger study are of great interest to mental health professionals as well as educators, and return us to questions first raised by Dr. John Bryde twenty years ago. The fourth article, "Suicide and Self-Destruction Among American Indian Youths," by May, reviews and compares suicide mortality data specific to Indian adolescents. Using a variety of data sets, the author considers the nature, extent, and apparent risk factors of suicide, suicide attempts, and single vehicle accidents involving Indian youth. A brief update of the experience at an intermountain reservation underscores the positive outcomes that are possible when communities assume responsibility for such problems and struggle to find their own solutions. Of course, suicide among young Indian people is one of the most frequently discussed topics of the day, having engendered at least six major conferences on the subject over the last nine months.

In addition to publishing a range of works like those included in this issue, the National Center is planning a series of special editions dedicated to specific themes such as suicide and runaway youth. Moreover, we look forward to including regularly a section devoted to brief abstracts of innovative mental health, alcoholism, and drug abuse treatment programs and preventive interventions.

In closing, it is important to acknowledge that a journal depends upon its readers for the quality and focus of its content. You can play a significant role by disseminating information about the journal's availability, by contributing manuscripts for consideration, and by providing the editorial staff with comments--hopefully positive as well as negative ones--that will keep us alert to the needs of our field. Help *American Indian and Alaska Native Mental Health Research* to achieve a level of professionalism and relevance that will enable it to endure over future years.

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