Indigenous College Students' Violent Victimization, Help-Seeking, Service Utilization, and Needs:

A Mixed-Methods Approach

by

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ABSTRACT

Indigenous Peoples (Native American, American Indian, and Alaska Native) have experienced high rates of violence and victimization since colonization – which continues to present day. However, little is known regarding the victimization experiences of Indigenous college students. Furthermore, universities are struggling to recruit and retain Indigenous college students, evident by their low enrollment and matriculation rates. One possible reason for this could be universities' inability to support Indigenous students, especially those who have experienced victimization. Yet, there is little empirical knowledge regarding how universities can best support these Indigenous students. To address these gaps, the current dissertation takes a holistic approach to understanding Indigenous individuals' needs within the university context. Drawing upon Indigenous student survey and interview data, in addition to faculty and staff interview data, this dissertation explores the victimization experiences of Indigenous college students, their service utilization, informal help-seeking behaviors, barriers to seeking help, and ways to improve university services. Overall, findings reveal that Indigenous college students in this sample experience high rates of victimization. Additionally, having culturally relevant services, culturally competent service providers, and being able to practice their culture is necessary to best support Indigenous college students. Recommendations for universities are presented to improve the campus environment for Indigenous college students.

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INTRODUCTION

Indigenous Peoples have experienced and continue to experience high levels of violence and victimization (Deer, 2015; Riley, 2016). Violence was first experienced by Indigenous people at the hands of European settlers determined to conquer Indigenous Peoples' land, now known as the United States, Canada, and Mexico. This violence continues to present day through forced removal, assimilation, and genocidal policies determined to erase and eradicate Indigenous Peoples and their culture (Brave Heart & DeBruyn, 1998; Weaver, 2009). Colonization is the process in which individuals (e.g., colonizers) force colonized people to take on the values and beliefs of the colonizers, while simultaneously undermining the colonized peoples' values, cultures, and beliefs (Weaver, 2009). White settlers used violence of many different forms to ensure that their westernized worldview and culture became the dominant one in North America. Due to the ongoing impact of colonization on Indigenous Peoples and society, colonization has perpetuated violence and victimization within this population (Brave Heart & DeBruyn, 1998; Deer, 2015; Smith, 2005; Weaver, 2009). Indigenous Peoples experience violence and victimization at significantly higher levels than those from other racial/ethnic backgrounds, most often by non-Indigenous perpetrators (Bachman et al., 2008; Black et al., 2010; Deer, 2015, 2018; Riley, 2016; Rosay, 2016). Approximately four out of five Indigenous women will experience violence during their lifetimes, which is exponentially higher than that of women of other races (Rosay, 2016). Indigenous women are also at elevated risk of being killed. In some U.S. counties Indigenous women are *10 times* more

likely to be murdered compared to the national homicide rate for non-Indigenous women (Bachman et al., 2008; Urban Indian Health Institute, 2019).

While Indigenous Peoples experience high rates of violence within their lifetimes, it is not yet known if this is also true for Indigenous college students. College-aged individuals are at an increased risk for experiencing violence and victimization (see Fisher et al., 2000, 2003, 2010). Yet precise rates for Indigenous college students, specifically, are relatively unknown due to Indigenous Peoples' exclusion in national studies, which is attributed to small Indigenous student sample sizes (Brayboy, 2005; Fish et al., 2017; Patterson Silver Wolf et al., 2018). Given that Indigenous Peoples experience substantial amounts of violence, it is imperative that scholars and universities understand how violence impacts Indigenous college students. Some research has shown that the transition to college for Indigenous students can exacerbate victimization risk due to being in an unfamiliar environment, often devoid of their cultural practices and norms, and far distances from home and support networks (Tachine et al., 2017). While there is some research identifying academic and employment needs and services that are available for Indigenous students (Fish et al., 2017; Patterson Silver Wolf et al., 2018), there are relatively few studies focused specifically on the service availability, utilization, and needs of Indigenous college students who have experienced victimization. It is important that scholars understand the needs of Indigenous college students because Indigenous Peoples have unique service needs that differ from that of the broader population (see Fiolet et al., 2021). The unique needs of Indigenous college students can include historical trauma, impacts of colonization, microaggressions, high levels of victimization, and little to no representation at universities. Understanding Indigenous

students' experiences is key for informing effective service and program delivery. The current study aimed to fill these gaps by further examining the needs and help-seeking behaviors of Indigenous college students who have experienced victimization and/or trauma.

The current study fills several important gaps in the literature. More specifically, the current study aimed to understand how experiencing victimization impacts Indigenous students by learning directly from Indigenous college students and university staff and faculty who work closely with Indigenous students. The current study is among the first to explore Indigenous college students' perceptions of (1) help seeking and service utilization, (2) university services, (3) university responses to victimization, and (4) what the university and service providers can do to better support their students. Using a mixed-methods approach, including quantitative survey data and in-depth qualitative interviews, the current study amplifies the voices of Indigenous college students and university faculty and staff members who work directly with Indigenous college students. The remainder of this chapter presents background information to contextualize the challenges that Indigenous Peoples, particularly college students, face in the United States and how victimization experiences and service use translates to the university context. Then, a discussion of the research questions that shape this study and the methodology employed to conduct this research are presented.

Background

Meaning of the Word Indigenous

The word "Indigenous" is a term that refers to individuals who are the descendants of the first inhabitants of the Americas, often referred to within the United

States as “American Indian, Native American, or Alaska Native” (Yellow Bird, 1999). While there is no clear consensus on which label is preferred, scholars have written extensively on the use of “American Indian” and “Native American” (Krakoff, 2017; Peters & Mika, 2017; Weaver, 2001; Weaver & Brave Heart & DeBruyn, 1998; Yellow Bird, 1999). Scholars find that, although these terms are commonly used throughout the United States, they fail to recognize the diversity of Indigenous people which is distinguishable by language, behavior, dress, geography, foods, technologies, creation stories, among many other characteristics (Weaver & Brave Heart, 1999; Yellow Bird, 1999). Although federal policy and law uses the term “Indian” and “American Indian,” these terms are viewed by some Indigenous people as perpetuating “colonized identities” that were imposed by Europeans and American settlers (Yellow Bird, 1999; Yellow Bird & Chenault, 1999). When using words that identify these Tribes and groups of individuals as “Native American” or “American Indian,” it reduces Indigenous identity to a monolithic concept and assumes that the land in which they resided prior to colonization was referred to as “America” (Weaver & Brave Heart, 1999; Yellow Bird, 1999). The word Indigenous recognizes that there are over 570 federally- and state-recognized Tribes in the United States, including over 200 Alaska Native villages, all with unique identities and traditions. Throughout this dissertation, the word “Indigenous” will be used unless specifically referring to U.S. federal legal statues/laws, legal statuses of tribal citizens, or when using quotes.

Defining Violence

The concept of violence is common throughout various academic disciplines; however, it is important to define what is meant by “violence”. According to Hamby

(2017), there are four elements necessary to define violence including "behavior that is (a) intentional, (b) unwanted, (c) nonessential, and (d) harmful" (p. 168). Additionally, there are different forms of violence which are especially relevant to understanding violence perpetrated against Indigenous Peoples. These forms include *direct, structural,* and *cultural violence* (Bastien et al., 2003). When discussing violence and victimization of Indigenous Peoples, this dissertation focuses primarily on direct violence including sexual assault, domestic violence, physical assault, and homicide. However, the interactions with institutions and different individuals that Indigenous Peoples in this study might experience, can include both cultural (e.g., racism) and structural (e.g., forced relocation of Indigenous Peoples to reservations; Bastien et al., 2003). In terms of direct violence, Indigenous Peoples experience much high rates than individuals from other racial/ethnic groups (Bachman et al., 2008; Black et al., 2010; Deer, 2015, 2018; Riley, 2016; Rosay, 2016).

Colonization and The History of Violence Against Indigenous Peoples

Violence against Indigenous Peoples is the product of colonization used by white settlers as a way to obtain land that is now the United States, Canada, and other countries in North America (Smith, 2005; Weaver, 2009). Colonization has impacted Indigenous Peoples in many different ways throughout history. The discussion of colonization here is brief and provides a broad overview of necessary information to understand colonization at the basic level. It is beyond the scope of this dissertation to examine every way colonization has impacted Indigenous Peoples throughout history (for a review see Bastien et al., 2003; Pevar, 2012; Wolfe, 1999).

Colonization is defined as "the displacement and undermining of societies, including their values, cultures, beliefs, and ways of life by outside peoples…whereby the colonized people are encouraged and/or forced to take on the values and beliefs of the colonizers" (Weaver, 2009, p.1552). Colonization is not one specific event, but an ongoing system to maintain power; colonization structures race, gender, class, and sexual relations in a way that aligns with white settlers' views of society (Glenn, 2015; Wolfe, 1999). European settlers specifically aimed at acquiring land in order to settle permanently and create new communities, in addition to gaining control of resources (Glenn, 2015; Wolfe, 1999). In order to settle permanently and not return home, extractive settlers[1] operated under the assumption that the Indigenous occupants of the land must be eliminated or exterminated so that settlers could secure the land for themselves.

Colonization is pervasive and cuts across all functions of society, impacting Indigenous Peoples in all capacities, including basic human rights, politics, education, culture, and safety, among others (Bacon, 2019). Colonization is culturally enforced through practices that actively obscure and/or erase Indigenous Peoples. Colonization has attempted to eliminate Indigenous Peoples and cultures in several ways, including *physically* (via genocide), *culturally* (e.g., assimilation programs), and *politically* (e.g., termination policies) (Wolfe, 2006). Each of these forms of colonization are discussed further in the sections below. It is important to note that while these forms of

[1] Extractive settlers are settlers who wish to obtain goods, materials, and labor in exploitive ways. Extractive settlers wish to obtain land and resources so that they can successfully settle permanently. This can manifest itself in many different ways including forcing Indigenous people to less resource rich land, exploiting the use of Indigenous labor, and creating land boundaries to show ownership (Glenn, 2015).

colonization are broken down for clarity and ease of understanding; they are all interconnected and affect one another.

Physical

Settlers used physical violence to accomplish their goals of conquering and colonizing Indigenous land and peoples. The first and most well-known form of physical colonization is the use of genocide by settlers to eradicate Indigenous Peoples (Glenn, 2015). To accomplish this, many settlers knowingly exposed Indigenous Peoples to contagious diseases and perpetrated many different forms of violence including destruction of resources, sexual assault, and homicide. A primary form of colonization throughout history involved the perpetration of violence specifically against Indigenous women (Chester et al., 1994; Duran et al., 1998; Hamby, 2000; Matamonasa-Bennett, 2015; Smith, 2005; Tehee & Esqueda, 2008; Weaver, 2009). In fact, violence against women was a primary tool of conquest for settlers (Deer, 2015; Smith, 2005). Rape, sexual assault, and abuse were used by settlers to conquer Indigenous lands and Peoples and to destabilize Indigenous societies due to the positions of power Indigenous women often held (Deer, 2015; Matamonasa-Bennett, 2015). While violence against Indigenous women occurred prior to colonization, it was often a rare occurrence that was dealt with swiftly within the Tribe (Deer, 2015; Evans-Campbell, 2008; Matamonasa-Bennett, 2015; Smith, 2005). Those who committed violence pre-colonization were often ostracized or even banished from the Tribe (Matamonasa-Bennett, 2015; Smith, 2005).

Additionally, one lesser-known tactic of physical colonization was the use of sterilization of Indigenous women without their consent (Bacon, 2019; Carpio, 2004; Smith, 2005; Weaver, 2009). Many Indigenous women would go to Indian Health

Services (IHS) facilities for various procedures (e.g., childbirth) and would wake up having gone through an involuntary sterilization (Carpio, 2004). Additionally, some Indigenous women "were told outright lies about their conditions and treatments," which led to uninformed sterilizations (Carpio, 2004, p. 42). Sterilization was used well into the 1970s as a way to prevent the Indigenous population from growing and as a form of control (Carpio, 2004). Indeed, forced sterilization of Indigenous women is a human rights violation and a state-sanctioned act of genocide.

In terms of land colonization, settlers confined and displaced Indigenous Peoples to reservations while taking the resource-rich land for themselves. Far from their ancestral lands, Indigenous Peoples were forced to make homes on land that was viewed as less desirable by white settlers. Policies, such as the Indian Removal Act, were created to displace Indigenous Peoples forcing them on "long walks" (e.g., The Trail of Tears) where many members died from disease, fatigue, or starvation (Brave Heart & DeBruyn, 1998). The goal of these "long walks" was to move Indigenous Peoples from the land that white settlers wanted, no matter the cost. In the process of land acquisition, settlers destroyed natural resources that Indigenous Peoples relied upon. Examples include killing off buffalo and contaminating water supplies.

Indigenous Peoples and scholars commonly view Indigenous Peoples as caretakers of the land in which they reside (Bacon, 2019 Brave Heart & DeBruyn, 1998). Indigenous Peoples have a strong sense of interdependence with the earth; therefore, they see their care for the land as the land caring for them in return (Whyte, 2018). It is important to only take what is necessary and then give back what is not needed to the land, to ensure natural resources are allowed to replenish themselves (Whyte, 2018).

Thus, when settlers came and took Indigenous Peoples' lands and extracted resources, these resources were often not given the chance to naturally replenish themselves (Whyte, 2018). Due to this, some scholars have viewed the diminishing of earth's natural resources, the increase of pollution, and the rapidly changing climate as results of colonization (Bacon, 2019).

Cultural

The impact of colonization on the cultural practices and values of Indigenous Peoples is manifest throughout many aspects of Indigenous life. White settlers used colonialism to invalidate Indigenous concepts and language by only conducting business and creating treaties in the colonizer's language (e.g., English). To further this white indoctrination and "Indian civilization," setters created assimilation policies which were seen as some of the most detrimental to the Indigenous way of life in North America (Brave Heart & DeBruyn, 1998; Pevar, 2012; Weaver, 2009). Specifically, boarding schools (often termed "Indian" schools) were used to cut ties within Tribal communities, impose westernized ways of living on Indigenous children, while subsequently demonizing the Indigenous way of life (Bastien et al., 2003; Brave Heart & DeBruyn, 1998; Glenn, 2015; Weaver, 2009). "Indian" schools were created with one goal in mind: "kill the Indian, keep the man" (Bastien et al., 2003; Glenn, 2015; Weaver, 2009). In boarding schools, Indigenous Peoples faced neglect and abuse through forced cutting of hair; starvation; and sexual, physical, and emotional abuse (Bastien et al., 2003; Duran, 2006; Glenn, 2015; Irwin & Roll, 1995). These horrific experiences made it difficult for these Indigenous People to care for their own children within a traditional Indigenous context once they were adults. These boarding schools solidified the violent

indoctrination of the "heteropatriarchal nuclear family" that white settlers wanted. Other assimilation policies destroyed Indigenous rites of passage critical to Indigenous culture by outlawing certain religious and other traditional ceremonies (e.g., Potlatch in Canada, sun dance, and use of traditional languages).

Prior to colonization, many Tribes were – and some still are – matrilineal, whereas women own property and hold leadership roles within the Tribe (Herring, 2001; LaDuke, 1992; Matamonasa-Bennett, 2015). Indigenous women were considered to be vital to socialization and cultural transmission within their Tribes (Barrios & Egan, 2002). Social, political, familial, and spiritual structures gave women power and resulted in societies that were more egalitarian than those that existed in Europe at the time (LaDuke, 1992; Matamonasa-Bennett, 2015). As settlers moved to North America, the egalitarian roles that were present within Indigenous Tribes began to dissolve due to colonization and settlers' refusal to negotiate with female heads of Tribes (Weaver, 2009). Through the use of assimilation policies, such as boarding schools, sterilization, and the Dawes Act of 1887[2], the equal roles of Indigenous men and women shifted towards a more patriarchal system, which resulted in the devalued status of Indigenous women. The deliberate weakening of Indigenous women's status was vital to settlers' success because it weakened and destabilized the communities they were targeting to obtain their land and resources (Matamonasa-Bennett, 2015).

As a result of colonization and patriarchal ideology, violence against women began to become normalized in Indigenous communities. Violence against Indigenous

[2] Through the Dawes Act of 1887, the U.S. federal government divided tribal land into individual allotments that were only granted to heads of households, actively excluding Native women (Glenn, 2015; Pevar, 2012).

women changed the structure of Tribes and resulted in a loss of cultural transmission due to the shift in roles for Indigenous women (Weaver, 2009). For example, prior to the arrival of European settles, women in some Indigenous tribes held leadership roles, were in charge of various ceremonies, and were also responsible for passing down cultural knowledge about ceremonies and other traditions. The shift towards a patriarchal society took these roles away from women, effectively reducing knowledge transmission (Weaver, 2009).

Political

While the U.S. government did not exist when settlers first came to the Americas, settlers still focused on dismantling Tribal governments and their traditional ways of conducting business (Bacon, 2019). Indigenous oral law and historical rights were invalidated by settlers and Indigenous Peoples were forced to adopt westernized ways of governing and laws. Termination policies invalidated the political rights of Indigenous Peoples and dissolved tribes due to the U.S. government not recognizing the treaties that were in place (Bacon, 2019; Brave Heart & DeBruyn, 1998; Glenn, 2015; Pevar, 2012). The goal of termination policies was to fully integrate Indigenous Peoples into white/westernized society (Pevar, 2012). Termination sought to completely remove any distinct political rights Tribes or Tribal citizens had (Pevar, 2012). Although complete integration was never fully achieved, the U.S. government used other tactics to try and reduce who was considered an "Indian" according to the law. For example, blood quantum, or the amount of "Indian" blood a person has, is one of the most common forms of determining Tribal citizenship. However, it is important to note that colonization and the forced assimilation of Indigenous Peoples has resulted in reduced blood quantum due

to interracial marriages (Bacon, 2019; Pevar, 2012). By reducing the population of "Indians" eligible for U.S. government protections and support, the U.S. government effectively reduces the political power of Indigenous Peoples (Brave Heart & DeBruyn, 1998; Pevar, 2012; Smith, 2005).

Historical Trauma

Colonization and violence against Indigenous Peoples created trauma that has ripple effects experienced across generations. This trauma is referred to as "historical trauma" which acknowledges that there is a "cumulative emotional and psychological wounding across generations, including the lifespan, which emanates from massive group trauma" (Brave Heart, 1998, 2003, 2011). Specifically, Indigenous Peoples often experience historical trauma in addition to the trauma they experience within their own lives. First proposed as historical unresolved grief to help explain the experiences of Holocaust survivors (Doka & Aber, 1989), Brave Heart (1998, 2003) was one of the first to apply this concept to the experiences of American Indian people. Brave Heart and DeBruyn (1998) expanded the use of disenfranchised grief which refers to the grief that people experience when a loss cannot be openly acknowledged or publicly mourned (Brave Heart & DeBruyn, 1998; Doka & Aber, 1989). This concept is especially relevant for Indigenous Peoples as they were, and sometimes still are, prohibited from practicing their traditional ceremonies and other cultural practices used to mourn the loss of land, Indigenous lives, and vital aspects of their culture. This grief and inability to properly grieve dates back hundreds of years to the European conquest of North America. Compared to the typical formulation of trauma, historical trauma is complex and is a collective experience held by many members of a community and transmitted over

generations (Brave Heart & DeBruyn, 1998). Specific traumatic events are diverse and can vary across communities and Tribes.

Indigenous Peoples experience a disproportionate amount of emotional and psychological distress that has been traced back to the historical experiences with the European colonization of North America (Duran, 2006; Gone, 2009; Kirmayer et al., 2003; Prussing, 2014). Previous work on historical trauma shows that colonization has created a cycle and structure that promotes adversity and unresolved grief resulting in higher levels of mental and physical health problems while also causing Indigenous Peoples to be more resilient in order to respond to these systems of oppression and trauma (Evans-Campbell, 2008; Kirmayer et al., 2014; Prussing, 2014). Historical trauma and individual trauma can have many long-term effects and impacts on an individual, their family and community (Evans-Campbell, 2008). The impact of historical trauma can include physical and mental health problems for the individual, stress regarding parenting for the family, and a breakdown of traditional culture and values for the community (Evans-Campbell, 2008). The historical trauma framework can provide explanations for the continuation of health and wellbeing inequities that exist in these communities. Additionally, historical trauma can provide a useful framework for shaping social, cultural, and psychological interventions (Kirmayer et al., 2014). Historical trauma must be recognized by researchers, service providers, and other practitioners when addressing trauma within Indigenous Peoples' lives. By using the historical trauma framework, multiple experiences of trauma can be addressed and allows for a better understanding of the compounding impact of trauma within Indigenous Peoples' lives (Evans-Campbell, 2008).

Current Rates of Violence Against Indigenous Peoples

Limited data exists regarding violence against Indigenous Peoples in contemporary society. Even so, researchers have established that Indigenous people face disproportionately higher levels of all forms of victimization in their lifetimes compared to other racial groups (Deer, 2015; Rosay, 2016; Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000). Specifically, Indigenous women experience the highest risk of victimization compared to all other racial and ethnic groups in the United States (Bohn, 2002; National Congress of American Indians [NCAI], 2018; Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000). Experiencing victimization has collateral consequences that impact the lives of victims, their families, and members of their communities (Bohn, 2002; NCAI, 2018; Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000). Recent national estimates show that around four in five Indigenous women experience some kind of violence in their lifetime (Rosay, 2016). Nearly half (46%) of Indigenous women are physically abused by an intimate partner during their lives (Breiding et al., 2008). More than half of Indigenous women (55%) experience sexual violence and about 25% experience stalking victimization (Breiding et al., 2008). These rates of violence are well above the rates for women of other ethnic groups (Breiding et al., 2008). While there are a limited number of studies examining the prevalence of violence experienced by Indigenous women, estimates show that around 75% to 81% of Indigenous women are victims of interpersonal violence during their lifetime (Malcoe & Duran, 2004). Experiencing trauma has both short- and long-term consequences, staying with the victim throughout their lives.

The University Context

Within the university setting, Indigenous students (including American Indian, Native American, and Alaska Native students) are one of the most underrepresented ethnic groups among all college students (Executive Office of the President, 2014). Indigenous students represent only about 1% of both the undergraduate and graduate student population in the United States (Espinosa et al., 2019; Hussar et al., 2020; Musu-Gillette et al., 2017). Of those who attend college, research shows that about 20% of Indigenous students obtain a bachelor's degree or higher and 12% attain an associate's degree (Espinosa et al., 2019; Hussar et al., 2020; Musu-Gillette et al., 2017). In addition, only 41% of first-time Indigenous students graduate with their bachelor's degrees within six years compared to 63% for all other students (Espinosa et al., 2019; Hussar et al., 2020; Musu-Gillette et al., 2017). It is difficult to fully understand the experiences of Indigenous college students because they are often excluded from data sources and research on college students given the low sample size (Espinosa et al., 2019). However, it is vital to understand the needs of these students. While some recent statistics show that Indigenous student retention and completion rates are increasing, these rates are still well below those for students of other groups (Espinosa et al., 2019; Hussar et al., 2020). Lower retention and completion rates among Indigenous college students have been attributed to systematic barriers and racism by university personnel, including instructors and professors (Brayboy, 2005; Patterson Silver Wolf et al., 2018). These low rates could be due to the structure and design of the education system (Sherman & Sherman, 1990), instructor attitudes and stereotypes (Reyhner, 1990), and overall ineffective teaching and curriculum.

While scholars and Indigenous Peoples know that Indigenous Peoples experience high levels of violence in their lives, the experiences of Indigenous college students remain unclear. People between the ages of 18 to 24 are at a higher risk of being victims of violence (Morgan & Thompson, 2021; Morgan & Truman, 2018). Indeed, Indigenous Peoples between the ages of 18-24 are more likely to be victims of homicide (Fox et al., 2020). Given the high rates of victimization among both Indigenous populations and those between the ages of 18 to 24, Indigenous college students may be at an increased risk for victimization. The limited studies conducted to date have begun to document empirical evidence indicating that Indigenous students, similar to Indigenous Peoples outside of the college environment, experience disproportionately higher rates of violence and victimization (Fish et al., 2017; Patterson Silver Wolf et al., 2018; Perry, 2002). Fish and colleagues (2017) were among the first to examine different types of violent victimization rates among Indigenous college students compared to other racial/ethnic groups. Specifically, Fish et al. (2017) found that Indigenous students experienced the highest rates of being physically assaulted, verbally threatened, and raped compared to white, Black, Asian, Latino, or biracial/multiracial students. Indigenous students were also more likely to experience being sexually touched without consent and experience attempted rape compared to white, Asian, Latino, or biracial/multiracial students. Furthermore, Fish and colleagues (2017) found that Indigenous students were most likely to report having an intimate/dating relationship categorized by emotional, physical, and/or sexual violence. Similar to other studies examining the impact of violence on academics among all college students (see BlackDeer et al., 2022 and Patterson Silver

Wolf et al., 2018), Indigenous students reported that alcohol use, physical assaults, and sexual assaults negatively impacted their academics (Fish et al., 2017).

Indigenous college students may experience higher rates of victimization due to the structure of the college environment and the racism within it (Brayboy, 2005; Fish et al., 2017). Victimization experiences and the structure of higher education create barriers to success for Indigenous students, which can contribute to lower retention and completion rates (Fish et al., 2017; Patterson et al., 2018). Although there is limited research on victimization among Indigenous college students, the studies that do exist have called for culturally-appropriate services and staff to best address the unique needs of Indigenous students (Fish et al., 2017; Patterson et al., 2016; Patterson et al., 2018; Stewart et al., 2013). If university services for Indigenous students, including those for victims, are culturally-appropriate and provided on-campus, then Indigenous students will be better able to address their trauma and victimization and feel a stronger connection to their university (Fish et al., 2017). Higher education professionals must be able to adequately provide ongoing support for Indigenous students given the higher rates of violence they experience (Fish et al., 2017). In addition to victimization experiences, university support staff and other university professionals need to be educated on Indigenous students' life experiences (Brayboy, Solyom, & Castagno, 2015; Patterson Silver Wolf et al., 2018). Having specific support centers for Indigenous students and broader Indigenous inclusion within the faculty, staff, and university curriculum, can help create a sense of belonging (Brayboy, 2005; Brayboy, Solyom, & Castagno, 2015; Tachine et al., 2017). This can have important implications for Indigenous students' retention, successful completion, and safety while in college (Brayboy, Solyom, &

Castagno, 2015; Fish et al., 2017; Patterson Silver Wolf et al., 2018; Tachine et al., 2017).

Research Gaps

The current study addresses three distinct research gaps and in so doing will advance knowledge on the experiences and needs of Indigenous college students. First, prior studies have examined the impacts of victimization and trauma among Indigenous communities as a whole, with special focus on Indigenous women (Deer, 2015; Rosay, 2016; Tjaden & Thoennes, 1998). However, only a handful of studies explore the prevalence of victimization among Indigenous college students specifically (see Fish et al., 2017 and Patterson Silver Wolf et al., 2018). Research that examines victimization of college students broadly shows that people of college age (18-35) are at an elevated risk of victimization (see Fisher et al., 2000, 2003, 2010). Yet these studies either do not include Indigenous students at all, or combine them into an "other" category, making it impossible to understand the prevalence among this specific group (Patterson Silver Wolf et al., 2018). Therefore, given what is known regarding the high levels of violence experienced by Indigenous people broadly, it is important to understand if these high levels of violence apply to Indigenous college students as well. Thus, the current study aims to be one of the first to explore the victimization experiences of Indigenous college students and how these experiences impact them.

The second way that the current study advances the literature is by examining what factors shape Indigenous college students' likelihood to seek help when they experience trauma or victimization. Previous literature has found that victims having knowledge of available services and victims no longer being able to rely on informal

support methods, in addition to the severity of the violence experienced, influence a victim's likelihood of seeking out services (see Ravi et al., 2021 for a review). Yet, few studies test if these factors also influence Indigenous Peoples' help-seeking behaviors, with no known studies focusing specifically on Indigenous college students. Indigenous Peoples have unique service needs when it comes to healing from violence and trauma (see Fiolet et al., 2021). Specifically, Indigenous Peoples often rely on informal support networks when seeking help, which can contribute to their healing and ability to recover from trauma (Fiolet et al., 2021). Given that college-aged individuals are at a higher risk for victimization, many universities have implemented educational and awareness programs and offer resources for college students to use while on-campus (Fisher et al.,2000, 2003). However, it is unclear if university services are meeting the needs of their students, particularly in terms of the cultural-appropriateness for Indigenous students. Thus, the current study explored the utility of these services and programs for Indigenous students, especially for those who have experienced trauma or victimization.

Lastly, the specific needs of Indigenous college students and barriers to accessing services is understudied within the literature. Few studies amplify the voices and stories of Indigenous college students while simultaneously learning from those who work with these students in the university context. It is not yet known what the needs of Indigenous college students are in terms of coping with victimization and how their experiences shape their help-seeking behaviors and service utilization. Understanding the specific actionable steps that university faculty, staff, and Indigenous students believe universities need to take to better serve their Indigenous students is of the upmost importance. By addressing their needs, universities may be able to contribute to higher retention and

completion rates for Indigenous students (Brayboy, 2005; Brayboy, Solyom, & Castagno, 2015; Espinosa et al., 2019; Hussar et al., 2020; Musu-Gillette et al., 2017; Tachine et al., 2017). Not least, Indigenous students' sense of belonging can be enhanced by universities that create safe places and provide culturally appropriate services that address trauma and victimization among their students (Tachine et al., 2017).

Current Study

The current study sought to (1) better understand what services Indigenous college students are using and (2) identify services college students need to address their trauma. More specifically, this dissertation had two overarching foci to guide three interrelated research studies. The dissertation focused on (1) what Indigenous students and university faculty and staff think needs to be provided to better address the needs of Indigenous students who have experienced victimization and (2) what knowledge do universities need to have to provide culturally-appropriate services to Indigenous students.

The current study drew upon the voices and perspectives of Indigenous college students as well as university service providers, faculty, and staff who work closely with Indigenous students. Utilizing data from three different sources – (1) Indigenous student surveys, (2) interviews with Indigenous college students, and (3) interviews with university faculty and staff – this study sought to provide an in-depth holistic perspective on service utilization, help-seeking, and service needs for Indigenous students at a large southwestern university. In order to address the previously mentioned aims, the current study was broken down into three interrelated research studies. The three interrelated studies, described below, collectively aimed to increase scholars', policymakers', and

universities' understanding of what challenges and life experiences Indigenous students have that shape their help-seeking behaviors and service utilization. This dissertation also provides recommendations for universities seeking to better address the needs of both Indigenous students and the faculty and staff that serve Indigenous students. Overall, this dissertation examines an understudied, underserved, and oppressed population by amplifying the voices and stories of Indigenous students and sheds light on how to improve university service provision. To do this, the dissertation used a mixed-methods approach consisting of quantitative surveys and interviews with Indigenous college students as well as qualitative interviews with university faculty and staff.

Trauma-Informed Research and Participant Wellbeing

The current study utilized a trauma-informed approach throughout all aspects of the research process – from the creation of the research questions, survey measures, and interview questions to the data collection and interview processes. Trauma-informed research "realize(s) the impacts of trauma and potential paths for recovery, recognize(s) the signs and symptoms of trauma, respond(s) by integrating knowledge about trauma into their approach, and resist(s) traumatization" (Campbell et al., 2019; Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration [SAMHSA], 2014). Therefore, trauma-informed research aims to keeps these principles at the forefront of project development while maintaining participant safety, privacy and confidentiality in areas of recruitment, data collection, and dissemination (Campbell et al., 2019).

The larger project that this data was drawn from utilized a team of Indigenous-led and interdisciplinary researchers with several members being trained in victim services and trauma-informed care. To ensure trauma-informed research practices in the current

study, the research team first created questions with the goal of reducing retraumatization. To do this, the research team vetted every survey and interview question with special attention to wording and ordering to reduce the potential for triggering participants while also allowing for adequate information needed for the study to be gathered. Upon completion, the questions were edited for clarity and ensured that the questions only included information that was necessary to answer the question. For the recruitment process, the team provided a trigger warning on all appropriate recruitment materials (i.e., flyers, emails, presentations). This trigger warning allowed students to know that the survey, and subsequent interview, was on a topic that may be retriggering or retraumatizing for some participants. Providing a trigger warning allowed participants to be fully aware of the risk of participation prior to participating.

An important part of conducting trauma-informed research is ensuring that participants have access to resources and services during and after data collection. First, a culturally-appropriate list of services was created for participants that included campus-based, local, and national services to address victimization and trauma. This list was provided to participants within the informed consent document, throughout the survey with a clickable link, and at the end of the survey as well. During the interview process for students, the research team ensured that a trained trauma-informed Indigenous consultant conducted all of the interviews. This interviewer had decades of direct victim service experience and is well-trained in trauma-informed care. The team also ensured that breathing breaks were built into the interview protocol to allow the interviewee to take periodic breaks. Additionally, the interviewer was trained to recognize the signs of trauma and intervened during the interviews if the interviewee needed immediate crisis

intervention. At the end of the interview, the interviewer debriefed the participant and connected them with any resources or services they may have needed.

Lastly, this study was a collaboration among a variety of student organizations and other partners within the university. These partnerships allowed the research to include specific support for students at the university they attended, both during and after their participation in the study. Specifically, through our partnerships, participants were able to participate in talking circles led by an Indigenous student support organization as well as other community support groups (e.g., Native Health). The research team acknowledged that this research could be triggering for students, which may require additional support after participating. Therefore, the research team made sure that students had support upon completing the study if they needed it.

Data and Methodology

Research Design

The data for this study was drawn from a larger project examining Indigenous college students' experiences with victimization, the missing and murder of Indigenous People (MMIP), help-seeking behaviors, service utilization, and resiliency. Original data came from three sources: (1) surveys with Indigenous college students, (2) interviews with Indigenous students, and (3) interviews with university faculty and staff who work with Indigenous college students. The purpose of using these three data sources is to allow for increased understanding of Indigenous students' help-seeking behaviors, service utilization, and service needs from both the student perspective and the university faculty and staff perspective. Additionally, the use of qualitative and quantitative data from Indigenous students and university employees allowed for the identification of

strengths in service provision as well as gaps and existing needs. This study used perspectives from both Indigenous students and those who work with them to holistically understand student needs. University faculty and staff perspectives are included for two important reasons (1) they are able to identify what multiple students over time have experienced and (2) may be able to provide added insights and perspectives that students may not notice.

Study 1: Indigenous College Students' Victimization Experiences and Help-Seeking Behaviors

The goal of Study 1 (Chapter 2) was to explore Indigenous college students' service use and students' opinions on the university services. Additionally, this study aimed to understand the victimization experiences of Indigenous college students. The following themes have been found by scholars to be barriers to help-seeking: fear, shame, embarrassment, fear of retaliation, fear of not being believed, distance to services, and stigma (McCart et al., 2010). This study explored the barriers Indigenous college students faced and how those barriers may be different from what is already known regarding help-seeking among students in general. In addition, this study aimed to amplify the voices of Indigenous students by understanding their service needs and what the university could do to improve its service provision and programming. Finally, this study focused on the behaviors that Indigenous students engage in to heal and work through their trauma beyond the use of formal services.

Research Questions

To accomplish the goals of Study 1, three research questions were developed:

(1) What are the victimization experiences of Indigenous college students?

(2) What barriers do Indigenous college students face when seeking services on- and off-campus for their victimization experiences?

(3) How do Indigenous college students seek help for their victimization experiences, both informally and formally?

Data

Study 1 utilized both survey and interview data from students at a large southwestern public university, of which a relatively large proportion of students identify as Indigenous. Study 1 utilized survey and interview data from Indigenous college students only and does not include university faculty and staff perspectives. In Study 1, there were 95 survey respondents and 16 interview participants.

Student survey. In an effort to ensure participant and researcher safety during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, all of the data for this study was obtained virtually. Survey participants were asked to participate in an electronic Qualtrics survey containing questions covering topics pertaining to victimization, experiences with MMIP, help-seeking behaviors, resiliency, and experiences with university services. The survey consisted of 41 questions, with skip and display[3] logic, and took participants between 10-20 minutes to complete, depending upon their pace (See the Survey in Appendix A). Upon completion of the survey, participants were invited to: (1) participate in an interview, provided that they have experience with MMIP, and (2) enter into a drawing

[3] Display logic is a survey software technique that only displays a question to a participant if they answer the previous question a certain way. For example, if a participant answers "yes" to using a certain service, then questions about that service will be displayed to them; while if they answer "no," questions about that service will not be shown to the participant.

for a $75 Target gift card. All email addresses were stored securely and separately from participant survey responses.

To be eligible for participation in the student survey, participants had to (1) be age 18 or older, (2) identify as Native American, American Indian, Indigenous, or Alaska Native, and (3) be a student attending the specific university where the study was conducted. Students who participated in the survey were asked if they wanted to participate in a future interview regarding their experiences with MMIP and service use. Student survey participants who indicated an interest in participating in an interview on MMIP and service use, and who report having experiences with MMIP, were eligible to participate in an interview.

Student interview. Participants who provided their email addresses in response to the invitation to participate in an interview were contacted by a member of the research team to set up a time and date to participate in an interview via video conferencing software (e.g., Zoom). The interview was conducted using semi-structured, open-ended questions focusing on students' victimization, help-seeking behaviors and service utilization, experiences with MMIP, and perceptions of resiliency. At the start of each interview, our Indigenous victim advocate (hereafter referred to as consultant) provided each participant with a consent form and reviewed the informed consent procedures verbally with the participant prior to commencing the interview. With the participant's permission, interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed verbatim. All interview participants were comfortable with the interviews being recorded. Each interview lasted approximately 1 to 2 hours depending on the pace of each participant. Consistent with the student survey, student interviews were conducted virtually. Interviews were

conducted in a safe, quiet environment as determined by the participant. Each interview participant received a $75 Target gift card.

Recruitment. Recruitment of participants was focused specifically from within trusted networks and organizations within the university that serve Indigenous students. In terms of student recruitment, electronic announcements and flyers were distributed via email by our research team as well as university organizations and academic departments that serve Indigenous students (hereafter referred to as "university partners"), social media from Indigenous student groups, and referrals from friends and/or family. The university partners shared the flyer and invitation to participate with their Indigenous students via their listservs, social media, websites, as well as in person. Recruitment for the student interviews were advertised the same way as the surveys, however, those who wish to participate in the interview had their emails collected upon completing the survey. Subsequently, survey participants who met the interview eligibility criteria were contacted later on to set up the time and day for their interview.

Key Measures

To understand the help-seeking behaviors of Indigenous college students, a number of measures drawn from both the student surveys and interviews were used. The following provides a brief description of each of the key measures to address the research questions for Study 1.

Victimization experiences. The victimization experiences of participants were measured in several ways. Participants were asked about any victimization experiences, both prior to entering college and during college. First, victimization experiences were measured by asking about the participants' personal experiences with four different types

of victimization. Second, participants were asked about household experiences with victimization that the participants witnessed or had a family member experience within their household. The four types of victimization experiences included *controlling behaviors*, *physical violence*, *sexual violence*, and *emotional or psychological abuse*. Each victimization experience was dichotomized so that the participant either did (=1) or did not (=0) experience each of the victimization types or it happened to someone in their household (=1), or it did not happen (=0). Additionally, an index score for personal and household victimization was created (range: 0-4) for those who experienced multiple types of victimization. Then, a third index was created to show the total amount of victimization experienced by participants, both personally and within the household (range: 0-8).

Previous service use. Multiple measures were used to assess participants' use of services both at the university and in the community. First, participants were asked if they used any services at their university (yes =1; no=0). If they indicated that they did use services at their university, follow-up questions were asked about participants' use of *mental health counseling, support groups, health services, legal services,* and *culturally specific services* at the university. For each service that participants indicated they used, participants were asked two questions. First, participants were asked to rate their satisfaction with using the service on a Likert scale ranging from "extremely satisfied" (=4) to "extremely dissatisfied" (=0). Then participants were asked if they would use this service again with options being dichotomized: yes (=1) and no (=0). For both those who used services at their university and those who did not, participants were asked if they also used any services off-campus (yes=1; no=0). If they did use services off-campus,

participants were asked what services they used and where they were located. Additionally, participants were asked about their experiences with each of the specific services they used in the interview. Interview participants who did not use any services (on- or off-campus) were asked why they did not utilize the services. Interviewees were asked detailed questions about their experiences with the services they used, how they felt about the services, reasons for whether or not they would use the services again, and recommendations for on-campus services. These questions provided qualitative information regarding the aspects of university services that students do and do not like as well as provide reasoning for why students would or would not use the service again.

Barriers to help-seeking. The next measure directly relates to participants' previous service use by asking in the survey if anything prevented the participant from seeking help (yes =1; no=0). If participants indicated that something prevented them from seeking help, they had the option to provide an explanation in an open-ended question in the survey as to what prevented them from seeking help. Additionally, the interview included questions regarding the challenges and barriers the participants faced while seeking services on-campus. Also, individuals who did not use services on-campus were asked about their knowledge regarding the availability of these services on-campus and about their access to services on-campus.

Informal service use. The last measure examines help-seeking behaviors beyond the university and formal institutions. In both the survey and interview, participants were asked how they take care of themselves beyond formal services. This measure provided insight into how Indigenous college students cope with their victimization and trauma beyond what traditional services can provide.

Study 2: University Faculty and Staff Perceptions of Indigenous Students' Needs and Challenges

The goals of Study 2 (Chapter 3) were to understand the perspectives of university faculty and staff regarding how services are used by Indigenous students and what challenges students experience. While previous research has explored university services and employee perceptions (Holland et al., 2019; Lichty et al, 2008; Ullman & Townsend, 2007), this is the first known study from the university faculty and staff perspective to focus specifically on services that serve Indigenous students and how Indigenous students' needs may differ from other students. Not only does this study allow for the identification areas in which the university could improve services or where the university may need to create new programs, it also accounts for programming that is working and is successful for Indigenous students. The goal of this study was to identify what services university employees believe could be improved for Indigenous students, how their students overcome barriers they face, and what services have beneficial outcomes for Indigenous students.

Research Questions

Study 2 (Chapter 3) shifted from the student view and focused specifically on the perceptions of university faculty and staff who work with Indigenous students. This chapter aimed to answer the following research questions:

(1) What are faculty and staff's knowledge of Indigenous college students' victimization experiences?

(2) How engaged are Indigenous college students in campus services in response to their victimization from the perspective of faculty and staff who serve this population?

(3) How do faculty and staff effectively support Indigenous college students who have experienced victimization or trauma?

Data

Study 2 utilized data from interviews with university faculty and staff who work with Indigenous students. A total of 41 interviews were conducted for this study. The eligibility criteria for university staff/faculty to participate in the employee interview included: (1) age 18 or older, (2) interact with Indigenous students within the college context, and (3) be a current employee of the university where the study will be conducted. Recruitment for university faculty and staff was conducted through individual outreach by the research team as well as snowball sampling whereas each participant was asked to refer others who work with Indigenous students within the university. In addition, university faculty and staff were also recruited through information sessions with university organizations and academic departments, and through referrals directly from close university partners on the larger project.

The procedure for conducting university faculty and staff interviews was similar to the procedure utilized for the student interviews. Each faculty or staff member who agreed to participate in an interview was contacted via email to schedule the virtual interview. At the start of each interview, I provided each participant with a consent form and reviewed it verbally with the participant prior to commencing the interview. With the participant's permission, interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed verbatim.

Each interview participant agreed to have their interview tape-recorded. Faculty and staff interviews lasted between 1 to 2 hours, depending on each participant's pace. The employee interviews were conducted using semi-structured, open-ended questions focusing on the topics pertaining to participants' work with Indigenous students, challenges Indigenous students face, resources Indigenous students need, other needs of students and employees, and employee burnout. Interviews with university faculty and staff were conducted via video conferencing software (e.g., Zoom) in a safe, quiet environment as determined by the participant. All faculty and staff who participated in the interview received a $10 Starbucks gift card.

Key Topics

Several key themes were expected to emerge from the faculty and interviews. The following provides a brief description of each of the key questions/topics that was asked in order elicit different themes to answer the research questions for Study 2. These topics included, *knowledge of Indigenous college students' victimization, perceptions of Indigenous service use,* and *ways the staff and faculty support Indigenous students*. To gauge participant's awareness of students' experiences with victimization, faculty and staff were asked the following question, "In your interactions with students, have any Indigenous students shared experiences of victimization or trauma with you?" Participants were then asked if they believed Indigenous students were likely to engage with campus services. Participants were probed to further explain why they thought Indigenous students did or did not engage with campus services. Additionally, participants were asked, "Do you find that Indigenous college students seek help for their victimization/trauma experiences when they need it?" These questions helped gauge

employees' perceptions of Indigenous student service use, while also establishing whether or not the employees are aware of student trauma or victimization histories. Lastly, participants were asked how they support Indigenous students who have experienced victimization and those that choose to seek help.

Study 3: Solutions to Better Serve Indigenous College Students

The goals of this study were to better understand actions the university can take to (1) improve current services for Indigenous students, (2) create new programs or services for Indigenous students, (3) address challenges and barriers that Indigenous students face in accessing programs/services, and (4) improve overall experiences for Indigenous college students. All of these goals address ways to better support Indigenous college students who have experienced victimization or trauma. Addressing these five key goals may increase service utilization and cultural competency for Indigenous students as well as increase resources and training for university faculty and staff.

Research Question

In Study 3 (Chapter 4) student and university faculty and staff viewpoints were presented collectively to better understand what Indigenous college students and faculty and staff believe need to be provided to students by the university. Specifically, this chapter answered the following three-part research question:

> What qualities of services do Indigenous students and the faculty and staff who serve them believe (a) are currently working, (b) need to be provided, or (c) need to be improved to effectively serve Indigenous students with victimization histories?

Data

Study 3 utilized all the student data discussed in Study 1 and all the faculty and staff data discussed in Study 2. See above for data descriptions.

Key Topics

For the final study, three topics were explored and drawn from both the student and faculty and staff interviews. The three topics that were explored include *service needs, resource needs,* and *program needs.* The student interview included questions about what students wished the university knew that would better serve their students as well as what services they wish were provided to students on-campus. The university faculty and staff interviews asked questions regarding how the university could better serve their Indigenous students and reduce the barriers that Indigenous students face when seeking services.

Organization of the Dissertation

The remainder of this dissertation is organized into four chapters, whereas Chapter 2 features Study 1, Chapter 3 focuses on Study 2, and Chapter 4 presents Study 3. Chapters 2 through 4 each provide a review of the literature, explanation of the relevant research questions, data, measures, results, and a discussion of the specific implications and conclusions for each study. The final chapter, Chapter 5, presents an integrated summary of the findings from each of the three studies and how they relate to one another with a final discussion of how these findings cohesively provide implications for policy and practice, while acknowledging the limitations and identifying directions for future research.

CHAPTER 2

INDIGENOUS COLLEGE STUDENTS' VICTIMIZATION EXPERIENCES, HELP-SEEKING BEHAVIORS, AND SERVICE UTILIZATION

ABSTRACT

Indigenous Peoples (Native American, American Indian, and Alaska Native) have experienced violent victimization for generations, dating back to the beginning of colonization, and continuing in present day. Yet, limited knowledge exists about Indigenous college students' victimization experiences and their help-seeking behaviors and service utilization. The current study is the first known study of Indigenous students' help-seeking, both on- and off-campus, in response to their victimization. Original data collected from a sample of 95 Indigenous college students revealed high prevalence among survey participants of personal victimization (82%; n=71) and household victimization (66%; n=57), yet relatively low utilization of on-campus services (20%; n=19). Additionally, interview data from 16 Indigenous college students identified several barriers to service utilization. The themes that emerged included lack of awareness of services, inaccessibility to services, and lack of cultural competency within services. Even so, Indigenous students relied on various informal and cultural methods to heal from their victimization, including traditional healing methods, participation in Indigenous ceremonies, physical exercise, and having a strong social support network. Policy recommendations are offered for universities and service providers to address the needs of Indigenous students who have experienced victimization.

Introduction

Indigenous Peoples have historically and continue to experience victimization and violence in their lives more often than other racial groups. In fact, a national study revealed that 84% of Indigenous women and 82% of Indigenous men experienced violent victimization during their lifetime (Rosay, 2016). College students are also at a higher risk of experiencing victimization (see Fisher et al., 2000, 2003, 2010). Yet very little research has examined whether Indigenous college students experience high rates of victimization, consistent with the high rates observed among Indigenous populations in general and college students broadly. Across academic disciplines, there is extensive research exploring the prevalence and experiences of college students' victimization (see Fedina et al., 2018 for review). Indeed, college students are among the most over-sampled populations in research today (Hanel & Vione, 2016; Peterson, 2001; Peterson & Merunka, 2014). However, Indigenous college students remain an underserved and understudied population for which very little is known. Although Indigenous college students only comprise about 1% of both graduate and undergraduate students in higher education (Espinosa et al., 2019; Hussar et al., 2020), their experiences are important to understand, particularly given universities' recent efforts to be more diverse, equitable, and inclusive in all aspects of operations (e.g., hiring faculty/staff, supporting and mentoring of students, and recruiting and retaining students of color). Understanding and addressing Indigenous students' victimization is also relevant, knowing that both Indigenous Peoples and college-aged individuals are generally at an increased risk of victimization (Fox et al., 2020). To date, the victimization and service use experiences of Indigenous college students is relatively unknown.

In response to college students' victimization experiences, universities have created educational curriculum and programming to help address victimization of college students. Trauma and victimization can impact students' academic performance and success in college (BlackDeer et al., 2022; Mengo & Black, 2016; Molstad et al., 2023). Victim and mental health services on-campus can help support students who have experienced victimization address their trauma and help them with their academics (Sabina et al., 2017). However, these prevention and service programming created for the university setting are often based on the experiences of white college students and do not recognize the unique service needs of students of color, especially Indigenous students (Fish & Syed, 2018: Fish et al., 2017; Patterson Silver Wolf et al., 2018). Current research often lumps students of color, including Indigenous students, into one singular "other race" category, making it more difficult to understand the experiences and different needs of these students. Services currently offered on university campuses may be able to help some students of color, specifically Indigenous students, address their victimization needs. However, there are still gaps in service provision due to the lack of culturally specific services for Indigenous victims on-campus.

The current study builds upon the little research on Indigenous college students victimization experiences and is the first known exploration of Indigenous college students formal and informal help-seeking behaviors. This study also examines the challenges that prevent Indigenous college students from accessing services on- and off-campus. Through the empowerment and amplification of Indigenous voices, this study uses a mixed method approach to understand the lived experiences of Indigenous college

students and provides policy implications for colleges and universities to enhance their support of Indigenous students.

Literature Review

Victimization Experiences of Indigenous Peoples

There has been a growing focus in the victimization literature on the lived experiences of Indigenous Peoples who have experienced victimization (Bachman et al., 2010; Bohn, 2002; Rosay, 2016; Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000). Although this research is limited, national studies indicate that 4 in 5 Indigenous women experience violence during their lifetime (Bachman et al., 2010). Due to the impact of colonization and settler colonial violence, Indigenous communities have experienced or have been exposed to large amounts of violence and victimization (Deer, 2018; Sarche & Whitesell, 2012). According to some Indigenous leaders, almost all Indigenous children are exposed to violence (NCAI, 2018). In fact, Indigenous youth are 2.5 times more likely to experience trauma compared to their non-Indigenous counterparts (Sarche & Whitesell, 2012). A handful of studies have shown that Indigenous Peoples experience interpersonal violence (IPV) more often than other racial/ethnic groups, including physical assault, sexual assault, and stalking (Bachman et al., 2010; Matamonasa-Bennett, 2013; Rosay, 2016; NCAI, 2018; Urban Indian Health Institute [UIHI], 2018). Indigenous Peoples are also at higher risk than other racial groups of becoming missing persons and homicide victims, which relates to a national and international crisis of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Peoples ([MMIP] Fox et al., 2020, 2022).

While there has been a growing number of studies examining the impacts and prevalence of victimization among Indigenous communities, few have focused

specifically on Indigenous college students. Although Indigenous Peoples represent a small percentage of all college students (around 1%), it is vital to understand their experiences with victimization and college given the historical trauma associated with education (e.g., Indian Boarding Schools; Brayboy, 2005; Caplan & Ford, 2014; Tachine et al., 2017). Often in larger studies exploring the victimization experiences of college students, Indigenous students are left out or lumped into an "other race" category made up of a number of different students with varying ethnic and racial backgrounds (Brayboy 2005; Fish et al., 2017; Patterson Silver Wolf et al., 2018). While these studies are important for understanding the prevalence of victimization among college students, it provides little to no information regarding the lived experiences of *Indigenous* college students. Given that research broadly shows that Indigenous Peoples, youth, and women in particular, experience high rates of violence, it is imperative to examine the victimization experiences of Indigenous college students.

Similar to studies that examine Indigenous Peoples in general, the few studies that focus on Indigenous college students also find high rates of victimization (Fish et al., 2017; Patterson Silver Wolf et al., 2018). Compared to students of other racial/ethnic groups (i.e., white, Black, Asian, Latino, biracial/multiracial), Indigenous students had higher rates of physical assault, verbal threats (harassment), rape, and being in a relationship that was categorized as emotionally, physically, and/or sexually violent (Fish et al., 2017). Indigenous college students report that physical and sexual assaults negatively impacted their schoolwork (BlackDeer et al., 2022, 2023; Fish et al., 2017). The current body of literature suggests the need for culturally-appropriate services and

staff to address the unique needs that Indigenous students have (Fish et al., 2017; Patterson Silver Wolf et al., 2018).

Indigenous Peoples experience higher levels of violence and victimization due to the colonization they faced when white settlers came to take their land (Deer, 2015; Matamonasa-Bennett, 2015; Weaver, 2009). Colonization refers to is the process in which individuals (e.g., colonizers) force colonized people to take on the values and beliefs of the colonizers, while simultaneously undermining the colonized peoples' values, cultures, and beliefs (Weaver, 2009). The violent process of colonization has resulted in ripple effects across generations of Indigenous Peoples, causing them to experience historical trauma (Brave Heart, 1998, 2003, 2011). Historical trauma is a term created by Brave Heart and DeBruyn (1998) and refers to a type of trauma that is a "cumulative emotional and psychological wounding across generations, including the lifespan, which emanates from massive group trauma". In addition to personal trauma, Indigenous Peoples often experience historical trauma that is felt by communities over many generations (Brave Heart & DeBruyn, 1998). Due to violence and victimization caused by colonization over the course of history, Indigenous Peoples have increased exposure to structural inequities and racism that can lead to their personal victimization (Evans-Campbell, 2008; Prussing, 2014; Sarche & Whitesell, 2012). Similar to personal victimization, historical trauma can impact an individual's mental and physical health (Kirmayer et al., 2014). So, not only is it vital to understand the impact of personal trauma on Indigenous individuals, but it is also imperative that researchers and service providers acknowledge the impact historical trauma can have on Indigenous individuals when healing.

Help-Seeking Behaviors

Individuals who have experienced violence and/or victimization cope in a number of different ways. One way is to specifically seek out services that are aimed at addressing victimization and its impacts. Seeking specific services from victim service organizations or other nonprofits is referred to in the literature as formal help-seeking, while talking with friends, being in nature, or journaling is referred to as informal help seeking (McCart et al., 2010). While addressing victimization through direct service provision is common, many victims decide to handle their victimization though informal help-seeking means such as talking with friends and family (McCart et al., 2010).

Many factors influence whether or not victims seek formal help in response to their victimization. Typically, help-seeking is determined by victims' previous history and pattern of violent victimization, meaning multiple forms of victimization (Cho et al., 2020). Additionally, victims who experience more severe violence and those that result in injury are more likely to seek formal help such as medical care (Ansara & Hindin, 2010; Cho et al., 2020). Along with their previous victimization history, victims' previous experience with service providers or law enforcement can impact their decision to seek formal help (Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000). Specifically, victims' perceptions of effectiveness, providers' attitudes towards the victim, and fear of being blamed or judged often prevent individuals from seeking formal help (Fiolet et al., 2021; Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000; Stanek et al., 2023). Victims who are older, white, female, or have a perpetrator who is a different race are more likely to seek formal services (Ameral et al., 2020; Ansara & Hindin, 2010; Cho et al., 2020).

It is important to note that college students typically do not seek formal help (Ameral et al., 2020; Fisher et al., 2000; Sabina & Ho, 2014). Less than 16% of college students who experienced domestic violence or sexual assault seek formal help (Cusano et al., 2022; Edwards et al., 2012; Sabina & Ho, 2014). Additionally, in a sample of college students who experienced IPV, Prospero and Vohra-Gupta (2008) found that only 16% sought mental health services. College students attribute not seeking help to similar reasons to non-college students, but they also identify unique barriers to help-seeking on-campus (Cusano et al., 2022). Theoretical frameworks for help-seeking have determined that there are often three stages of deciding to seek help for college students including (1) determining if there is a problem, (2) deciding what the options are, and (3) weighing the consequences of those options (Cusano et al., 2022; DeLoveh & Cattaneo, 2017; Liang et al., 2005). A number of barriers exist for students when seeking help on-campus, including lack of awareness of available services, lack of understanding of eligibility criteria, and unclear outcomes of utilization (Cusano et al., 2022). While research acknowledges the impact of individual, interpersonal, and sociocultural factors, it has yet to be applied to Indigenous college students' help-seeking decisions. Factors such as race, gender, culture, and socioeconomic status can contribute to help-seeking decisions, it is important to understand how these may impact Indigenous college students' decision making.

Victims often rely on informal help when they experience victimization, such as talking to family members or friends (McCart et al., 2010; Ullman, 2007). Informal support systems have been perceived in a more positive light than formal help-seeking (Campbell, 2008; McCart et al., 2010). To illustrate this point, a national study of college

women found that while only 2% of victims who experienced sexual violence reported to the police, 70% sought support from a loved one (Fisher et al., 2000). Younger victims, and those with prior victimizations, or a history of mental health problems, were more likely to rely on informal support networks (Lewis et al., 2005; Reyns & Englebrecht, 2014). Therefore, college students often rely on informal support networks rather than formal service engagement (Cho & Huang, 2017; Reyns & Englebrecht, 2014; Wood & Stichman, 2018). Additionally, the type of support needed impacts the type of help-seeking with which an individual engages. Those who are seeking emotional support are more likely to rely on informal support networks (Cho & Huang, 2017; McCart et al., 2010). Disclosing victimization informally to family and friends can help victims connect with formal services later on if they are encouraged to do so by those individuals (Ullman, 2007).

Help-Seeking Among Indigenous Victims

Victims' cultural backgrounds are highly influential for formal and informal help seeking (Morrison et al., 2006). For example, those who are a part of a collectivist culture (e.g., Indigenous Peoples) often prefer utilizing informal help rather than seeking help outside of their community/culture (Morrison et al., 2006). Historical and racial barriers to services can prevent Indigenous Peoples from accessing help, including lack of trust in westernized services as well as language and cultural barriers (Ellison-Loschmann & Pearce, 2006; Finfgeld-Connett, 2015). Indigenous family members sometimes discourage formal help seeking in order to maintain the family unit given the importance of kinship and family to Indigenous cultures (Finfgeld-Connett, 2015). Lack of awareness of available services, feelings of shame or fear, and previous experiences

with child protective services are reasons why Indigenous victims are often hesitant to seek formal help (Finfgeld-Connett, 2015; Fiolet et al., 2021). Indigenous victims may be worried that seeking formal help will lead to their children being taken away (Burnette, 2013; Finfgeld-Connett, 2015).

Historical trauma, oppression, racism, lack of cultural sensitivity, general distrust of service providers reduces the likelihood of Indigenous victims seeking formal service (Finfgeld-Connett, 2015; Fiolet et al., 2021). Poor previous interactions with service providers lead to mistrust among Indigenous victims due to re-victimization, being let down by the system, or facing judgement or racism (Fiolet et al., 2021). Victims often relied on informal support networks to avoid potential shame, judgement, and confidentiality issues that can arise from the use of formal services (Cripps & McGlade, 2008; Finfgeld-Connett, 2015; Fiolet et al., 2021). The close-knit characteristics of Indigenous communities, such as lack of confidentiality or spreading information to others, were also cited as being barriers to seeking services (Fiolet et al., 2021). It has been found that Indigenous victims only seek formal services when they reach a crisis point and feel they have no other choice (Ellison-Loschmann & Pearce, 2006; Finfgeld-Connett, 2015; Fiolet et al., 2021). Thus, it is imperative that service providers, medical personnel, and law enforcement agencies ensure that they are practicing cultural sensitivity and creating culturally relevant services to help Indigenous victims heal (Weaver, 2004).

No known studies to date have examined help-seeking behaviors and service utilization for Indigenous college students who have experienced victimization. Thus, it is unclear what exactly leads Indigenous victims to seek help formally or informally.

Although service providers can provide insight on why Indigenous victims seek help, they cannot provide in-depth information on why Indigenous Peoples engage with services or not and what factors lead up to these decisions. It is vital that research on Indigenous victims' help seeking behaviors include and empower Indigenous victims to share their stories with the goal of understanding help seeking processes and tailoring services to meet those needs.

Service Needs of Indigenous Peoples

Prior to colonization, IPV such as domestic violence or sexual assault were relatively rare in Indigenous communities (Duran et al., 1998; Hamby, 2000; Matamonasa-Bennett, 2015; Smith, 2005). When it did occur, tribes dealt with it swiftly and severely with perpetrators being ostracized or even exiled from the tribe (LaDuke, 1992; Matamonasa-Bennett, 2015). Tribes were adequately equipped to handle the limited instances of IPV and were able to address and maintain safety of their people prior to colonization. Given this historical context, Indigenous Peoples have been subjected to violence by white settlers and colonizers for centuries. This has led to historical trauma, discussed previously, which is unique to Indigenous victims. There has been extensive research examining the service needs of victims who have experiences sexual assault and domestic violence within the general population and among college students broadly (Fedina et al., 2018). However, there is a small subset of research focusing on the unique service needs of Indigenous victims and communities. Indigenous victims have many of the same service needs as those of other races/ethnicities such as safety, mental health treatment, and medical care, among others.

Yet, Indigenous victims also have service needs that are unique to their culture, traditions, worldview, and ways of healing (Fox et al., 2018).

Victim service organizations are often ill-equipped to address the unique needs of Indigenous victims (de Heer et al., 2021; Fiolet et al., 2021; Griffiths & Yerbury, 1991; Wuerch et al., 2019). Specifically, victims service organizations are typically created and developed based on "westernized" worldviews and needs of non-Indigenous victims, which have been found to be culturally inappropriate, ineffective, and insensitive to some Indigenous victims (Bagwell-Gray et al., 2021; Crips & McGlade, 2008; Griffiths & Yerbury, 1991). Additionally, formal help for Indigenous victims is often unavailable or unable to address and understand the complex factors that contribute to Indigenous victimization (Cripps & McGlade, 2008). Cultural healing methods and access to Indigenous providers are important aspects in the healing process for Indigenous survivors (de Heer et al., 2021; Finfgeld-Connett, 2015; Fox et al., 2018; Logan et al., 2004). This is the case for both urban and rural Indigenous Peoples and communities (Fiolet et al., 2021).

Indigenous victims of violence experience a disproportionate lack of specific services both on and off the reservation, which can partially be attributed to their geographic isolation (Jones, 2008). For Indigenous victims, there are a number of specific service needs that current victim service organizations do not address. These organizations need to have Indigenous providers who can relate to Indigenous victims' identities and/or providers who are trained and understand the cultural and language needs of Indigenous victims (de Heer et al., 2021). There is a severe need for culturally competent service providers, if Indigenous providers cannot be hired, in order to reduce

Indigenous victims' efforts to explain their own victimization against stereotypes, victim blaming, and general cultural insensitivity to uninformed service providers (Logan et al., 2004). In order to strengthen current victim services, providers must provide a holistic culturally-sensitive approach to addressing victimization and establish trust with Indigenous victims and their communities (Finfgeld-Connett, 2015). Access to transportation, awareness of services, and confidentiality are major factors that influence Indigenous victims' service utilization in rural areas, both on and off the reservation (de Heer et al., 2021; Fox et al., 2018; Griffiths & Yerbury, 1991).

Current Study

The current study is the first known study to explore the lived experiences of Indigenous college students with victimization, help-seeking, and formal service use. This study seeks to understand the challenges and barriers that Indigenous college students face when seeking services both on- and off-campus. Previous research focusing on Indigenous Peoples' victimization experiences and service needs, not among college students, has primarily focused on the perspectives of service providers, rather than prioritizing and amplifying the voices of Indigenous victims themselves (see Fiolet et al., 2021 for discussion). It is important to explore Indigenous Peoples' victimization and service needs in collaboration with Indigenous Peoples, to provide not only an understanding of what Indigenous Peoples experience, but also allow them to provide solutions to the challenges they experience. This study takes a mixed-methods approach by utilizing data from Indigenous student surveys and further provides context to these surveys by conducting interviews with Indigenous students as well.

Three research questions were developed to understand Indigenous college

students' experiences with (1) victimization and trauma, (2) challenges and barriers when seeking help, and (3) formal service use and informal help seeking. The research questions are as follows:

(1) What are the victimization experiences of Indigenous college students?

(2) What barriers do Indigenous college students face when seeking services on- and off-campus for their victimization experiences?

(3) How do Indigenous college students seek help for their victimization experiences, both informally and formally?

Methodology

Research Design

The current study uses original data from a sample of Indigenous college students at a large southwestern university. This study was part of a larger project with Indigenous college students' and the faculty and staff who serve them, which focused on students' experiences with victimization, MMIP, help-seeking, and resiliency as well as faculty/staff needs and experiences with serving this population. The project was approved by the university's Institutional Review Board (IRB), underwent a cultural review by the university president's Tribal Advisory team, and employed a trauma-informed approach. The current study presents findings from surveys and interviews with Indigenous students. This mixed method approach allows for the identification of strengths in service provision as well as gaps and existing needs for this population, while providing context for why students used services or did not.

Student Survey

Eligibility. To be eligible for participation in the student survey, participants had to (1) be age 18 or older, (2) identify as Native American, American Indian, Indigenous, or Alaska Native, and (3) be a student attending the university where the study was conducted. Survey participants were asked to participate in an electronic survey containing questions covering topics pertaining to victimization, experiences with MMIP, help-seeking behaviors, resiliency, and experiences with university services.

Recruitment. Students were recruited from trusted networks and organizations within the university that serve Indigenous students. Electronic announcements and flyers were distributed via email by our research team as well as university organizations and academic departments that serve Indigenous students (hereafter referred to as "university partners"), social media from Indigenous student groups, and referrals from friends and/or family. The university partners shared the flyer and invitation to participate with their Indigenous students via their listservs, social media, websites, as well as in person.

Procedure. The survey was administered electronically due to the covid-19 pandemic and took participants between 10-20 minutes to complete (See the Survey in Appendix A). Upon completion of the survey, participants were invited to: (1) participate in an interview, provided that they have knowledge on MMIP, and (2) enter into a drawing for a $75 gift card.

Student Interviews

Eligibility. The inclusion criteria for the student interviews were the same as the criteria for the survey, with one exception. Those who wished to participate in an in-

depth interview needed to have knowledge of MMIP in order to be eligible for an interview.

Recruitment. Recruitment for the student interviews was advertised the same way as the surveys, however, those who wished to participate in the interview had their emails collected upon completing the survey. Subsequently, survey participants who met the interview eligibility criteria were contacted to set up the time and day for their interview.

Procedure. Survey participants who indicated that they wished to participate in an interview were contacted by a member of the research team to set up an interview at a date and time convenient for them. Interviews were conducted via a video conferencing software (e.g., Zoom). The interviews were conducted by an Indigenous victim advocate (hereafter referred to as consultant) who is trained in trauma informed interviewing and had served as a victim advocate and worked in victim services with Indigenous Peoples. The interview was conducted using semi-structured, open-ended questions focusing on students' victimization, help-seeking behaviors, and service utilization, in addition to, experiences with MMIP and perceptions of resiliency. At the beginning of each interview the consultant reviewed the provided informed consent form with the participant verbally and answered any questions the participant had prior to starting the interview. For each interview, one note taker was present off camera with the permission of each of the participants to take notes, record the interview, address technical issues, and to debrief with the participant after the interview. Each interview lasted approximately one to two hours, depending on the pace of each participant, with an average time of one hour and 11 minutes. Interviews were conducted in a safe, quiet

environment as determined by the participant. Upon completing the interview, each interview participant received a $75 gift card that they could use at a store of their choosing.

Participants

Survey Participants

A total of 95 students participated who met the inclusion criteria of being aged 18 years or older, a student at the university where the study took place, and identified as Indigenous, Native American, American Indian, or Alaskan Native. Participant ages ranged from 18 to 54, with an average age of 23.9 years old (median=21). Most participants were female (82%; n=74), followed by two-spirit[4] or gender non-conforming (9%; n=8), followed by male (9%; n=8). About one-third (28%; n=24) of participants identified as multiracial, meaning they were Indigenous and identified with one or more other races. Class standing was almost evenly distributed across participants whereas 18% (n=16) were freshman, 20% (n=18) were sophomores, 23% (n=21) were juniors, 20% (n=18) were seniors, and 19% (17) were graduate students. In terms of relationship status, most students were single (68%; n=62) followed by those in long-term relationships (24%; n=22). A substantial proportion of survey participants (41%; n=37) took a break from college at some point during their college journey. Participants attributed their break in college enrollment to a variety of factors, including mental health struggles, financial needs, taking care of family, among other reasons. Half of the sample were first generation college students 51% (n=45). Just over half of participants grew up

[4] The term "two-spirit" refers to an Indigenous "person who identifies as having both a masculine and a feminine spirit" (Vincenty, 2021). In Indigenous cultures these individuals were not considered men or women, but rather held a distinct third gender status (Indian Health Service, n.d.).

on a reservation (55%; n=49). Nearly half of participants (42%; n= 38) indicated that they would like to move to a reservation to work once they graduated. The majority of participants (78%; n=69) lived off-campus either with a roommate, family, or by themselves compared to only 22% (n=20) who lived on-campus. Few of the students (15%; n=13) had children.

Table 1. Indigenous College Student Survey Descriptive Statistics (N=95)

	Frequency Percent (n) / Mean (SD)	**Range**
Age	23.9 (7.69)	18-54
Gender		
Male	9% (8)	—
Female	82% (74)	—
Two-Spirit/Gender Non-Conforming	9% (8)	—
Multiracial	28% (24)	—
Class standing		
Freshman	18% (16)	—
Sophomore	20% (18)	—
Junior	23% (21)	—
Senior	20% (18)	—
Graduate	19% (17)	—
Relationship status		
Single	68% (62)	—
In a long-term relationship	24% (22)	—
Married	7% (6)	—
Divorced	1% (1)	—
Took a break from college	41% (37)	—
First generation college student	51% (45)	—
Grew up on a reservation	55% (49)	—
Return to a reservation	43% (38)	—
Value placed on connection to Indigenous community	4.40 (0.82)	1-5
Living situation		
On-campus, alone	2% (2)	—
On-campus, with roommate(s)	20% (18)	—
Off-campus, alone	15% (13)	—
Off-campus, with roommate(s)	21% (19)	—
Off-campus, with parents or family	42% (37)	—
Parent	15% (13)	—

Interview Participants

Among the 95 survey participants, 16 indicated in their survey that they wished to participate in an individual interview. Of the 16, 81% (n=13) identified as female, 13% (n=2) identified as non-binary/non-conforming, and 6% (n=1) identified as male. The

interviewees ranged in age from 18 to 54, with an average age of 28 (SD=10.14). These students represent a diverse group in terms of their Tribal affiliations as well as their academic backgrounds (e.g., science, technology, social work, design, American Indian studies, and criminology and criminal justice). The majority of interviewees 69% (n=11) were undergraduates and 31% (n=5) were graduate students. Two interviewees stated that they had children. More than half (63%; n=10) of interviewees were first generation students who had taken a break during college prior to returning (56%; n=9).

Table 2. Indigenous College Student Interview Descriptive Statistics (N=16)

	Frequency Percent (n) / Mean (SD)	**Range**
Age	28 (10.14)	18-54
Gender		
Male	6% (1)	—
Female	81% (13)	—
Non-Binary/Non-Conforming	13% (2)	—
Class Standing		
Undergraduate	69%% (11)	—
Graduate	31%% (5)	—
First Generation Student	8% (3)	—
Parent	13% (2)	—

Measures

Victimization Experiences

Survey participants were asked about personal and household (e.g., witnessing in the home) victimization experiences. To measure personal victimization, participants were asked if they had personally been a victim of any of four types of victimization during their lives, including: *controlling behaviors*, *physical abuse*, *sexual abuse*, and *emotional or psychological abuse* (yes=1; no=0). Each of these victimization types were defined for the participants prior to answering the question. To measure household

victimization, participants were asked if someone in their household had ever experienced any of the same four types of victimization *(yes = 1; no=0)*. Additive indices were created for personal victimization separately from household victimization and ranged from zero (no experience) to four (experienced all four items). A third additive index was created that combining both personal and household to create one victimization index ranging from zero (no experience) to eight (experienced all personal and household items). Interview participants were asked to share their experiences with lifetime victimization.

Service Utilization and Formal Help-Seeking

In order to gauge participants' use of both on- and off-campus services, a number of questions were asked. First, we asked if they used any on- (yes=1, no=0) or off-campus services (yes=1; no=0). For on-campus services, survey participants who indicated that they had used these services were asked about the specific services they used on-campus including *mental health services (counseling), support groups, health services, legal services,* and *culturally specific services (i.e., ceremony, smudge, traditional celebration, sweat lodge, etc.)*. For each service that students used, two follow-up questions were asked of survey participants regarding their satisfaction with the service, ranging from "extremely satisfied" (=4) to "extremely dissatisfied" (=0) and if they would use the service again in the future (yes=1; no=0). All survey participants were asked if they used off-campus services and were given the opportunity to share what services they utilized in an open-ended format.

During the interviews, participants were asked about individual services they used, both on- and off-campus, and why they used those services. Interview participants

who did not use any services (on- or off-campus) were asked why they did not utilize the services. Interviewees were asked detailed questions about their experiences with the services they used, how they felt about the services, reasons for whether or not they would use the services again, and recommendations for on-campus services.

Informal Help-Seeking

Participants of both the survey and the interview were asked how they take care of themselves more holistically, such as journaling, meditating, or talking to family members, when they experience victimization or other challenges. Survey and interview participants were asked to explain what they do to take care of themselves beyond formal services, meaning informally.

Barriers to Help-Seeking

The final measures address barriers or challenges Indigenous college students face when seeking help, either on- or off-campus. Survey participants were asked if anything prevented them from seeking help (yes=1; no=0). Those who responded affirmatively were asked to explain in an open-survey question what prevented them from seeking help.

Interview participants were also asked about the challenges and barriers they faced when seeking services on-campus. Interviewees who did not use any campus services were asked about their knowledge and access of campus services as well as reasons why they did not utilize any on-campus services.

Analytic Plan

Descriptive analyses were conducted for the survey responses to understand the prevalence of victimization, help-seeking, and service utilization among participants.

Interviews were transcribed verbatim via the online video conferencing software (e.g., Zoom). Transcripts were then reviewed and edited for accuracy by a research assistant. Once the interview transcripts were cleaned, they were uploaded to ATLAS.ti for analysis. First, each of the 16 interview transcripts were then open coded line-by-line summarizing interviewee responses with single-words or phrases, thus identifying possible themes (Thornberg & Charmaz, 2014). Upon completing the line-by-line coding, 309 micro-codes were created. Next, each code was carefully examined, 28 micro-codes were merged due to their similarity, 20 micro-codes were deleted due to only appearing once in the transcripts, and the remaining codes were grouped into 18 main code groups, 8 of which are discussed in this study including "service utilization" and "informal help-seeking."

Results

Research Question 1: Indigenous College Students' Experiences with Victimization

Victimization was a pervasive and traumatizing experience for the majority of our sample of Indigenous college students. Notably, eight out of every ten Indigenous student survey participants personally experienced at least one form of victimization (82%; n=71). As Table 3 shows, more than half of the survey sample personally experienced controlling behaviors (58%; n=50), physical abuse (56%; n=49), sexual abuse (53%; n=46), and psychological or emotional abuse (68%; n=59). Two-thirds of the Indigenous survey participants indicated that someone in their household experienced at least one form of victimization (66%; n=57), including the following: controlling behaviors (47%; n=40), physical abuse (49%; n=43), sexual abuse (41%; n=35), and psychological or emotional abuse (51%; n=44). Many students experienced

polyvictimization, meaning multiple forms of victimization. Specifically, 38% (n=32) of the survey participants experienced all forms of personal victimization, 26% (n=22) experienced all forms of household victimization, and 14% (n=12) experienced all forms of personal and household victimization.

Table 3. Indigenous College Students' Experiences with Victimization (n=95)

Personal Victimization Experience	**Percent (n)**
Controlling behaviors	58% (50)
Physical violence	56% (49)
Sexual violence	53% (46)
Emotional/psychological violence	68% (59)
Experienced all forms of victimization	38% (32)
Household Victimization Experience	
Controlling behaviors	47% (40)
Physical violence	49% (43)
Sexual violence	41% (35)
Emotional/psychological violence	51% (44)
Household victimization of all forms	26% (22)
Personal and Household Victimization	
Experienced all forms of personal and household victimization	14% (12)

Relationship Violence

All interview participants experienced at least one form of victimization in their lives, with many experiencing multiple types. The most common form of violence interview participants experienced or witnessed was relationship violence (n=15; 94%), including domestic violence. Specifically, 56% (n=9) of participants were involved in an abusive relationship either with a spouse or partner. The same number of participants (56%; n=9) witnessed domestic violence in their homes. Interestingly, a quarter of participants (n=4; 25%) who witnessed domestic violence in the home as a child later were involved in an abusive relationship. Many participants discussed that they either remained in their abusive relationships for extended periods of time or fell into a cycle of

abusive relationships. Winona[5] described this cycle of violence. She experienced several abusive relationships throughout her life, and this led to her to normalize the violence in her life.

> I found myself in one shitty relationship after the other. But it wasn't in my mind, you know, it wasn't domestic violence, because he wasn't any different than any other men I kn[e]w growing up. The sexual violence that I experience[d] wasn't any different than anything that I had ever known so it was not, in my mind that this was domestic or sexual violence, right? This is [just] how men are.

The consistent experiences Winona had with abusive men impacted the way she viewed not only men, but it also carried over to her views of romantic relationships. The violence she endured was so common that she believed this was how relationships were supposed to be.

Participants also discussed the impact of witnessing domestic violence, most commonly between their parents, had on them. Samantha, like many participants, had experienced their parents fighting. Like Winona she believed that this type of behavior was normal for romantic relationships. She described when the domestic violence started between her parents and how her father also abused her and her siblings.

> My parents knew each other for six months before they found out they were pregnant with me. I was six months old when my dad first hit my mom. He made her nose bleed. I thought that was normal behavior. He would hit my mom and what not, and then bully us kids, and do the same thing to us kids. I haven't really processed it myself. I still have resentment towards my dad for that.

Samantha was one of the four who later found themselves in an abusive relationship as an adult. She shared that she was sexually assaulted by her partner that she had been with for about a year. These incidents of domestic violence in the home were not isolated events, participants discussed that the violence between their parents was often frequent

[5] Pseudonyms used throughout dissertation to protect interviewee identities.

and sometimes carried over to them. Additionally, some participants discussed how the violence was brought on due to the use of alcohol or other drugs. Cora remembered the violence between her parents and how frequently it happened.

> There was domestic violence…between my parents, and I just will always remember this one time, you know, and it happened a lot, because, you know, my parents were young, and they didn't know like they were still growing up. It will always happen but when it wasn't happening it was good, I guess. I just always remember a certain scenario where my dad and it happen because of alcohol. So, it always led to violence. He was the one who started it against my mom, and then my mom would try to protect us.

Cora wanted to protect her mother and siblings from the abuse, but she was unable to. Participants discussed taking various steps to protect themselves or their siblings from the abuse. Many participants tried to hide their siblings from the abuser, prevent them from crying so as to not draw attention to them, or leave the home when the violence was occurring.

Childhood Trauma

While the survey did not inquire when participants' victimization experiences occurred during their life, the majority of interviewees (n=13; 81%) discussed experiencing victimization during their childhood. Many interviewees discussed how their abuse was often perpetrated by another family member such as a cousin, father, or grandfather. Ava described sexual abuse she experienced as a child and how she wanted someone to intervene, but no one did.

> I remember getting in [grandmother's husband] truck with him, and we went to [a grocery store]…we went back to the truck, and we didn't leave for a little while. So, I asked him why we're like still there and then that's when he told me like take off some [clothing]. And we were parked there for a long time. And this lady, she walked by, I don't think she saw, but I just looked at her. I hoped so badly that she would notice [the abuse] was going on, but she just kept walking like she looked me right in the eyes when he was doing it.

This experience caused Ava to block out many of her childhood memories and abusive experiences as a way to protect herself. Later, Ava went on to explain a time when her mother asked her if Ava's older brother was still abusing her, of which Ava had no recollection. Blocking out and disconnecting from trauma was a common way many of the interviewees coped with their experiences. The impact of these early victimization experiences shaped interviewees' worldviews and many were just beginning to learn how to cope with their emotions.

Similar to Ava's experience, Talia had difficulties remembering the trauma she experienced as a child. She shared an experience where her sister told her about the abuse she experienced, and Talia couldn't remember if she had the same experience.

> I remember there'd be different men and women that would watch us. My sister opened up about being sexually abused growing up, by these people who would watch us. I think I kind of had the same experience, but I just can't remember, for whatever reason.

Talia blocked out her childhood memories as an attempt to protect herself from the impact of the victimization she experienced. Like many of the other participants, Talia and her sister were abused by individuals they believed they could trust.

Family members and family friends were often the individuals that participants said abused them as children. Talia went on to describe another incident of sexual abuse she experienced as a child from a family friend.

> I have memories of this man. We were at a rally. I remember I was in a car, and he had tried to touch me. I don't know how old I was. I think I was middle school, so like sixth or seventh grade. I remember just feeling like I couldn't tell my parents about it just because this guy was someone that stuck around for years. He was one of my dad's closest friends. I felt that if I was going to speak up about it, I would get backlash or I would be told that I was lying because he has been around for years.

The individual who attempted to molest Talia as a child was a family friend, which made it more difficult for Talia to tell anyone about the incident. When violence is perpetrated by someone close to the victim, they may be more hesitant to tell anyone or reach out for help. Victims' hesitancy to disclose is often due to fear of not being believed, being told that they are lying, or ruining the reputation of a close family friend or relative.

Research Question 2: Barriers to Help-Seeking

Seeking help, both formally and informally, can be difficult for many survivors of violence, particularly those who are young (e.g., college students). It often takes time and self-reflection for individuals to decide to share their victimization experiences and seek help. About a third of interviewees (31%; n=5) that had sought help shared that they reached an internal breaking point in which they knew they had to address their victimization, either through disclosing the incident or seeking formal help. However, when individuals seek help or services, there are often barriers in their way. About one-third (33%, n=28) of Indigenous survey participants acknowledged that something prevented them from seeking help for their victimization. All but one (94%, n=15) interview participant discussed barriers and challenges they faced when deciding to seek services.

Cultural Barriers to Help-Seeking

Culture can act as a protective factor for many students to aid with healing from victimization; however, many Indigenous interview participants (38%; n=6) also discussed how their culture or cultural views acted as a barrier to help-seeking, both formally and informally. One theme that emerged from the interviews revealed that Indigenous interviewees perceived it to be socially unacceptable to discuss negative

feelings, victimization, or trauma because doing so is often viewed as weakness in many Indigenous communities. Participants perceived that the cultural practice of avoiding discussions about trauma was passed down by families for generations and acted as a barrier for many Indigenous students to seek help. To illustrate this point, a survey respondent discussed how the beliefs held by her community and the stigma associated with asking for help, especially for mental health services, among Indigenous Peoples prevented her from seeking help. She stated,

> My family prevented me from receiving help, as well [as] standards in my community made me feel shameful and guilty for asking for help. There is a stigma within Indigenous communities that forced me to disregard my emotions surrounding the abuse I experienced.

The stigma around sharing one's feelings was echoed by other interviewees (25%; n=4). Talia experienced an abusive relationship and child sexual abuse that she blocked out of her memory until her sister shared similar experiences with her. Talia discussed how she never shared her experiences with anyone because she was never taught how to express her emotions.

> I really haven't healed from it because I feel like growing up. I was always, I wasn't taught this, I just felt like I couldn't talk about my feelings and my experiences, and if I would, it would be seen as a weakness. So, I think I haven't healed completely from that experience.

Growing up as a child, Talia learned that it was unsafe to discuss her feelings because of how others would perceive her. This belief transferred into her adulthood, limiting her ability to seek services or ask for help.

Accessibility Barriers

Help-seeking may be discouraged by friends and family or even cultural beliefs, but there are also more systematic barriers that students face including accessibility of

services and awareness of the services offered. Many students identified barriers that either prevented them from seeking help initially or prevented them from continuing to seek help and utilize services.

Accessibility of services. Students' ability to utilize and access services was one of the largest barriers identified by both survey participants and interviewees (38%; n=6). Specifically, about a third (32%; n=8) of survey participants who indicated that something prevented them from seeking help attributed it to accessibility issues. Costs of services, transportation to get to the service, free time to go to appointments, and long wait times to schedule an appointment with a provider were all identified as barriers for students. Amber discussed their feelings regarding on-campus counseling services,

> I know that they [the university] offer like one free [counseling] session…which is nice, but even trying to open up and actually get consistent help, you would need more than just the one session.

While they acknowledged the importance of having these services on-campus, they noted that counseling and the healing associated with it takes time. To reach this healing point, they would have to attend multiple counseling sessions on-campus that they would have to pay for. The costs of services prevented Amber and many others from seeking help because they simply did not have the funds to obtain these services.

In addition to the costs of services, having transportation to and from these services left many students unable to utilize them. The university where these students attended had four campuses and many students resided off-campus or were out of state, online students. Therefore, it was very difficult for some students to obtain consistent transportation to receive services, with many located on the main campus. Also, online

students indicated that there were limited resources and services available to them that were not located specifically on-campus, in person.

When students were able to obtain transportation to on- or off-campus services, many were met with barriers at the service provider's office. The largest barrier for many was the long wait times to be seen by a provider or to even schedule an appointment. One survey participant noted that even though she initially sought help for her victimization experiences, she was discouraged by the amount of time it took her to see a provider.

> I did initially [seek help] through the [local Indigenous medical center] but they had a very long wait time in order to be able to seek mental help with a therapist. This was through their behavioral health department. They told me that I would not be able to have an appointment for two months. From there, I just stopped trying to seek help. It felt like there was always going to be a wait everywhere else I would attempt.

Due to the long wait times, she experienced, this participant chose not to continue utilizing these services or seeking help elsewhere. Long wait times were discouraging for many participants as they needed help to address their trauma in a timely manner.

Awareness of services. Beyond the barriers of how to utilize and pay for services, about a third (31%; n=5) of students noted that they were unaware of the services available to them, both on- and off-campus. Without knowledge regarding services, students are unable to utilize formal services. Rose discussed how she was unaware of most services on-campus but did hear about counseling services.

> I haven't done anything from campus. I didn't really know what was available. I know there was free counseling services. But I haven't gone. But I don't know where they're located, either.

Although she had heard about the counseling services on-campus, she did not know where they were located. Having limited knowledge about the services on-campus acts

as a barrier to help-seeking for many students. It is important that universities provide information on the services they offer and where they are located to all students.

Research Question 3: Indigenous College Students' Help-Seeking Behaviors

Despite these barriers, most interviewees (75%; n=12) were able to utilize services on- and off-campus in addition to seeking support informally. Although students sought help for their trauma and victimization experiences, not all had positive experiences. Seeking help informally was better suited for some individuals compared to utilizing formal services.

Formal Service Use

While the majority of students had experienced some form of victimization, very few sought on-campus services to address their victimization. Specifically, 22% (n=19) of survey participants and 38% (n=6) of interviewees indicated that they utilized services located on-campus. The majority of the survey participants who did use services at the university utilized mental health or counseling services (58%, n=11) or campus health services (58%, n=11). Of those who used services on-campus, the majority said they would use the services again, while only four indicated that they would not use that specific service again. A little under a third (30%, n=26) of survey participants utilized off-campus services to address their victimization. Students utilized many different forms of professional services, on- and off-campus, to address their victimization, but counseling and culturally specific services were the most commonly used.

Counseling. Several students, both in the survey and interviews (50%; n=8), identified mental health services being vital to their healing. A few students (19%; n=3) utilized the counseling services on-campus and were satisfied with the care they received.

However, there were also students who used these services and had experiences that were not helpful. Talia utilized on-campus counseling services and initially had a good experience. However, the inconsistency and variation in providers impacted her experience later on.

> I really liked who I was working with. She was a little younger and I just found it really easy to talk to her, but I really enjoyed that experience. But this year I was working with this woman, who was a little older, but not nothing wrong with that, but I just found it hard to, I just feel like she wasn't listening to me. So, I stopped going. She kind of just made me feel like she didn't really care, or she…wasn't putting in like effort, you know. So, I just stopped going, so that experience this semester was not a good one.

Counseling was valuable for Talia, as well as others; however, when her new provider was unable to connect with her and understand her experiences, Talia decided to discontinue her use of these services. Many students had experiences similar to the last half of Talia's experience, in which their on-campus counselors were unable to connect with their cultural needs and did not have the necessary cultural knowledge to treat them. The lack of cultural competency within counseling services was another theme discussed by students (31%; n=5). Other interviewees discussed how they felt they could not connect with non-Indigenous counselors because they believed these counselors did not understand what they were going through or their values as an Indigenous person.

Students (31%; n=5) were frustrated with the short-term nature of the on-campus counseling services. Mental health services at this university were primarily goal focused and students would be discharged at the end of each semester. Sometimes students would be connected with outside providers to continue their care, but this did not always happen and has its own challenges for students. Jackie, who was returning after taking a break during her college journey, noted that when she initially started at the university

she utilized on-campus counseling, but was frustrated that she was unable to address the root cause of her problems during her sessions. She explained,

> I don't remember exactly when I had that counseling [on-campus], but it feels like a lot of the things that I received during that [time] was temporary. It was mostly just talking about what my experience was at that time, and not really getting into the deeper stuff like, what are some of the deeper issues that I'm experiencing.

She went on to explain that her experience felt like it was only enough to get her through that semester and not how to cope with her emotions. Ultimately, Jackie stated that due to the short-term nature of on-campus counseling, she had a hard time trying to manage her feelings and the symptoms of her trauma.

Utilizing formal cultural services. While a number of students found counseling services useful, the majority of students (56%; n=9) highlighted the importance of formalized cultural services both on- and off-campus. Using cultural services was a major theme throughout the interviews. Of those who indicated they used on-campus services in the survey, 53% (n=10) utilized culturally relevant services on-campus. Several students spoke highly about the Indigenous student support services that were located on each of the four campuses. These offices provided a place where Indigenous students could study, print assignments, hangout with other students, and get advice from the staff who worked there.

> I really like the community that…[Indigenous student services] built. Trying to provide a safe space for all Indigenous. I think even just that alone is really nice, and they offer like other opportunities, you know, with scholarships or just support you know if you want to go talk…there's…one of the ladies down there that is always willing to help. Especially with schooling or even just talking. It's always like one on one if you want that personal experience or safe space.

Cora echoed the thoughts of many students, describing these offices as a safe place for Indigenous students to gather. Not only do these offices provide a physical space for

students, but they also host workshops and events focused on financial aid, scholarships, job preparedness, and mental health.

One program in particular that was mentioned by several students was the talking circles that the office provided once a week. These talking circles were in partnership with a local Indigenous health organization and allowed students to practice their cultural healing methods and talk with each other about the things they were struggling with. Off-campus, many students utilized Indian Health Services, their specific tribal health organizations and other service providers focused specifically for Indigenous Peoples. These organizations allowed students to receive formal services, such as mental health care, with a culturally sensitive provider who understood the student's background and the experiences they had.

Informal Help-Seeking

Indigenous students in this sample relied heavily on informal methods of help-seeking and support. Utilizing different informal healing methods was a theme discussed by almost all interviewees (94%; n=15). Cultural practices, healing, and ceremonies emerged as important ways students coped with their victimization experiences. Maintaining a busy schedule and focus on schoolwork served as an important way to keep students on task and keep their mind off their previous traumas. Indigenous cultures strongly value maintaining the group and the importance of relationships. It is unsurprising then, that multiple students expressed how helpful the support from family members, friends, and elders was for their healing.

Maintaining hobbies and a healthy lifestyle. Students found many different ways to cope with their victimization experiences, but a theme (75%; n=12) that emerged

was focused specifically on maintaining a healthy lifestyle with hobbies. Exercising, running, and being in nature were common ways students reset their minds and coped with their stressful emotions. Attending classes and therapy appointments in addition to taking their prescribed medication helped students regain control and balance in their lives. Students turned to various creative methods as a way to process their emotions. Joy relied on art as an outlet for her healing, with special focus on art that utilized traditional Indigenous methods and materials such as beadwork. When talking about the impact of these creative outlets, Joy said "I love art and music. I love doing beadwork. I love to weave. I paint. I like to make music…it does feel like I am taking care of myself when I'm doing that work." When creating new works, Joy felt her passion grow, while also beginning to move past her victimization experiences.

Relying on informal support systems. One major theme within informal help-seeking for interviewees was the reliance on informal support systems (81%; n=13). Support systems can provide the necessary relief to those who have experienced victimization. These individuals can also connect victims with other services or methods of healing. Family, friends, teachers, and elders all provided interviewees with support by listening or providing advice. Ava shared that she found support in a friend that had similar experiences as a child.

> I have a friend that I talk to sometimes about it because she understands, and she went through the same thing as me. So sometimes I talk to her about it and she helps me with it.

By talking with this friend, Ava was able to work through her emotions with someone who knew what those feelings were and how to manage them. Talking with family

members helped many students recognize their trauma and reminded them that they had the ability to overcome their past.

Participation in cultural healing practices. The power of culture and participating in traditional ceremonies was evident throughout every interview (100%; n=16) and also highlighted in many of the survey responses. Students found solace in their culture and traditional teachings after their victimization experiences. Amber's way of healing emphasized the importance of Indigenous Peoples' connection with the land,

> I try to find a lot of my grounding in my culture and in the land really. So, for instance, even after [my victimization], I immediately went to [a sacred mountain]…on the reservation and so that's like a place I like to go to a lot. I have friends that are very supportive of me. So they're people that I can talk to about my things very openly and not be judged. So often we will go out to the mountain or something like that and talk or smoke some tobacco.

Visiting traditional sites allowed students, like Amber, to connect back to the land, their relatives, and allow their flame to grow. Participating in ceremonies, attending dances, and seeking traditional medicine were other ways students relied on their cultures for healing. Cora maintained her wellness and ensured the negative thoughts of trauma did not come back by using traditional medicine. Additionally, students who may not have been raised in their culture or participating in ceremonies found that learning about their culture helped them find their path.

Discussion

Findings of the Current Study in the Context of Prior Research

The current study is the first known study to focus solely on the victimization experiences of Indigenous college students and their formal and informal help-seeking behaviors. Barriers to help-seeking that students faced were also explored in this study. Indigenous Peoples experience high levels of violence, but it is unknown if this holds true

for Indigenous college students. The victimization experiences of college students have been widely documented within the literature (see Fedina et al., 2018 for review). However, Indigenous college students, comprising 1% of the undergraduate and graduate student population, have often been left out of these studies (Espinosa et al., 2019; Hussar et al., 2020; Willmott et al., 2016). Many colleges and universities have recognized the need to address students' victimization needs by creating victim service departments and prevention education. Yet, these programs rarely take the needs of Indigenous college students when creating these programs. The lack of cultural acknowledgement and tailoring of services to Indigenous students' needs may reduce students' use of these services and this was one theme that emerged in the current study. Indigenous students in this study found the lack of cultural competency in service providers a barrier to engagement. Therefore, if universities want to support Indigenous students who have experienced victimization, it is necessary to understand their victimization and help-seeking behaviors. The current study provides an overview of these experiences.

Utilizing a mixed-methods approach, the findings show that Indigenous college students come to the university with varying degrees of victimization experiences. However, the vast majority (82%, n=71) of students experienced at least one form of victimization during their lifetimes. All interview participants experienced victimization during their lifetimes. The two most common forms of victimization interview participants experienced were relationship violence and childhood trauma, including child sex abuse.

The impact of these experiences left students with altered worldviews and changed the way they sought support. Trauma and victimization impacted students'

abilities to continue with their university degrees. Some were forced to take breaks in order to address their needs and symptoms of trauma. Students experienced various barriers that prevented them from utilizing services or caused them to discontinue their use of these services. Barriers such as limited access to services due to either not having enough money for the costs or no transportation to go to appointments were found to be common among participants as well as the broader literature on this topic (Fugate et al., 2005; McCart et al., 2010; Overstreet & Quinn, 2013). Knowledge of services available is a frequently cited barrier to help-seeking for victims (Fugate et al., 2005) that was also pointed out by our participants for on-campus services. This highlights the importance of reducing the barriers Indigenous students face when seeking help and ensuring the services they do use are addressing their needs.

Culture was a reoccurring theme throughout students' discussions surrounding their victimization and healing journeys. While research commonly attributes culture to a protective factor (Burnette, 2018; Walters & Simoni, 2002), some participants also indicated that their cultural beliefs acted as a barrier to help-seeking. Students mentioned that the stigmatized views surrounding asking for help and mental health services within their communities often kept them from utilizing formal services. Non-Indigenous service providers' lack of cultural understanding or awareness has been cited as a barrier for Indigenous victims when they seek formal services (Ellison-Loschmann & Pearce, 2006; Finfgeld-Connett, 2015). Students who used on-campus counseling services identified that their counselor's lack of understanding of their Indigenous background made it difficult to utilize these services. Our findings are consistent with the small body of literature showing that Indigenous Peoples are more likely to address their

victimization informally (Morrison et al., 2006). While the majority of studies on Indigenous Peoples' help-seeking behaviors focus on the non-college population, our findings among Indigenous college students also highlight the importance of informal support networks and utilizing culture to heal (Cripps & McGlade, 2008; Finfgeld-Connett, 2015; Fiolet et al., 2021). Indigenous students in our study utilized many different methods to heal from their trauma that have been supported by prior literature including being in nature, exercising, creating art, and practicing cultural traditions (Burnette, 2018; McKinley, 2022).

Policy Recommendations for Universities

Considering the limited research on Indigenous college students broadly and no known study to date regarding their help-seeking behaviors, the current study fills a critical gap in the literature. The population of Indigenous college students has steadily risen in the past few decades. However, in most recent years, the once growing population of Indigenous college students has started to decline. Thus, it is imperative that universities ensure Indigenous college students' enrollment and retention, especially considering most universities' efforts to create a more diverse and inclusive learning environment. The majority of students in our study did not utilize on-campus services, despite universities' best efforts to encourage students to utilize their services. Those who did utilize on-campus services, primarily counseling services, noted their dissatisfaction with the provider's inability to connect with them and understand their cultural backgrounds. The implications for university service provision are clear, universities must ensure that their on-campus services and providers are culturally competent and recognize the unique histories Indigenous students have. Service

providers off-campus would also benefit from taking a culturally sensitive approach to their services.

Having a place where Indigenous students can gather and hangout with other Indigenous students is also vital to their help-seeking. Many students utilized the Indigenous student support centers to receive informal support and connect with other services that staff members suggested. These centers also offer culturally appropriate programming that acknowledges where students come from and incorporates it into their workshops. It would be important for universities to either create these centers or increase funding and staffing to better serve Indigenous students. Increasing students' ability to practice their culture on-campus, whether it be smudging or even being able to use traditional medicine, is necessary to support Indigenous students who have experienced victimization. When creating policies and programming for Indigenous students, universities must take stock of the needs of their own Indigenous student population because Indigenous Peoples are not a monolith (Brayboy et al., 2012; Shotton et al., 2013). Given that this is the first known study to focus on the service utilization and help-seeking behaviors of Indigenous college students, these results can guide future research in this area.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

While this study illuminated important findings regarding Indigenous college students' victimization experiences, it is not without its limitations. The results from this study were focused on students attending one large southwestern university, so it is difficult to generalize these findings to all Indigenous college students. It is important to note that these findings should not be generalized because Indigenous Peoples are diverse

with many different cultures and ways for healing and addressing trauma. This was evident among our interview participants who talked about various cultural elements that were important to their individual Indigenous community. Additionally, this data was drawn from a larger study and not focused specifically on help-seeking behaviors, therefore the current findings are unable to shed light on Indigenous college students' utilization of the criminal justice system to report victimization, broadly, or perceptions of community-based service providers. Even so, the current study provides a strong foundation for future research exploring Indigenous college students' experiences with service providers.

Despite the victimization and trauma that these Indigenous college students experienced, they were all able to overcome these challenges and continue their education. This study fills a critical gap in the literature, but more remains to uncover. Future research would benefit from understanding how universities currently support Indigenous college students, specifically from staff and faculty who work with them. These individuals may be able to identify trends and other commonalities in the needs of Indigenous students and what needs to be created within the university to support them. By expanding our understanding of the experiences and needs of Indigenous college students, we can begin to create a more inclusive campus environment where every student's needs are addressed.

CHAPTER 3

"TRUST IS HUGE":

FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE INDIGENOUS COLLEGE STUDENTS' CAMPUS SERVICE ENGAGEMENT ACCORDING TO FACULTY AND STAFF WHO SERVE THEM

ABSTRACT

Institutions of higher education have often been used as a tool to perpetuate colonization and enforce westernized views of knowledge and values. Institutions of higher education have recently made efforts to acknowledge Indigenous Peoples through the creation of land acknowledgements. Even so, these institutions have very low enrollment and graduation rates for Indigenous students. One possible reason for these low rates is the inability of universities to address Indigenous college students' unique needs, including historical trauma and high levels of victimization. To date, many universities are uncertain as to how to best support Indigenous college students given their victimization experiences. The current study is the first known study to examine how Indigenous students engage in campus services and what barriers they face, from the perspectives of faculty and staff who work with this population. Drawing on interviews from 41 faculty and staff, this study identified several themes including the importance of culturally specific services and Indigenous representation for Indigenous college students' engagement with on-campus services. Additionally, connecting Indigenous students to on-campus services was one way faculty and staff supported students. Policy recommendations are offered for universities and their faculty and staff to increase Indigenous college student service engagement and effectively support those who have experienced victimization.

Introduction

Institutions of higher education in recent years have increasingly been committed to promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) on campus (Wong, 2023). Yet, there have also been recent calls for the removal and reduction in funding for DEI initiatives on campus (Kennedy & Perez-Carrillo, 2023). Despite these attacks on DEI initiatives, universities across the U.S. are committed to creating inclusive learning environments for minority students. One group, in particular, that universities are struggling to recruit and retain are Indigenous (e.g., American Indian, Alaska Native, Native American) students. While many universities, primarily in the southwest, are bolstering their commitment to Tribes by way of land acknowledgements and tuition waivers for Tribal citizens (Bryant, 2021), Indigenous students still represent the smallest racial group of college students (Espinosa et al., 2019; Hussar et al., 2020). Public institutions of higher education have a federal trust responsibility to provide adequate education for Indigenous students (Pevar, 2012). While student diversity on college campuses continues to grow, limited effort has been made to increase Indigenous student representation. Although Indigenous student enrollment has increased in recent years, retention and graduation rates remain the lowest for Indigenous students compared to students from other races (Espinosa et al., 2019; Hussar et al., 2020).

Indigenous college students must navigate several unique systemic barriers when attending non-Native colleges and universities (NNCUs) that other students of color do not encounter. Specifically, Indigenous students deal with the impacts of historical trauma, high levels of victimization, microaggressions, and limited representation within the university. However, universities have limited knowledge about what barriers

Indigenous students face, how they navigate these barriers, and ways to better support Indigenous students. Without this understanding, universities and their administration are unable to call for appropriate changes to programs, services, attitudes, or curriculum that could improve Indigenous student outcomes (Brayboy, Solyom, & Castagno, 2015). The creation of a culturally safe and supportive campus learning environment is vital for the retention and success of Indigenous students as well as for their overall health and well-being. In order to increase the recruitment and retention of Indigenous students, universities must understand how they can create a campus environment and programming that addresses the unique needs of these students and supports them.

The current study aims to address the gaps in knowledge regarding Indigenous students' utilization of campus services, barriers they face when using services, and how faculty and staff support Indigenous students who have experienced victimization. This is important given its implications to impact campus policy and practice. Additionally, this study seeks to understand the awareness of faculty and staff regarding Indigenous students' victimization experiences. Universities that understand how to best support Indigenous students and reduce the barriers they face when seeking help, will be more likely to enhance the educational experiences for Indigenous Peoples and build capacity for Indigenous Peoples to be represented in higher education and employment opportunities. The current study focuses on the experiences of faculty and staff who work predominantly with Indigenous college students. This population is important given their ability to collectively synthesize the experiences of many Indigenous students and identify patterns.

Literature Review

A Brief History of Indigenous Education

Indigenous education has existed long before white settlers came to what is now known as the U.S. (Brayboy, Faircloth, et al., 2015; Lomawaima, 1999; McClellan et al., 2005). Each Native Nation has their own form of education including oral histories, teaching stories, ceremonies, apprenticeships, and more (Hampton, 1993). Indigenous higher education today is rooted in treaty rights granted to Tribes by the U.S. government through the federal trust responsibility (Brayboy, Faircloth, et al., 2015; Pevar, 2012). The federal government is required to maintain and uphold the education of Indigenous people in the U.S. (Brayboy, Faircloth et al., 2015; Pevar, 2012). However, the education carried out by the federal government has historically been centered on white, Christian, westernized viewpoints with the goal of assimilation (Lomawaima & McCarty, 2006; Brayboy, Faircloth, et al., 2015).

Through the use of federal funds, religious organizations were able to establish boarding schools to dissolve Indigenous families and "civilize" Indigenous people with the goal of assimilating them into the dominant white Christian western culture (Bastien et al., 2003; Glenn, 2015; Weaver, 2009). Indigenous children were forcibly removed from their homes and communities and forbidden from speaking their languages or practicing their culture (Bastien et al., 2003; Duran, 2006; Glenn, 2015; Irwin & Roll, 1995). Up until the 1960s, federal policy for Indigenous education focused primarily on assimilation and termination of Indigenous culture (Pevar, 2012). More recently, with the addition of Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs), U.S. higher education has begun

to address the importance of effectively educating Indigenous students (Oxendine & Taub, 2021).

Education is vital for Indigenous communities and is essential for nation building and self-determination among Native Nations (Brayboy et al., 2012). Higher education has often been viewed as a tool for Indigenous people to combat oppression and discrimination, protect their culture and homelands, and provide opportunities for social, political, and economic success – which in turn positively impacts Native Nations (Brayboy et al., 2016; Stewart-Ambo, 2021). Yet many institutions of higher education focus solely on western viewpoints with curricula centered on settler colonial ideologies (Stein, 2018; Waterman, 2019). Predominantly white institutions of higher education generally do not acknowledge Indigenous ways of knowing or knowledge systems (Brayboy, Faircloth, et al., 2015; Fong et al., 2021). This framework disenfranchises Indigenous students and compromises their ability to feel like they belong, to be supported/mentored appropriately, to have an enriching college experience, to graduate, and to benefit from their college education in future endeavors (Brayboy, Solyom, & Castagno, 2015; Fong et al., 2021; Shotton et al., 2013; Tachine et al., 2017; Tippeconnic-Fox, 2005).

Current State of Indigenous Students in Higher Education

Indigenous students comprise the smallest racial group attending institutions of higher education, but their numbers have grown in recent years (Espinosa et al., 2019; Hussar et al., 2020; Musu-Gillette et al., 2017). Often dubbed the "forgotten minority" in higher education research, Indigenous students only make up about 1% of all undergraduate and graduate students (Brayboy, 2004; Espinosa et al., 2019; Hussar et al.,

2020; Musu-Gillette et al., 2017; Willmott et al., 2016). Many researchers justify the exclusion of Indigenous students or lumping of these students into an "other" category, due to their small size, stating they cannot be studied (Shotton et al., 2013). The Indigenous college student population has varied over time (NCES, 2022). Specifically, the percentage of Indigenous students enrolled in college between the ages of 18-24 more than doubled from 1996 (18.9%) to 2010 (41.4%; NCES, 2022). However, in 2016 there was a sharp decline in these enrollment rates to only 18.6%, just below the 1996 rates (NCES, 2022). It is important to note that enrollment rates have started to slowly climb since 2016. In 2021, enrollment for Indigenous college students between the ages of 18-24 was 28.4%, still well below the rates in 2010 (NCES, 2022). This fluctuation signals that colleges and universities may not be adequately addressing the needs of Indigenous college students. Thus, it is important that college and universities understand the needs of Indigenous students to ensure that their access and enrollment in higher education continues to grow.

Although Indigenous student enrollment rates have generally been on the rise, attrition rates have also increased recently (Espinosa et al., 2019; Shotton et al., 2013). This rise in attrition rates could be due to many factors, including a failure to understand Indigenous ways of knowing and learning (e.g., decolonizing teaching methods), limited Indigenous representation across faculty and staff, and/or limited administrative, mentoring, or financial support for Indigenous students (Brayboy, Solyom, & Castagno, 2015; Gusa, 2010; Tachine & Cabrera, 2021; Tachine et al., 2017). University support is critical for combating attrition rates, in addition to reducing cultural and social isolation for Indigenous students (Huffman, 2003; Lundberg, 2014; Maxwell, 2001). Limited

services and programming on campus for Indigenous students contributes to social isolation as well as alienation from other students (Janke et al., 2023; Tachine et al., 2017). Many Indigenous students attend universities that are far from their homelands, families, and cultures, often making them feel out of place when they attend college (Tachine et al., 2017; Guillory & Wolverton, 2008).

Not only do Indigenous students feel far away from home, but universities often subject Indigenous students to campus assimilation, thereby oppressing cultural aspects students of color find important and a part of their identities (Brayboy et al., 2014). Persistence is commonly defined as a student's ability to persist to graduation, through an individual's motivation, academic ability, and integration to the academic and campus environment (Tinto, 1975; Lopez, 2018). While typical retention studies highlight the importance of campus assimilation and acculturation for persistence and success, Indigenous scholars have argued that this is not inclusive of diverse students (Lopez, 2018). In fact, students from diverse racial backgrounds, including Indigenous students, find culturally relevant factors, including belonging and maintenance of identity, to be vital for their retention and success (Guillory & Wolverton, 2008; Lopez, 2018; Oxendine & Taub, 2021).

Indigenous College Students' Service Utilization

Indigenous students value community and culture when they attend NNCUs, as these institutions can be alienating for students of color (Hurtado et al., 2012; Tachine et al., 2017). Specifically, peer influence, structured support, student culture, and friendship have all been found to increase Indigenous students' service utilization, sense of belonging, and overall college success (Lundberg, 2014; Shotton et al., 2013; Tachine et

al., 2017; Waterman, 2012). Specifically, validating Indigenous cultures, identities, and traditional ways of knowing and being are vital to Indigenous students' success in higher education (Alejandro et al., 2020). Indigenous students who feel like they belong at their university are more likely to persist and graduate (Tachine et al., 2017). Additionally, a sense of belonging may increase Indigenous students' university service utilization. Although it is still unclear what influences Indigenous student's service utilization, research has shown that support from other Indigenous students and staff/faculty increases Indigenous students' sense of belonging at the university (Fong et al., 2019; Fong et al., 2021; Tachine et al., 2017).

Indigenous students at NNCUs who are unable to practice their cultural ceremonies or practices often experience stress or a sense of disconnection from their culture (Tachine et al., 2017; Strayhorn et al., 2016). Creating and holding talking circles or other traditional ceremonies on campus increases Indigenous students' sense of belong in addition to building connections within the university with other students and staff/faculty (Alejandro et al., 2020; Beck et al., 2014; Fong et al., 2019; Tachine et al., 2017). These connections are vital to Indigenous students' college persistence (Lopez, 2018; Oxendine, 2015; Oxendine et al., 2020), and could have the potential to impact their service utilization on campus. There is very little known regarding the factors that shape Indigenous college students' service utilization. However, there have been a number of studies, discussed next, that examined factors that influence Indigenous student retention, success, and sense of belonging that could potentially be applied to help seeking and service utilization.

Community and trust are vital to Indigenous students' success, and this may be especially true for those who attend universities far away from their homes. Having a trusted individual that Indigenous college students can go to for support, may also increase the likelihood of utilizing services. Some Indigenous cultures place high value on humility and indirectness, which can make it more difficult or even culturally inappropriate for students to advocate for their own personal needs (Bazemore-James & Dunn, 2020). This may be because culturally instilled qualities like humility and indirectness, along with other socialized practices that many Indigenous cultures teach (e.g., respect for elders, silence as a form of respect, and avoiding openly discussing traumatizing experiences), may inhibit Indigenous Peoples from proactively communicating when something makes them uncomfortable and what they need to create balance or harmony in their lives. However, Indigenous students who are reluctant to advocate for themselves, may look to trusted older students or employees to advocate for them (Bazemore-James & Dunn, 2020). Thus, building strong trusting relationships with other students or even faculty and staff is vital to Indigenous students' sense of belonging, success in college, and potentially their service utilization.

Current Study

The current study seeks to understand perceptions of faculty and staff who serve Indigenous college students on (1) the prevalence of students' victimization experiences, (2) students' campus service use to address their victimization, and (3) how they support students who have victimization experiences. The current study is among the first to examine these understudied topics using original data from staff and faculty members who work with Indigenous students within a large southwestern university. Given the

small amount of research focused on Indigenous students, and even less work focused on their utilization of services for coping with victimization, it is vital to investigate how universities can improve their support for Indigenous students who have experienced victimization. This study is important because it will reveal important insights about the service utilization of Indigenous college students, which may lead to increased enrollment, academic achievement, supportiveness, and graduation rates for Indigenous students. This study is guided by three related research questions:

(1) What are faculty and staff's knowledge of Indigenous college students' victimization experiences?

(2) How engaged are Indigenous college students in campus services in response to their victimization from the perspective of faculty and staff who serve this population?

(3) How do faculty and staff effectively support Indigenous college students who have experienced victimization or trauma?

Methodology

Research Design

The current study utilizes original qualitative data drawn from interviews with university faculty and staff who work with Indigenous students as part of a larger project that also conducted surveys and interviews with Indigenous students about their victimization experiences (Fox et al., 2023). The interviews with faculty and staff who serve Indigenous college students were conducted using semi-structured, open-ended questions and focused specifically on topics pertaining to participants' work with Indigenous students including challenges Indigenous students face, resources Indigenous

students need, other needs of students and employees, and employee burnout. To be eligible to participate, faculty and staff were required to (1) be age 18 or older, (2) interact with Indigenous students within the college context, and (3) be currently employed at the university where the study was conducted.

Sampling

Participant recruitment was conducted through direct outreach, participant referrals through snowball sampling, and information sessions with university organizations and academic departments that primarily served Indigenous students. A list of the population of faculty and staff who work with Indigenous students was created by conducting a search of the university's online directory using key terms including "Indigenous," "Native American," and "American Indian." All faculty and staff who had featured these terms in their professional biographical descriptions, course descriptions, or areas of expertise were included in the outreach list (N=73). One key informant who worked with Indigenous students and who had a wide network of faculty and staff who work with Indigenous students at the university, reviewed the document and suggested names of employees who were not initially included on the list. This yielded a total population of known faculty and staff who worked with Indigenous college students to include 93 employees. Of the 93, 13 were necessarily removed given the researcher team's inability to locate a correct email address. These 80 employees were all invited to participate via email. Of the 80, twenty never responded to the request for an interview; six did not have time or did not wish to participate; four asked a follow-up question, but never responded thereafter; and six initially agreed to participate but then never responded to schedule their interview or had to reschedule their interview and never did,

despite sent reminders. In total, the current study's sample includes forty-one staff and faculty (51% response rate).

Procedure

Interviews were conducted via an online video conferencing software (e.g., Zoom), in a safe, quiet environment determined by the participant. Consistent with the university Institutional Review Board approval procedures, participants were provided with a consent form at the beginning of the interview, which was also reviewed verbally prior to commencing the interview. With the participant's permission, interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed verbatim. All interviewees agreed to have their interviews tape recorded. Interviews ranged from 22 minutes to 2 hours and 10 minutes in duration, with an average of one hour and 12 minutes. All employees who participated in the interview received a $10 gift card.

Interview Topics

To understand how Indigenous students utilize various campus services, faculty and staff were asked a number of questions to gauge their perceptions. While these questions were developed to illicit responses regarding specific topic areas, it is important to note that interviewees were invited to discuss anything related to their work with Indigenous students and their perceptions for service use and needs. The first topic focuses specifically on participants' *knowledge of Indigenous students' victimization experiences*. To gauge participant's awareness of students' experiences with victimization, they were asked the following question, "In your interactions with students, have any Indigenous students shared experiences of victimization or trauma with you?"

The next topic focused on faculty and staff *perceptions of Indigenous student service use*. In order to understand this, participants were asked if they believed Indigenous students were likely to engage with campus services. Participants were probed to further explain why they thought Indigenous students did or did not engage with campus services. Additionally, participants were asked to explain any barriers they thought Indigenous students faced that may impact their campus service utilization. Specifically focusing on victimization and trauma, participants were asked, "Do you find that Indigenous college students seek help for their victimization/trauma experiences when they need it?" These questions help gauge employees' perceptions of Indigenous student service use, while also establishing whether the employees are aware of student trauma or victimization histories. Lastly, participants were asked how they support Indigenous who have experienced victimization and those that choose to seek help.

Participants' Descriptive Characteristics

Of the 41 participants, their ages ranged from 24 years old to 68 years old, with an average age of 45 years old (SD=9.78). The majority of participants were female (66%; n=27) and identified as Indigenous (56%; n=23). Most participants (85%; n=35) held a master's degree or higher. On average, participants worked in their current position between two months and twenty-two years, with an average employment length of five years. The majority of participants had been a previous student at the university (68%; n=28). Half of the interviewees worked with Indigenous students every day (49%; n=20), while the other half worked with Indigenous students occasionally or sometimes (46%; n=19). Participants worked for the university in different capacities, including

faculty, advising/academic support staff, administrators, counselors or other health providers, and student support staff (see Table 4).

Table 4. Staff Participants Descriptive Statistics (n=41)

	Frequency Percent (n) / Mean (SD)	**Range**
Age	45.37 (9.78)	24-68
Gender		
Male	34% (14)	—
Female	58% (27)	—
Race		
Native American/Indigenous	56% (23)	—
White	22% (9)	—
Hispanic	10% (4)	—
Multiracial	7% (3)	—
African American	5% (2)	—
Education		
Bachelor's degree	8% (3)	—
Master's degree	53% (20)	—
Juris Doctor	8% (3)	—
Doctoral degree	32% (12)	—
Years of service	4.92 (4.72)	0-22
Previous student at university		
Yes	68% (28)	—
No	29% (12)	—
Amount of time spent working with Indigenous students		
Everyday	49% (19)	—
Sometimes	33% (13)	—
Occasionally	15% (6)	—
Rarely	3% (1)	—
Never	0% (0)	—

Data Analysis Plan

Thematic analysis was used to analyze the data utilizing ATLAS.ti. First, line-by-line coding was conducted for each of the 41 interviews, resulting in the creation of 348 codes. Then, the transcripts were reviewed, and codes were inductively categorized into

thematic codes. Themes were then cross-checked both across within and across transcripts to ensure their prevalence in the data. Similar codes and themes were combined to create overarching themes based on the responses of faculty and staff. Data for this study draws upon codes including *engagement with services, barriers to engagement, accessibility of services*, and *student support methods*. Additionally, responses to specific questions regarding *knowledge of student victimization* and *student service engagement* were compiled to understand how many faculty and staff believed students experienced victimization or engaged with campus services.

Results

Research Question 1: Faculty and Staff's Knowledge of Indigenous Students' Victimization

Faculty and staff disclosed a range of knowledge regarding the victimization and trauma experiences of Indigenous college students with whom they served. Just over half of participants (54%; n=22) indicated they had knowledge of Indigenous students' victimization or had a specific student share their experience with them. It is important to highlight that nearly half of faculty and staff (46%; n=19) had never had an Indigenous college students divulge a victimization experience. Given the high rates of victimization that Indigenous college students and Indigenous Peoples experience, it is important that faculty and staff who serve this population are aware of, and can respond to, these experiences (Fox et al., 2023). Although not all faculty and staff were aware of Indigenous students' victimization experiences, it is necessary that they do understand. Victimization can impact an individuals' mental health and academic performance while

in college (BlackDeer et al., 2022; Molstad et al., 2023). It is important that faculty and staff are equipped to support these students.

Research Question 2: Faculty and Staff's Perceptions of Indigenous Students' Service Use

Student Service Utilization

While about half of the faculty and staff did not have direct knowledge of Indigenous students' victimization, all participants shared their perceptions about Indigenous students' engagement with campus services and only three participants stated that they did not know if Indigenous students accessed campus services (7%). Faculty and staff perceived that Indigenous students either did not engage with services (34%; n=14), or that their engagement depended on various factors such as cultural barriers or accessibility issues (34%; n=14). One-quarter of faculty and staff (24%; n=10) perceived that Indigenous students engaged with campus services. If Indigenous students did engage in services, according to faculty and staff, it was typically due to the type of service (e.g., one-on-one) and the program orientation (e.g., Indigenous-centered). Specifically, services that were individualized or perceived as comfortable were more likely to be used by students, according to faculty and staff. When asked about Indigenous students' level of engagement in campus services Martin said,

> I think the more personalized and car[ing] [service] feels to [students], they're more likely [to] engage. My thought is that probably, no, they're not engaging the way we would hope…It will be nice to see more of that engagement of university services…so we can reach more people.

Many faculty and staff echoed this sentiment stating that Indigenous students were less likely to engage in more traditional westernized campus services such as tutoring, career services, health services, and sometimes even counseling. Specifically, in response to

victimization, faculty and staff believed Indigenous students only used counseling or culturally specific services on-campus. Although many (34%; n=14) faculty and staff stated that Indigenous students typically did not engage with campus services, several highlighted the services that Indigenous were likely to use, if they used any services. Indigenous students were likely to engage in services that were specialized for them, their needs, and recognized their culture.

Culturally specific services. Services focused specifically on serving Indigenous students were the services most used by Indigenous college students according to faculty and staff (80%; n=33). A small percent of faculty and staff (7%; n=3) believed that Indigenous students exclusively used these services and not others because these services explicitly stated they were for Indigenous college students. Gwen discussed her experience working with Indigenous students,

> I get the sense that they [students] would probably be more willing to reach out to services that are specific for American Indians. They're staffed by American Indian people. So, you know you're going to see…a similar face, or someone who shares [their culture], even if they're not the same tribe, or even from the same state, you're going to have sort of that cultural connection.

According to faculty and staff, culturally specific services were utilized by Indigenous students because those working there were often Indigenous or had cultural understanding. These services were able to create an environment where Indigenous Peoples, their tribes, and cultures were represented and celebrated.

Indigenous representation, feeling comfortable, and have a safe place to go were all reasons faculty and staff attributed to Indigenous students' engagement with the culturally specific services on campus. Indigenous representation, both among the faculty and staff, but in the physical environment (i.e., having Indigenous art, Tribal

seals, and traditional herbs and medicine displayed) allowed Indigenous students to feel safe and created a sense of belonging. One culturally specific service identified by faculty and staff as being effective for students was the Indigenous student center on-campus, given its ability to create a community that Indigenous students could rely on for support. Community increased Indigenous students' engagement with the Indigenous student support center according to faculty and staff (46%; n=19).

The center's appreciation of diverse Indigenous cultures was discussed by many faculty and staff as increasing Indigenous students' engagement with these services. Heather, who was Indigenous and a previous student at the university, illustrated this by saying:

> If you go to [the Indigenous student support center] you're going to find someone that you identify with…and that's just based on like, "hey that person looks like me, so I feel comfortable there." That's going to create that sense of community and that sense of like, "okay, I can come here, and I know this person is going to be able to help me because I can feel and see that sense of community."

According to faculty and staff, creating a culturally safe environment helped Indigenous students connect with services and other on-campus services that they may not have used otherwise.

Barriers to Service Utilization

Given that 68% (n=28) of faculty and staff stated that Indigenous students either did not engage in services or typically did not depending on the service type, it is important to understand why these Indigenous students might not engage with more "traditional" on-campus services.

Lack of Indigenous representation. One major reason why Indigenous students typically do not engage in campus services, as described by faculty and staff (61%;

n=25), was the lack of Indigenous representation among the faculty and staff working at these services. This idea was especially prevalent when faculty and staff were discussing Indigenous students' use, or non-use, of on-campus counseling services. Tammi, who worked in the counseling center noted this issue, "I work for [thousands of] students, but our Indigenous students are clearest at communicating that representation is the single factor that supports or disrupts a comfort with broader university services."

Faculty and staff, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, were aware that limited Indigenous representation across the university made it more difficult for Indigenous students to engage in services. While faculty and staff noted that Indigenous students requested an Indigenous counselor, one had yet to be employed in the campus counseling center. Indigenous representation in these service roles was vital to Indigenous students' engagement with services according to faculty and staff. Faculty and staff shared that Indigenous students often felt like campus service providers, who were not Indigenous, did not understand them or their experiences. Additionally, participants talked about how students felt that some service providers asked questions that were microaggressions or that triggered their trauma. When Indigenous students reach out for help, they want to see someone like them that will make them feel heard and understood.

Accessibility of services. Indigenous students' lack of awareness and accessibility of services was a theme brought up by 68% (n=28) of faculty and staff as a common barrier to service utilization. In addition, knowing how to navigate services was also another barrier Indigenous college students faced, according to 32% (n=13) of faculty and staff. Accessibility issues were highlighted by the fact that faculty and staff pointed out that Indigenous students may have never had access to or needed to use

services on-campus before. This caused students to be hesitant or even intimidated to reach out to services and make an appointment. Paula, who worked predominately with Indigenous students, discussed how many Indigenous students are worried about utilizing services:

> I think that a lot of [students] have never sought out those type of services before on their own. Some of them don't know they're available, some don't want to share their weakness. They already feel like they don't fit sometimes and why would they add something else to it that shows them that they don't fit? Some of them are worried there might be a fee involved and might not want to incur any additional debt.

Indigenous students did not want to be perceived as weak or like they do not fit in with others. Faculty and staff identified that there was often a stigma attached to seeking services, especially for mental health. Participants also noted that students' uncertainty about using campus services often prevented them from utilizing the services. For example, participants noted that Indigenous students were hesitant to use counseling services because they were uncertain about what the appointment would be like, if there was a fee for the service, or what they would be asked to discuss. Additionally, faculty and staff noted that many students faced long wait times to even receive an appointment. Heather shared her frustrations,

> I've had students tell me they can't get an appointment to speak with somebody [at counseling] for weeks and weeks, which turns into a month or two. By that point…they're only getting one session within a semester.

Lack of trust. Trust can be very difficult to build for Indigenous Peoples given the history of abuse, violence, and broken trust that has occurred within institutions of higher education throughout history (Brayboy, 2005; Kirmayer et al., 2003). Due to a lack of trust, Indigenous faculty and staff (37%; n=15) stated that Indigenous students

were much more hesitant to engage in western-oriented services including counseling, tutoring, or health services because students.

To illustrate the importance of trust, Cassandra, who had worked with Indigenous students at multiple universities shared,

> Trust is huge. I mean, when you think about all the historical [events] and I keep talking about historical [events], but that's what I teach is I teach a timeline of history from Indigenous perspective, and when you think about it from that perspective, like, why should we trust anyone at this point, right? We experienced so much [oppression] and constantly for hundreds of years our trust is broken, and so yeah, we're naturally going to function that way. We're naturally going to question every environment that we're in, right?

Faculty and staff pointed out that students who had limited exposure to specific services were often distrustful of the service. Specifically, these faculty and staff perceived Indigenous students to be unsure if the service would understand their cultural background or be a safe place for them to share their experiences. Bad experiences with services providers either personally or as told by peers, can reduce overall trust in the service; thus, reducing the likelihood of Indigenous students utilizing the service.

Research Question 3: How Faculty and Staff Support Indigenous Students Who Have Experienced Victimization

Validate and Listen

Supporting Indigenous students, particularly those who had experienced victimization or trauma, was extremely important to faculty and staff. Three-fourths of participants discussed supporting Indigenous students in various ways (75%; n=31). Over half of participants (56%; n=23) noted the importance of listening to Indigenous students' stories and validating their feelings. Indigenous faculty and staff often shared

their own experiences with students to remind students they were not alone. Dean, who was Indigenous and a previous student, discussed how he listened and validated students:

> I let [students] know that what they're going through, their [victimization] experience, is just as valid as any other person's experience. I just allow them to feel that hurt and that pain. I try to create a space for them in the limited time I have with them and let them know that it's okay to feel that way, it's okay to have that hurt and pain, it'll go away…I'll let them know that I'm here as a resource to help them get through that…I try to be my best in terms of upholding kinship values which includes being an uncle and even sometimes a brother.

For some Indigenous students, sharing their story was the only thing they needed in that moment, according to faculty and staff. Listening to students was often the first step Indigenous students took to seek help. Faculty and staff discussed listening to students and providing guidance on what their next steps could be. While not all Indigenous students chose to seek services after sharing their experiences with faculty and staff, some asked faculty and staff to refer them to services. Again, having a trusted individual was vital to Indigenous students seeking help on campus. Specifically, Cassandra shared how she listened to students share their victimization experiences and let them know that she would be there to support them no matter what. "I validate them I say you have every right to feel the way that you're feeling. I tell them you, it is up to you, I'll support you however you want to move forward with this [victimization experience]."

Connect Students to Services

The university in which these faculty and staff worked had a large student population and was spread across multiple campuses. The size of this university often led many students to not know where services were located or what services were available to them, according to faculty and staff. The most common (73%; n=30) way

faculty and staff supported students was through connecting them to services both on- and off-campus. More specifically, connecting students to services on campus was mentioned 64 times across 30 transcripts. When Indigenous students share their victimization experiences with faculty and staff there is an established relationship and level of trust with them. Therefore, when this faculty or staff member connects an Indigenous student to a service they trust, the student will be more likely to engage with that service. One staff member shared her experience referring a student to services, "they're looking for someone…that they can trust. And if I refer them to somebody that I trust then, you know they'll trust them." Indigenous students often needed a nudge to utilize services and that students were hesitant due to uncertainty about the trustworthiness of the service. Some (39%; n=16) faculty and staff shared that Indigenous students would not reach out for help unless a trusted mentor/advisor directly introduced the student to the service they need. This was referred to as a "warm handoff," in which the faculty or staff member would physically take the student directly to the service and introduce them to the person they knew or provide contact information for that person.

In addition to connecting students to services, many (46%; n=19) faculty and staff provided more hands-on support. Specifically, they often assisted students with setting up appointments with service providers, took them directly to the service, went to meetings with the student, or assisted in the drafting of emails to service providers or other faculty for academic help. Regardless of the size of the university, staff and faculty noted that many Indigenous students were first generation college students or came from a reservation or rural area and did not know how to navigate these services. Frances

discussed how she helped students who may have had less experiences reaching out to services or faculty members,

> I think part of it is just not knowing even what to say or what to do, so I try and help them and give them things, you know emails, to let them know this is what you would say, or this is who you would contact, so that they know.

Sitting down with students and helping them discuss their options and helping them set up appointments or locate where certain services are located was vital to helping Indigenous students use services.

Discussion

Findings of the Current Study in the Context of Prior Research

This is the first known to explore Indigenous college students' campus service utilization in response to victimization, from the perspectives of faculty and staff who work with them. Additionally, this study sought to understand how faculty and staff support Indigenous students who have experienced victimization. Given that Indigenous college students make up only 1% of undergraduate and graduate students, it is clear that universities are struggling to recruit and matriculate these students (Espinosa et al., 2019; Hussar et al., 2020). Institutions of higher education have a history of subjecting Indigenous peoples to assimilation and the erasure of their culture (Bastien et al., 2003; Brayboy, Faircloth, et al., 2015; Duran, 2006; Glenn, 2015; Irwin & Roll, 1995; McClellan et al., 2005; Pevar, 2012). With recent calls to create more diverse college learning environments and increasing university commitments to recognizing Indigenous lands (e.g., land acknowledgements), now is the time to increase Indigenous student representation. However, without knowledge regarding how to best support Indigenous students, universities will likely continue the recent trend of losing Indigenous students.

Therefore, the current study allows universities to address the needs of Indigenous students and create programming to retain them.

Indigenous peoples and college students experience disproportionate rates of victimization (Fish et al., 2017; Fox et al., 2023). However, in the current study, almost half (46%; n=19) of faculty and staff had little to no knowledge about Indigenous college students' victimization experiences. These findings identify a gap in the understanding of universities and faculty and staff when it comes to addresses the needs of Indigenous college students. Furthermore, 68% (n=28) of faculty and staff did not believe that Indigenous college students engaged with on-campus services, or believed they only engaged with a few specific on-campus services. Faculty and staff identified that Indigenous college students were most likely to engage with culturally specific services on-campus. Faculty and staff who worked with Indigenous students pointed to the success of services that created community among other Indigenous students, celebrated Indigenous culture, and reinforced a sense of belonging for students at the university – all of which have been shown to increase Indigenous college student retention and graduation (Alejandro et al., 2020; Hurtado et al., 2012; Lopez, 2018; Tachine et al., 2017).

In the general population, Indigenous people who have experienced victimization are less likely to utilize services than victims of other races/ethnicities (Finfgeld-Connett, 2015; Fiolet et al., 2021). Victimization and trauma can impact college students' mental health, academic performance, and overall persistence to degree completion (BlackDeer et al., 2022; Molstad et al., 2023). Thus, if universities wish to retain and increase their

Indigenous student population, they must reduce the barriers Indigenous students face using services on-campus.

The current study identified several barriers that faculty and staff believed prevented Indigenous students from utilizing on-campus services, including lack of Indigenous representation among the faculty and staff, reduced accessibility of services, and an overall lack of trust of university services. Representation is critical to the success of minority students, including Indigenous students (Brayboy, Solyom, Castagno, 2015; Tippeconnic-Fox, 2005; Windchief & Joseph, 2015). Having Indigenous faculty and staff can reduce Indigenous students' feelings of isolation and enhance their college experience (Tippeconnic-Fox, 2005). Simply not knowing about services or how to navigate them were identified by participants as major barriers for Indigenous students, especially those who were first generation students or from a reservation or rural area. Providing Indigenous students with information on available services, in addition to how to use the services, may lead to increased engagement with campus services. Lastly, general distrust of universities and their services prevented Indigenous students from engaging in most campus services. Distrust of service providers often prevents Indigenous peoples from engaging with services in the community (Finfgeld-Connett, 2015; Fiolet et al., 2021). Building trust among Indigenous peoples and universities is necessary to increase Indigenous college students' campus service engagement and better support.

Supportive faculty and staff can provide Indigenous students with the tools necessary to persist and continue their successes past graduation (Brayboy, Solyom, Castagno, 2015; Tippeconnic-Fox, 2005; Windchief & Joseph, 2015). In this study,

faculty and staff supported Indigenous college students who experienced victimization in two key ways. First, validating and listening to Indigenous students allowed them to process their emotions in a safe environment supported by faculty and staff. Indigenous students that experience a supportive reaction to disclosing victimization may be more likely to engage with services in the future (Ullman, 2023). Second, faculty and staff connected students, with their permission, to trusted services on-campus, providing a "warm hand off" to help ease the transition and introduction for students. This can help alleviate the stress that students may experience when utilizing a service for the first time, and may even have successful outcomes, such as increased service use, enhanced wellness and healing, and improved academic achievement.

Policy Implications for Universities

Considering that the number of Indigenous college students attending and graduating from NNCUs is extremely low, the current study provides NNCUs with several avenues to better serve Indigenous college students. To increase utilization and engagement with campus services for Indigenous college students, universities must first recognize the violence that Indigenous peoples have experienced throughout their lives and history, and the role institutions of higher education have had perpetuating this oppression. Universities that do not openly acknowledge the oppression of Indigenous Peoples, including that from institutions of higher education, will continue to be ill equipped to make real change and be unable to effectively serve this population. Increasing the representation of Indigenous peoples and cultures throughout the university is necessary to increase Indigenous students' sense of belonging. It is important for universities to create employment pathways and opportunities for

advancement and leadership among Indigenous peoples, which will increase representation. Creating culturally specific services, including culturally-appropriate counseling services, is necessary to support Indigenous students with victimization histories heal in a way that recognizes their culture (Hodge et al., 2009). This can be accomplished through the aforementioned employment pathways through the hiring of Indigenous students studying social work, psychology, or counseling at the university.

Collaborating with Indigenous community providers in surrounding areas near the university may provide many benefits. For example, university-Tribe partnerships may lead to increased opportunities for the university to employ Indigenous Peoples, admit and support Indigenous students, diversify their student body and employees, partner on legislative and research efforts including grant-funded projects that invest in Indigenous students, employees, and Tribal Nations. Partnerships with universities must also benefit Tribes. Employment and admission of community members benefits the Tribe by building capacity within their people. Collaborating with research, especially grant-funded research, benefits the Tribe by investing in their communities to find solutions to problems. Indeed, researchers and universities who wish to partner with Indigenous Peoples and/or Tribal Nations must first educate themselves on the history of Indigenous Peoples and work with their universities Tribal leader liaisons to ensure partnerships are equitable and honor Tribal sovereignty, among many other considerations (de Heer et al., 2021).

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

Although this is one of the first studies to examine Indigenous college students' engagement with campus services from the faculty and staff who serve them, it is not

without its limitations. This study focused specifically on faculty and staff at one large southwestern university. Given that Indigenous Peoples across the nation are so different, it may not be advisable to generalize the findings to other areas. Even so, this university has one of the largest Indigenous college student populations in the country in a state that has one of the highest Indigenous populations. Thus, it is reasonable to assume that the current study can provide a foundation for other researchers to understand the engagement and barriers students face at their respective institutions. Another possible limitation is the focus on faculty and staff to understand Indigenous college students' engagement, including non-Indigenous faculty and staff. Importantly, recall that 68% (n=28) of this sample were previous students at the university where the study took place and 56% (n=23) identified as Indigenous. Further, recall that half (49%; n=19) of the sample worked with Indigenous students *every day*, which means that this sample has remarkably high exposure to, and interactions with, Indigenous students. Thus, participants in this study are well-equipped to speak to college students' experiences at this university, more specifically *Indigenous* college students' experiences at this university. Also, it is important to understand the perspectives of non-Indigenous faculty and staff as they are most likely going to interact with Indigenous students at some point during their careers. These perspectives allow for an understanding of how universities can equip Indigenous and non-Indigenous faculty and staff to better support Indigenous students.

Future research should include the voices of Indigenous college students to understand the service utilization in addition to their needs in terms of university services. The integration of both Indigenous students and faculty and staff who serve them

regarding how universities can best support their needs is also a much-needed avenue for future research. As stated by Brayboy and colleagues (2015), without knowledge of "Native people's rich, complex history and modern-day sociocultural needs and desires," then "postsecondary leaders cannot call for changes to initiatives, programs, services, attitudes, or offerings that would improve student outcomes," (p. 155). If universities wish to continue to celebrate and promote diversity on their campuses, they must include Indigenous college students and communities in the conversation. Ultimately, this inclusion will allow for a safer, more welcoming learning environment for Indigenous peoples, further supporting their self-determination and nation building (Brayboy, Solyom, & Castagno, 2015).

CHAPTER 4

CREATING A "HOME AWAY FROM HOME": SOLUTIONS TO ADDRESS THE VICTIMIZATION AND GENERAL NEEDS OF INDIGENOUS COLLEGE STUDENTS

ABSTRACT

Universities have recently increased their efforts to improve the campus climate for all students. However, one group of students that universities have overlooked in these efforts are Indigenous students. Although Indigenous students represent 1% of college students, their rates have slowly been increasing. Yet, they still have one of the lowest retention and graduation rates among students. This could be due to universities' inability to address Indigenous college students' needs. Unfortunately, many colleges and universities are unsure about how to support Indigenous students. The current study is the first known study to explore the needs of Indigenous college students from the perspectives of both Indigenous students and the faculty and staff who work with them. Utilizing data from 16 Indigenous student interviews and 41 faculty and staff interviews, the current study sought to understand what programs currently work well for Indigenous students, what programs need to be improved, and what programs need to be provided. Creating a safe environment and opportunities to engage in cultural practices on-campus were major themes found in this study. Recommendations for how universities can better serve Indigenous college students are also presented.

Introduction

Colleges and universities have recently focused on improving campus climate to ensure all students feel welcome (Battles, 2022; U.S. Department of Education, 2016). This has typically been accomplished through hiring of more diverse faculty and staff, diversifying curricula, and creating identity-based programming (e.g., LGBTQ+ centers, multicultural centers). Even so, many universities overlook programming specifically for Indigenous college students – a group that represents the smallest percentage of college students in the U.S., both at the undergraduate and graduate levels (Espinosa et al., 2019; Hussar et al., 2020; Musu-Gillette et al., 2017). Remarkably, the enrollment of minority students, especially Indigenous students, who have been historically excluded, underserved, and underrepresented in higher education is steadily increasing (Fong et al., 2021; Hussar et al., 2020; Strayhorn et al., 2016). Yet, the retention and completion rates for Indigenous students remains low (Espinosa et al., 2019; NCES, 2022). These low rates are often attributed to hostile environments and microaggressions that Indigenous students face when attending college (Brayboy, 2005; Guillory & Wolverton, 2008; Patterson Silver Wolf et al., 2018). Additionally, the lack of Indigenous staff and faculty, and non-Indigenous faculty and staff who support Indigenous students can lead to low engagement and retention. These experiences can contribute to Indigenous students perceiving that they do not belong at the university when their cultural identity and needs are not supported by staff, faculty, or the institution itself (Janke et al., 2023; Tachine et al., 2017).

When attending college, Indigenous students must learn to balance their cultural identity and their new student identity, without losing their sense of self in the process.

Indigenous students have unique lived experiences that shape their college experiences that non-Indigenous students do not have. More specifically, Indigenous students often experience historical trauma as the result of colonization and assimilation policies implemented by the U.S. government and institutions of higher education (Brayboy, 2005; Brayboy, 2021). Due to these harmful historical policies, many non-Native colleges and universities (NNCUs) are still ill-equipped to adequately serve Indigenous students (Brayboy, Solyom, & Castagno, 2015; Solyom et al., 2019; Windchief & Joseph, 2015). However, the growing implementation of Indigenous student affairs or student support centers signals to Indigenous college students that these faculty, staff, and universities are equipped to support them (Bazemore-Dunn & James, 2020).

Indigenous students can face numerous barriers when attending college such as microaggressions, financial hardship, social pressures, limited Indigenous representation on campus, and limited academic preparation (Brayboy, Solyom, & Castagno, 2015; Tachine & Cabrera, 2021; Windchief & Joseph, 2015). Victimization and trauma experiences compound these barriers, making it even more difficult for Indigenous students to be healthy and successful during their academic pursuits. Culturally-specific programming and services have been shown to be important to Indigenous college students' retention and success (Guillory & Wolverton, 2008; Lopez & Tachine, 2021; Oxendine & Taub, 2021; Shotton et al., 2007; Van Dyk & Weese, 2019). Yet, little is known regarding the needs of Indigenous college students who have experienced victimization and trauma.

The current study aims to understand holistically the needs of Indigenous college students, both in terms of their victimization experiences and in general. Additionally,

this study provides recommendations on how to improve the experiences of Indigenous college students and what programming or services need to be provided to them on campus. Culturally supportive campus environments have a strong impact on the retention of Indigenous students *and* the retention of Indigenous staff and faculty (Bazemore-James & Dunn, 2020; Oxendine & Taub, 2021). Yet, many colleges have a limited understanding of what contributes to a culturally safe environment, culturally specific programming, and what elements contribute to Indigenous students' engagement within the campus environment, namely campus services. The current study addresses these gaps by elevating the voices of Indigenous college students and the faculty and staff who work with them to create solutions that will allow colleges and universities – including those that are NNCUs and those that are not – to better serve Indigenous students. This study examines perceptions of Indigenous students and the faculty and staff who serve them pertaining to effective services to assist students with victimization histories and campus service use in response to students' victimization.

Literature Review

Indigenous Peoples in Higher Education

Institutions of higher education have often excluded Indigenous peoples or been used as a tool of assimilation and erasure, stripping Indigenous people of their culture, traditions, and languages (Bastien et al., 2003; Brayboy, Faircloth, et al., 2015; Lomawaima, 1999; McClellan et al., 2005; Pevar, 2012). Through colonization, the U.S. government has and continues to impact the educational attainment of Indigenous peoples. Specifically, Indigenous college students make up the smallest proportion of college students, both undergraduate and graduate, of any racial/ethnic group (Espinosa

et al., 2019; Hussar et al., 2020). While the number of Indigenous students enrolled in college has steadily increased since the 1970's, their retention and completion rates remain low (NCES, 2022). In fact, only about 39% of first-time Indigenous college students between the ages of 18 and 24 graduate within six years (de Brey et al., 2019). However, only 15% of Indigenous people over the age of 25 have completed a bachelor's degree or higher (de Brey et al., 2019). An overwhelming majority of Indigenous students (92%) attend NNCUs, with the majority of those students attending public state universities (de Brey et al., 2019). Therefore, the way the university operates, and the campus environment are important to the success and persistence of Indigenous college students.

Factors that Influence Indigenous College Students' Persistence and Success

Indigenous college students are a diverse group with various needs when attending college. Specifically, Indigenous students' persistence to graduation is influenced by different factors than what is commonly examined in higher education literature. In this context, persistence refers to a student's capability to continue to the next semester until graduation, in addition to their ability to integrate into academic and campus life (Tinto, 1975; Lopez, 2018). Yet this integration has been recently called out by Indigenous scholars as being potentially detrimental to the persistence of diverse students (Lopez, 2018).

Indigenous college students must be able to maintain their cultural identity and ties to their home communities while attending college. Ensuring that Indigenous students are able to navigate both their own specific culture and the culture on campus while obtaining a degree is vital to students' persistence. Institutional support of

Indigenous students can be displayed through the recognition and celebration of Indigenous students' various cultural identities (Fong et al., 2021; Lundberg, 2014). This institutional support has been shown to increase Indigenous student persistence and sense of belonging (Lopez, 2018; Lundberg, 2007; Lundberg, 2014; Oxendine & Taub, 2021; Tachine et al., 2017). Allowing students to practice their cultures on campus has been shown to increase persistence and overall success in college (Fong et al., 2021; Guillory, 2009; Guillory & Wolverton, 2008; Waterman, 2012; Wright & Shotton, 2019). Taken a step further, institutions of higher education must not only allow Indigenous students to practice their culture and traditions on campus, but they must also incorporate it into the curriculum (Brayboy & Castagno, 2008; Wright & Shotton, 2019). Culturally responsive schooling increases Indigenous student engagement and success (Brayboy & Castagno, 2008), yet this type of curriculum is rarely implemented within NNCUs. Creating a culturally safe learning environment where Indigenous people and worldviews are acknowledged and validated have been shown to increase Indigenous students' persistence and success in college (Fong et al., 2021; Lopez, 2018; Mosholder & Goslin, 2013).

A college degree is an important tool for Tribal capacity building, in addition to strengthening Tribal sovereignty and self-determination (Brayboy, 2004; Brayboy, Solyom, & Castagno, 2015). Therefore, it is important for institutions of higher education to ensure that they are creating environments in which Indigenous students can be successful. Having a supportive campus environment, including a physical space, has been found to be the strongest predictor of learning, among other college environmental characteristics, for Indigenous students (Lundberg, 2012). Strong connections to family

and community have been shown to increase feelings of belonging for Indigenous students in college and, in turn, increase the likelihood of successful completion of a college degree (Lopez & Tachine, 2021; Tachine & Cabrera, 2021). Creating opportunities for Indigenous students to gather and engage in cultural traditions and ceremonies on campus have strong implications for students' ability to perform well in their academic studies (Oxendine & Taub, 2021; Waterman, 2012; Windchief & Joseph, 2015; Wright & Shotton, 2019). Allowing Indigenous students to engage in cultural/spiritual practices, interact with other students from similar backgrounds, create networks of support, and develop a sense of independence on campus sets them up for success in college and beyond.

Space and Place for Indigenous College Students

Physical places are integral to Indigenous peoples' creation stories, knowledge systems, and identities (Minthorn & Marsh, 2016). For Indigenous college students, university campuses are places that hold important meanings due to their location on Indigenous lands. University campuses can create a sense of belonging for staff and students to support them in their academic careers and increase their persistence (Cox et al., 2012). If universities and their orientations are not originally designed to serve a certain group of people (i.e., Indigenous people), this group's ability to succeed and complete a degree in higher education is reduced. When Indigenous students attend college, often far away from their homelands, they can experience a jarring shift in their cultural, spiritual, and physical being, that goes beyond feelings of homesickness (Wright & Shotton, 2019). Thus, it is vital that institutions of higher education be viewed as a welcoming and culturally comfortable place for Indigenous students.

While there are typical places on campus for all students, such as the library, student union, and dorms, *counterspaces* on campus are vital to positive college experiences for students of color (Minthorn & Marsh, 2016; Solórzano et al., 2000). *Counterspaces* refers to places in which students are able to safely create their own learning and supportive environments in which their knowledge and experiences are validated (Minthorn & Marsh, 2016; Solórzano et al., 2000). While these *counterspaces* can be located anywhere on campus, students often want a specific place where their needs are addressed, and they can be themselves in a supportive environment. Having a specific space designated for Indigenous students such as an American Indian Student Services office or Indigenous Student Affairs office can increase belonging and create community for students (Bazemore-James & Dunn, 2020; Minthorn & Marsh, 2016). These centers create a physical space for Indigenous students to be themselves and connect with resources they may need. It is vital that Indigenous students have places on campus where they feel safe and empowered, not devalued by racism or stereotypes (Andersen et al., 2008; Bazemore-James & Dunn, 2020; Carter et al., 2018). Faculty and staff within these spaces play important roles in creating a sense of belonging, identity, and place attachment for these students (Carter et al., 2018). Reinforcing Indigenous college students' sense of self and belonging within these on-campus places and spaces increases their ability to persist and be successful in higher education.

Student Support Services for Indigenous College Students

One program that has been successful in fostering community and trust for Indigenous students on campus is the creation of Indigenous student centers (Minthorn & Marsh, 2016; Windchief & Joseph, 2015). Not only do these centers foster Indigenous

student belonging to the university, but they offer validation for Indigenous students pursuing higher education. Indigenous student support centers or Indigenous student affairs (ISAs) are increasingly being created on college campuses to provide specific services tailored to Indigenous students (Bazemore-James & Dunn, 2020). Often, Indigenous student support services provide services throughout the student's academic career, even prior to attending college (Bazemore-James & Dunn, 2020). These centers provide needed support for Indigenous students at NNCUs that are not designed for Indigenous students (Bazemore-James & Dunn, 2020; Larimore & McClellan, 2005; Minthorn & Marsh, 2016). Many Indigenous students feel as though they cannot succeed in college due to the various barriers that NNCUs create for them (Guillory et al., 2008). However, Indigenous student support services or centers aim to combat this by supporting Indigenous students with their schoolwork in addition to reinforcing the student's right to be there (Bazemore-James & Dunn, 2020).

Cultural centers offer a space for students of color to gather safely away from the uncomfortable environment that NNCUs create (Faircloth, 2022). These centers create a community and allow Indigenous students to embrace their cultural identities (Bazemore-James & Dunn, 2020; Faircloth, 2022). Indigenous student support centers also provide support for students to navigate the various power differentials and barriers created by institutions of higher education built for westernized white culture (Brayboy, Faircloth, et al., 2015; Lomawaima, 1999; McClellan et al., 2005). Cultural centers are vital to students of color's success in college, yet there are limited studies focused on this topic, and even fewer focused specifically on Indigenous students (Bazemore-James & Dunn, 2020; Faircloth, 2022; Keels, 2020; Minthorn & Marsh, 2016). Despite limited research,

it has been shown that cultural centers for Indigenous students may help alleviate the culture shock that many students experience when they come to NNCUs for the first time (Lopez, 2018). Additionally, cultural events held by these centers have been cited as helping Indigenous students persist and graduate (Jenkins, 1999).

While Indigenous support centers offer positive experiences for Indigenous students, these centers are faced with a number of challenges. Specifically, Indigenous student support centers or ISAs are often underfunded, understaffed, and under-supported by university administration (Bazemore-James & Dunn, 2020). Many institutions of higher education do not understand the needs of Indigenous students and provide the minimal resources needed to operate these centers (Bazemore-James & Dunn, 2020). This bare minimum approach may contribute to the small enrollment sizes for Indigenous students as well as their reduced retention (Bazemore-James & Dunn, 2020; NCES, 2022). Often, only one or two people are staffed in these centers but are responsible for serving and providing programming for several hundred Indigenous students (Bazemore-James & Dunn, 2020). Thus, staff must focus on addressing the immediate needs of students and are often unable to provide the amount and types of programming they would like to (Bazemore-James & Dunn, 2020). While institutions often support the creation of these centers, they also do not provide adequate funding or staffing to maintain these centers long term (Bazemore-James & Dunn, 2020). Yet, ISAs and support centers are expected to support all Indigenous students on campus, even though they cannot require all Indigenous students to participate in their services. Despite this, ISAs are held accountable for the success and failures of all Indigenous students on campus regardless of their involvement with support centers (Bazemore-James & Dunn,

2020). Lastly, institutions do not support the staff, primarily Indigenous, who run these centers and often are slow to replace them if they leave. If Indigenous staff and faculty are replaced, they are often replaced by non-Indigenous persons who have a limited understanding of Indigenous culture (Bazemore-James & Dunn, 2020; Brayboy, Solyom, & Castagno, 2015). There is little effort made by the institution to recruit other Indigenous professionals. Thus, threatening the sustainability of ISAs and Indigenous support centers on campus.

Current Study

Indigenous students attend institutions of higher education with hopes of bettering themselves, which in turn can improve the strengths of their respective tribes. However, Indigenous students often feel out of place on university campuses, or face microaggressions from fellow classmates, staff, and faculty (Guillory et al., 2009). In addition to these barriers at the university, Indigenous students may come to campus with previous trauma or victimization histories which may compound their difficulties. The barriers and challenges faced by Indigenous students can impact their desire to persevere and continue their postsecondary degrees. Thus, it is imperative to understand how the college environment can be improved to better serve Indigenous students, especially those with victimization histories. Yet, little is known about how to best serve Indigenous students in the college environment, especially for those who have or are currently experiencing victimization. Limited research has shown that Indigenous students value culture and specific spaces dedicated for Indigenous students within the university setting; however, it remains unknown what Indigenous students who have experienced victimization may need to support them to successful degree completion.

Therefore, the current study seeks to understand how universities can better serve Indigenous students, specifically those with victimization or trauma histories. Incorporating qualitative interviews from both Indigenous students and university staff and faculty who serve these students, this study provides a holistic approach to understanding the needs of Indigenous college students in terms of service provision. This study is among the first to examine the needs of these individuals and provide recommendations universities can utilize to better serve their Indigenous students. To understand the needs of Indigenous students, the following three-part research question developed:

> What qualities of services do Indigenous students and the faculty and staff who serve them believe (a) are currently working, (b) need to be provided, or (c) need to be improved to effectively serve Indigenous students with victimization histories?

Methodology

The current study takes a holistic approach to understanding the service and programming needs of Indigenous college students and the faculty and staff who serve them by conducting original data in the form of two qualitative datasets from the same university setting. The first is drawn from interviews with Indigenous college students and the second is drawn from interviews with university faculty and staff who work with Indigenous students. The current study is part of a larger project focused on gathering data about victimization experiences, service use, resilience, and needs of Indigenous students and the faculty and staff who serve them. This study was approved by the university's institutional review board, underwent a cultural review by the university's

designated Tribal Advisor team, and used a trauma-informed approach by the research team.

Trauma-Informed Research and Participant Wellbeing

The current study utilized a trauma-informed approach throughout all aspects of the research process, from the development of the research team, research questions, survey and interview questions, and data collection processes. Trauma-informed research "realize(s) the impacts of trauma and potential paths for recovery, recognize(s) the signs and symptoms of trauma, respond(s) by integrating knowledge about trauma into their approach, and resist(s) traumatization" (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration [SAMHSA], 2014). Therefore, this research kept these principles at the forefront of project development while maintaining participant safety, privacy and confidentiality, and data collection (Campbell et al., 2019). The overarching project utilizes Indigenous-led, interdisciplinary research approaches, with many members being trained in trauma informed-care and victim services.

Taking a trauma-informed approach, first the research team created the questions utilized in the study with the goal of reducing retraumatization. Each question was vetted several times to ensure wording and ordering of the questions were appropriate and minimized the possibility of triggering participants. Through this process, questions were edited for clarity or taken out if they were deemed to be unnecessary to the goals of the research project. All participants were provided with a list of free and culturally appropriate services that included on-campus, local, state, and national services focused on serving victims of violence. Several measures were taken during interviews to ensure participant well-being. Breathing breaks were built into the interview protocol to allow

the interviewee to take periodic breaks. At the end of the interview, each participant was debriefed and was provided with any resources or services, either on- or off-campus, that they needed.

Student Interviews

Research Design

The student interviews were conducted using semi-structured, open-ended questions focusing on Indigenous students' service needs and how to improve current university services. In order to be eligible for this study, participants must (1) be 18 years or older, (2) identify as Native American, American Indian, Indigenous, or Alaska Native, and (3) be a student attending the university where the study occurred. Additionally, in order to participate in the interviews, students had to have awareness of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Peoples (MMIP).

Recruitment

Student participants were recruited through trusted networks and organizations within the university that serve Indigenous students. Electronic announcements and flyers were distributed via email, social media posts, and referrals from friends and/or family. University organizations, academic departments, and student groups that serve Indigenous students also aided in the distribution of the flyers and study information. Additionally, a number of presentations to Indigenous student audiences were delivered to provide students with an in-person opportunity to learn more about the study and ask questions prior to participating. As noted earlier, the current study is part of a larger study. The larger project included an online student survey component, which is not included in the current study given its focus on other issues, including MMIP. The

student survey invited students with MMIP to participate in a one-on-one interview to further discuss it and other topics, including those presented herein. Upon completing the survey, students who wished to participate in an interview provided their email addresses and those who met the eligibility criteria, mentioned earlier, were then contacted to schedule their interview.

Procedure

A total of 16 interviews were conducted from June to November 2022. The interviews were conducted via video conferencing software (e.g., Zoom) with an Indigenous victim advocate trained in trauma informed interview techniques. Prior to the interviews, participants were provided with the informed consent form via email. At the beginning of each interview, the interviewer reviewed the informed consent form verbally and answered any questions the participant had prior to starting the interview. In each interview, one note taker was present off camera, with the permission of the interviewee, to take notes, record the interview, address technical issues, and debrief with the participant after ending the interview. Each interview was conducted in a safe, quiet environment determined by the participant. Interviews were extensive and ranged between one to two hours in length, with an average of one hour and 11 minutes. Upon completing the interview, each interview participant received a $75 gift card that they could use at a store of their choosing.

Staff Interviews

Research Design

Data for this portion of the study were drawn from interviews with university faculty and staff who work with Indigenous students. These interviews utilized a semi-

structured, open-ended question format focusing on the interviewee's work with Indigenous students, perceptions of challenges and needs of Indigenous students, and needs of the employees who work with Indigenous students. To be eligible to participate, faculty and staff must (1) have been 18 years or older, (2) interacted with Indigenous students within the college context, and (3) work as a current employee at the university where the study was conducted.

Recruitment

Faculty and staff participants were recruited through direct outreach and referrals through snowball sampling and through informational presentations with university organizations and academic departments that primarily serve Indigenous students. Given that no list existed that contained the population of faculty and staff who work with Indigenous students, the research team created a list of potential interviewees by conducting searches of the university's online directory using key terms including "Indigenous," "Native American," and "American Indian." All faculty or staff who listed these terms in their biographical sketches, course descriptions, or areas of expertise were included in the outreach list. A key informant, who works with Indigenous students and has a wide network of university faculty and staff who work with Indigenous students, reviewed the document, and suggested useful points of contact and other potential interviewees. In total, 80 faculty and staff comprised the population of those who work with Indigenous students. All 80 were contacted via email and invited to participate, of which 41 agreed and participated in the interview (51% response rate).

Procedure

A total of 41 interviews were conducted from April to October 2022. All interviews except for one were conducted via an online video conferencing software (e.g., Zoom) in a safe, quiet environment determined by the participant. The one exception preferred to meet in-person given their familiarity with the interviewer, and so their request was granted. Participants were provided with the informed consent form prior to the interview and informed consent procedures were also reviewed verbally prior to the interviews. All interviews were tape-recorded, with participants permission, via the online platform and were transcribed verbatim. Interviews ranged in length from 22 minutes to 2 hours and 10 minutes, with an average of one hour and 12 minutes. All participants received a $10 gift card.

Participants

Student Interviews

Of the students who participated in the survey portion of the larger study, 16 indicated that they would like to participate in an interview (see Table 5). Student interviewees ranged in age from 18 to 54, with an average age of 28 (SD=10.14). The majority of participants were female (81%; n=13), followed by non-binary/non-conforming (13%; n=2), and then followed by males (6%; n=1). Most of the students interviewed were undergraduate students (69%; n=11) and the remaining were graduate students (31%; n=5). Two interviewees indicated that they had children. Over half (63%; n=10) of interviewees identified as a first-generation college student.

Table 5. Indigenous College Student Interview Descriptive Statistics (N=16)

	Frequency Percent (n) / Mean (SD)	**Range**
Age	28 (10.14)	18-54
Gender		
Male	6% (1)	—
Female	81% (13)	—
Non-Binary/Non-Conforming	13% (2)	—
Class Standing		
Undergraduate	69%% (11)	—
Graduate	31%% (5)	—
First Generation Student	8% (3)	—
Parent	13% (2)	—

Staff Interviews

There were a total of 41 faculty and staff participants who agreed to be interviewed (see Table 6). Faculty and staff ranged in age from 24 years old to 68 years old, with an average age of 45 years old (SD: 9.78). The majority of participants were female (66%; n=27) and about 34% (n=14) were male. Over half of the participants (56%; n=23) identified as Indigenous, followed by White (22%; n=9), and the remaining 22% (n=9) identified as Hispanic, multiracial, or African American. More than half of participants (85%; n=35) had a master's degree or higher. On average, participants worked in their current position for around 5 years, with years worked ranging between 2 months and 22 years. Half of the interviewees worked with Indigenous students every day (49%; n=20), while the rest worked with Indigenous students occasionally or sometimes (46%; n= 19). Participants served in different capacities ranging from faculty across the university to advising/academic support staff, administrators, counselors or other health providers, and specific Indigenous student support staff.

Table 6. Staff Participants Descriptive Statistics (N=41)

	Frequency Percent (n) / Mean (SD)	**Range**
Age	45.37 (9.78)	24-68
Gender		
Male	34% (14)	—
Female	58% (27)	—
Race		
Native American/Indigenous	56% (23)	—
White	22% (9)	—
Hispanic	10% (4)	—
Multiracial	7% (3)	—
African American	5% (2)	—
Education		
Bachelor's degree	8% (3)	—
Master's degree	53% (20)	—
Juris Doctor	8% (3)	—
Doctoral degree	32% (12)	—
Years of service	4.92 (4.72)	0-22
Previous student at university		
Yes	68% (28)	—
No	29% (12)	—
Amount of time spent working with Indigenous students		
Everyday	49% (19)	—
Sometimes	33% (13)	—
Occasionally	15% (6)	—
Rarely	3% (1)	—
Never	0% (0)	—

Data Analysis

Interviews for both students and faculty/staff were transcribed verbatim via the online video conferencing software (e.g., Zoom) and then reviewed for accuracy by two research assistants. Upon completion of their review, transcripts were reviewed one last time by the author to ensure correctness, to address problems the research assistants identified, and to provide guidance on terminology and to ensure confidentiality when specific people/places were mentioned. Reviewed transcripts were uploaded into

ATLAS.ti for coding and analysis. Line-by-line open coding was conducted for both the faculty and staff interviews and the student interviews. Once all interviews were coded, codes were grouped into themes including *culturally specific counseling*, *safe space*, *community*, and *indigenous representation*.

Results

Research Question 1a: What Services Are Currently Working?

Opportunities to Engage in Culture

Faculty, staff, and students (70%; n=40) discussed in-depth the importance of having culturally specific services on campus that provided students the opportunity to practice their culture and be surrounded by it. Services and programming that allowed Indigenous students to engage in their culture were perceived as being successful in the eyes of faculty and staff, in addition to being helpful in the eyes of the students. Indigenous students have unique needs that other students do not have, they also come from different backgrounds and world views. Thus, it is imperative that on-campus services adequately address their needs in a culturally appropriate way. Students that used services on campus typically only engaged with the culturally specific services the university offered, including the Indigenous student support center (ISSC). This center allowed students to engage in their cultures on campus and connect with other Indigenous students to facilitate support for one another. To illustrate this point, when asked if going to the Indigenous student support center as a freshman was helpful, Rose replied, "Yeah, it was because I got to meet with other Native American people. It was just really good for me…I met some of my close friends down there. So, I think it was really good."

In addition to being a place where Indigenous students could gather, ISSCs were a place where their culture and Indigenous identities were celebrated. Feeling isolated or homesick was a theme brought up by faculty, staff (22%; n=9) and Indigenous students (31%; n=5). Often students, as well as faculty and staff, discussed how Indigenous students felt isolated and homesick, particularly students from the reservation. Being in Indigenous spaces, such as the ISSC, allowed Indigenous to feel a sense of home without having to navigate the challenges that visiting home presents for many students. The programming that these services created often centered on Indigenous worldviews and methods of healing. Art, mindfulness, meditation, nature, and various other cultural practices are often found to be the most common way Indigenous Peoples heal from victimization and trauma (Finfgeld-Connett, 2015; Stanek, 2023). Leslie who worked in the Indigenous student center shared how the Indigenous students she worked with enjoyed the traditional art workshop she created:

> The art, the cultural practices, we made moccasins as an event, and it was a really big hit, everyone [Indigenous students] loved it. The students that were able to join in and were able to participate enjoyed it. I think that was probably the highlight of our spring semester, so I am encouraging [more of] that…All staff members in [the Indigenous student support center] are always thinking about how to bring that cultural aspect to the community and [the university] as a whole.

Making Space and Creating Community

Another theme that 44% (n=7) of students and 56% (n=23) of faculty and staff discussed was having a community of Indigenous people and a safe place Indigenous students could go to on-campus. Feeling unsafe or like they do not belong at the university was brought up by 25% (n=14) of participants, however the Indigenous communities they found on campus helped alleviate that feeling. Dean emphasized why

Indigenous spaces on-campus are essential to supporting Indigenous students by stating: "they're [Indigenous spaces] so important because they give us just a little piece of feeling safe. I think that's the big part because we don't feel safe a lot of the times here in Western institutions." Joy, a student participant, echoed this sentiment:

> It's hard to say, but I do think that having safe places, you know safe spaces for Indigenous peoples is really important…going onto campus for the first time and being able to go into the [Indigenous library]. I felt very much at home whereas a lot of other places on campus I kind of felt like an outsider.

Community was both needed and valued by students when attending the university and seeking help. Connectedness and family are vital to Indigenous students' success and many staff and faculty discussed how some departments and organizations have fostered this type of environment. Faculty and staff discussed that not only does community help Indigenous students continue with their education, but also maintains their overall wellbeing. Delia, an Indigenous staff participant, shared,

> I think that there is a need for more community-family feel [on campus]. I think that's something that our students find helpful, and I think that's what our centers aim to do around the different campus[es]…they try to bring together that community feel…understanding that in general for this population family and community is very important to a lot of their success, not only as a student but spiritually for their own wellbeing as well.

Creating a "home away from home" was one way these spaces supported Indigenous students. Indigenous students may come from the reservation or far away from the university they attend. Community for Indigenous students typically goes beyond simple friendships and acquaintanceships. These Indigenous spaces on campus created a "family feeling" for students, often referring to faculty and staff who worked there as "auntie," "brother," or "cousin". Family is vital to Indigenous communities but is often one of the sacrifices Indigenous college students must make when they make the

decision to move away from home to attend college. Being far away from home can be a challenge for many Indigenous students because they are unable to be in their home communities. When Indigenous students were unable to find these spaces and the communities of support within them, they often felt homesick and detached from the university.

Research Question 1b: What Services Need to Be Improved?

Increase Indigenous Representation

The need for Indigenous representation was a theme that emerged from both students, faculty, and staff (49%; n=28). They believed Indigenous representation was imperative to supporting Indigenous students. While having Indigenous specific spaces was important, seeing Indigenous people outside of those spaces was also important to students. When Indigenous students see other Indigenous Peoples at the university, whether that be students, faculty, staff, or administration; their sense of belonging was often reinforced. Seeing Indigenous Peoples exposes others to Indigenous worldviews and can shift the way people view the world. Additionally, it can help reduce some potential bias or microaggressions that arise when professors discuss Indigenous Peoples or Indigenous history in the past tense.

Cassandra, an Indigenous staff member, pointed out how increasing Indigenous representation can take some of the burden off Indigenous students to try and explain to non-Indigenous faculty/staff and students the experiences of *all* Indigenous Peoples.

> If you have more Native students or Native faculty and staff in spaces, it changes the space…they're [Indigenous students] not doing it alone. If you bring me to a class to do a guest lecture and there's a Native student in that class, we already have that instant understanding of each other…Then they're like "wow, okay cool, I don't have to talk about these things [historical trauma and oppression] because

> there's this person here talking about it, to educate us." Because that's my job…And so, then it's like I am alleviating that barrier for that student.

The exact proportion of Indigenous faculty and staff is not often published by universities, yet some estimates suggest that half of one percent of faculty at 4-year institutions are Indigenous (Brayboy et al., 2015). Yet seeing someone like them and having a faculty or staff member who understood them was brought up by several students as being necessary for them to receive help when they experience victimization.

Rose, a student participant, shared the importance of having more Indigenous faculty and staff to rely on when she needed help.

> I guess the one thing I've always wanted is someone who I can talk to who was Indigenous. I would feel more understood if someone was Indigenous that I was talking to, because I feel like I would be explaining more of the cultural side to them [non-Indigenous staff/faculty] rather than them just understanding already.

Being able to connect with Indigenous faculty or staff was said to be imperative to Indigenous students' success, according to many Indigenous faculty and staff who were former students, as well as student interviewees. Faculty and staff (54%; n=22) believed it was important for the university to increase the number of Indigenous faculty and staff they employ to better support Indigenous students. Sharing their victimization or trauma experiences with a trusted Indigenous mentor was often a first step to seeking services for Indigenous students.

Culturally Competent Campus Counseling

Seeking mental health support through the use of counseling is a common way individuals seek help when they experience victimization. In fact, several faculty and staff (32%; n =13) believed Indigenous students used campus counseling to help address their victimization needs. Student interviewees (50%; n=8) also discussed their use of

both on- and off-campus counseling. However, faculty, staff, and students pointed out issues with how the university's counseling services were currently being delivered. Specifically, Talia talked about the barriers she faced to address her mental health due to her cultural views regarding seeking help. Although she overcame these barriers, she encountered a counseling session that led her to question the usefulness of on-campus counseling services. She stated,

> I remember sharing with her [counselor] that, being Indigenous, it's not normal to talk about our feelings. And from growing up, it was kind of frowned upon. If I were to ever share about my experiences, I would be seen as weak. So, I shared this with my [non-Indigenous] therapist, and she was like "Oh yeah I know, I know" [pretending to understand me, as an Indigenous client] And I just didn't know what to say. I was just taken back…So, I think she wasn't really culturally competent about what I had to share. So, I think if I was speaking to someone like you [Indigenous interviewer or another Indigenous person, I think it would have been a little bit easier just because maybe…they would understand a bit more or not pretend to know it all.

Cultural competency of counseling staff was found to be a major issue for students when they utilized these services. While most would prefer seeing an Indigenous counselor on campus, many students simply wanted someone who would understand them and take their traditional beliefs and cultural backgrounds into account. Students (63%; n=5) who used counseling on-campus, often felt that their experiences with on-campus counseling were negative due to the counselors disregarding their culture or by making them explain certain aspects of being Indigenous rather than addressing their mental health needs.

While many faculty and staff recognized the need for more Indigenous service providers, some, typically Indigenous staff/faculty, voiced frustrations with the university's lack of effort to hire Indigenous counselors. Martin, an Indigenous staff member, voiced his concerns, "I've been in partnership and conversation with counseling services, and they recognize the need to have an Indigenous counselor, but they still

haven't hired one, and they're missing the mark there." In addition to hiring Indigenous service providers, non-Indigenous providers need training to be culturally competent. Western medicine, including mental health services, is based on the needs of white culture and provides remedies best suited to address the health needs of white patients. This orientation and lack of cultural recognition within the counseling services often hindered Indigenous college students' utilization of these services. According to faculty, staff, and students, Indigenous students with mental health needs were forced to locate culturally competent mental health services within the community, or back home, which has its own barriers.

Research Question 1c: What Services Need to Be Provided to Indigenous Students?

Cultural Practices

Maintaining cultural identity, and ties with their home communities is critical for Indigenous students' persistence and overall success in college (Fong et al., 2021; Guillory & Wolverton, 2008; Wright & Shotton, 2019). Increasing Indigenous students' access to cultural practices on campus was a common recommendation made for the university to better support Indigenous students by faculty, staff, and students (32%; n=18). Many participants believed holding traditional ceremonies or cultural events on campus could help Indigenous students feel less homesick and provide them with the opportunity to take part in their culture without having to travel back home. Providing opportunities for students to engage with cultural practices and events year-round and not only during special times of the year (e.g., Native American Heritage Month) reinforces the importance of these events to Indigenous students, the university, and larger community. A handful of Indigenous faculty and staff noted the importance of holding

these events year-round. While not all Indigenous students adhere to cultural teachings, many at the university do. These students may come from reservations or traditional upbringings where they are surrounded by their culture on a daily basis. Delia, an Indigenous staff member, described how she felt when she left the reservation to attend college and missing her culture,

> I wish there was more representation of the cultural events and traditions…because, as someone who grew up…on the reservation, leaving the reservation, where I was around all of those things [cultural events] all the time.[Then] coming [to college], where I didn't see a lot of people who look[ed] like myself… was kind of jarring for me. If I had been…around the [Indigenous] community more or been able to see and interact with some of those same types of traditions, without having to go all the way home would have been nice.

Many Indigenous students experienced culture shock when they came to the university due to the lack of cultural representation on campus. This lack of representation again reinforced the idea that Indigenous students and people do not belong at institutions of higher education. Some students chose to go back home to participate in their ceremonies, which limited their ability to build community on campus. Going back home to participate in these events posed a risk to Indigenous students' education and persistence according to faculty and staff. Students who felt homesick and returned home to participate in traditional ceremonies often chose to stay home and not continue their degree according to faculty and staff. These events reinforced Indigenous students' sense of belonging and commitment to their academics. Eli, a staff participant, discussed the importance of these events.

> To have those[cultural] events to go to is a reminder [of] who they are, where they come from and empowers them to come back and do another week of school. So again, [culture is a] significant component of who they are, and why they're doing what they're doing.

In addition to these cultural events, many Indigenous students, staff, and faculty emphasized the importance of being able to engage in traditional ways of healing *on* campus. Being allowed to smudge[6], engage in ceremony, and connect back to the land were all mentioned as cultural practices Indigenous students wished they could engage with on campus. Amber, a student participant, discussed how she wished the university recognized Indigenous ways of healing that go beyond typical westernized services by stating: "I wish that [the university] would understand our [Indigenous Peoples] healing is about connecting back with the land not just, going in and seeing someone who's like me." Recognizing Indigenous students' need for cultural healing in addition to their campus service use, is necessary to ensure Indigenous students are able to heal from their victimization experiences on campus.

Discussion

Findings in the Context of Prior Research

Obtaining a college degree creates a sense of pride for many students, and Indigenous students are no different. However, the impact of obtaining a college degree for Indigenous college students goes beyond their own achievements and has implications for their communities. A college degree can build capacity within Indigenous communities and contribute to the strengthening of Tribal sovereignty and self-determination (Brayboy, 2004). Yet, Indigenous Peoples represent the smallest group of students in higher education (Espinosa et al., 2019). The retention of Indigenous students remains low at NNCUs across the U.S. While universities have

[6] The term "smudge" refers to an Indigenous ceremony in which various herbs and plants are burned to "cleanse ourselves and connect us with our spirit and with the creator," (Telus World of Science, n.d.). The smoke that is created through burning of the herbs is wafted over the body to cleanse it.

recently started promoting increased diversity, particularly in terms of curriculum and creating identity-based programming, many universities fail to address the needs of Indigenous students, specifically. The current study is among the first to explore the needs of Indigenous college students, especially those who have experienced victimization or trauma, as well as the faculty and staff who serve this population. Indigenous students often are forced to blend two worlds by balancing their cultural identities with their student identity. This is often difficult, especially considering that Indigenous college students may be subjected to microaggressions and exclusion from individuals at the university in addition to the institution itself. NNCUs are often unprepared to support Indigenous students because the services they provide are focused on westernized thinking and the needs of white students. To improve retention and persistence among Indigenous students, the current study illustrates the importance for universities to adapt their current offerings and expand culturally specific services on campus.

Faculty, staff, and Indigenous students highlighted the importance of having culturally specific services. Furthermore, having Indigenous spaces on campus, such as Indigenous student support centers, fostered a sense of community and belonging for Indigenous students. Attending college far away from home is a challenge for many students, however, the lack of cultural representation exacerbates feelings of homesickness and isolation for Indigenous student. As shown in previous research, the Indigenous student support center on this campus was highlighted by faculty, staff, and Indigenous students. Many Indigenous students, current and former, discussed how these spaces allowed them to connect with other Indigenous people and just be themselves,

without having to justify their existence in the broader campus environment. Holding cultural events, such as mindfulness and ribbon skirt workshops, allowed students to engage with their culture and build community without having to travel several hours back home with the potential of sacrificing their academic performance. Given the exclusionary historical practices of westernized institutions of higher education against Indigenous people, Indigenous spaces on campus are key for promoting belonging and feelings of safety among Indigenous students.

While many faculty, staff, and Indigenous students recognized the services at the university that were supportive and helpful for students, they also identified a number of ways they could be improved upon. First and foremost, increasing Indigenous representation across the university among the student body, and especially among the faculty and staff, was brought up by the majority of participants. This need is unsurprising given that it is estimated that Indigenous faculty represent only 0.5% of all faculty at 4-year institutions (Brayboy et al., 2015; NCES, 2012). Representation is imperative to Indigenous students' persistence and degree completion (Brayboy, Solyom, & Castagno, 2015; Shotton et al., 2013; Tippeconnic-Fox, 2005). Having Indigenous faculty and staff can allow Indigenous students to build connection with them and feel less isolated at their institution (Tippeconnic-Fox, 2005). Consistent with prior literature on the topic, Indigenous students in this study wanted Indigenous mentors, professors, counselors, and others at the university that they could go to and be understood. Many faculty and staff discussed how Indigenous representation can provide Indigenous students, not only with role models, but with new ideas regarding the direction of their academic studies and what they can do post-graduation.

In addition to increasing Indigenous representation throughout campus, faculty, staff, and students emphasized the need for culturally competent on-campus counseling. Prior literature shows that traditional westernized counseling methods are often based on the needs of white individuals (Bagwell-Gray et al., 2021; Crips & McGlade, 2008; Griffiths & Yerbury, 1991; Hodge et al., 2009; Robertson, 1999). This orientation often leads to underutilization of counseling services by minority populations, namely Indigenous Peoples (Cripps & McGlade, 2008; Hodge et al., 2009; Robertson et al., 2015). The lack of integrations with traditional Indigenous healing methods, in addition to the limited cultural understanding of the staff, made Indigenous students hesitant to engage with on campus counseling services in this study. Faculty and staff stressed the importance of having Indigenous counselors on campus. Additionally, they discussed the need for having non-Indigenous providers who are culturally-competent and do not require Indigenous students to explain the ins and outs of living on a reservation or what it means to be Indigenous prior to addressing their mental health needs. Being able to integrate traditional healing methods utilized by Indigenous Peoples is vital to addressing Indigenous students' mental health concerns. However, given the diversity among Indigenous Peoples, on-campus counseling services must be able to adapt to the needs of each Indigenous student's cultural needs.

Lastly, the need for cultural events and the ability to engage in cultural practices on-campus, was something that faculty, staff, and Indigenous students believed the university needed to provide. While Indigenous student support centers host numerous cultural programs, participants felt it was not enough. Students, faculty, and staff wanted to see more cultural representation across the university and not just during special events

(e.g., Indigenous culture week). The ability to engage in culture and maintain a cultural identity while attending college increases Indigenous students' persistence and graduation rates (Fong et al., 2021; Guillory, 2009; Guillory & Wolverton, 2008; Waterman, 2012). When coming to college from a reservation or small town, many Indigenous student may experience culture shock, as pointed out by faculty, staff, and students. However, holding these ceremonies or allowing Indigenous students to practice their traditional healing methods on campus can help reduce this culture shock.

Recommendations for Universities

The number of Indigenous college students enrolled has risen significantly over the past several decades, however, recently these numbers have started to decline, signaling that there may be a problem in the way universities are supporting Indigenous students (NCES, 2022). Indeed, the students in the current study also articulated ways that the university could improve their support, and this was also echoed by faculty and staff. It is important to understand how to best serve Indigenous students *and* staff and faculty to ensure enrollment and graduation rates begin to rise again among this population.

Based on these findings, the current study provides recommendations for understanding the needs of Indigenous college students and how universities can better serve them. First, the current study highlights the importance of recognizing and validating Indigenous students and their cultures. Additionally, having specific spaces on campus that were Indigenous focused and led were found to be successful at supporting Indigenous students. Therefore, universities who wish to better support Indigenous students need to provide these spaces *and* provide adequate funding and staffing to run

these spaces. Culturally competent non-Indigenous counselors, in addition to Indigenous counselors are needed to support the unique needs of Indigenous students while simultaneously incorporating their cultural beliefs into their treatment. Increasing Indigenous representation and the cultural competence of services already offered on campus will help create a sense of belonging for Indigenous students on campus. When Indigenous students feel like they belong on campus, they are more likely to be successful in their classes, persist through their degree plan, and ultimately graduate (Janke et al., 2023; Oxendine & Taub, 2021; Windchief & Joseph, 2015).

Overall, there are several ways in which NNCUs can create more inclusive environments and services to better support Indigenous students who attend their universities. The following recommendations are based on the findings from the current study and aim to provide universities with data-driven suggestions to improve their current offerings for Indigenous students:

1. Foster a university environment that recognizes and celebrates the variety of Indigenous cultures on-campus, increasing a sense of belonging for Indigenous students.
2. Provide culturally- appropriate services for Indigenous students on campus in partnership and collaboration with Indigenous community organizations.
3. Create more environments on-campus where Indigenous students can gather and build community with one another.
4. Implement mandatory training for faculty and staff addressing violence against students, with special attention to culturally inclusive strategies to support Indigenous students and connect them to culturally specific services.

5. Facilitate the hiring of more Indigenous faculty and staff, especially in the areas of counseling and health services.
6. Allow Indigenous students opportunities to engage in their cultural practices on-campus including, smudging, drumming, sweat, and other traditional ceremonies.

Altogether, universities need to provide space for Indigenous students on their campuses to foster growth and learning. Celebrating Indigenous Peoples and their culture through events, representation, curriculum, and specialized programming can help create an environment where Indigenous students feel safe.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

While the current study provides valuable insight regarding how to better serve Indigenous college students, there are a few limitations to consider. First, in terms of student participants, the sample was relatively low compared to the size of the Indigenous student population at the university. However, considering that Indigenous students comprise one of the smallest group represented in higher education, these findings provide insight into a group that has commonly been excluded from higher education research. Additionally, the university in which the study took place has one of the largest Indigenous student populations in the U.S. Given this, the university had several programs already in place to support Indigenous students, albeit lacking. Universities with smaller populations of Indigenous students or limited programming for them may require additional recommendations that suit the needs of their specific Indigenous students. Finally, the current study focused on the needs of Indigenous students only at the university, it would be important for future research to consider the needs of faculty and staff as well. By focusing on the needs of faculty and staff who work with

Indigenous students, we can see what they themselves need to better support Indigenous students.

Indigenous representation was an important aspect of Indigenous students' needs in this study; however, future research should examine the benefits of Indigenous representation for Indigenous students and universities broadly. Faculty, staff, and students mentioned how Indigenous students may experience microaggressions at the university due to lack of Indigenous representation, it is imperative that future research understand these experiences and learn how best to reduce these experiences for Indigenous students. This will help contribute to a more inclusive campus environment that is needed by Indigenous students. While there are a number of different experiences and needs that Indigenous students have while in college, the current study provides an overview of how universities can begin to support their Indigenous students. However, it must be noted that although there are common experiences and needs of Indigenous college students, "there is not one singular Native [Indigenous] experience in higher education," (Shotton et al., 2013, p.3). While this study provides several important recommendations and implications for universities and higher education policy, institutions must ensure that this study is used as a guide. Universities need to take stock of the needs of their own individual Indigenous students and act accordingly.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

"Many postsecondary leaders lack general knowledge of Native people's rich, complex history and modern- day sociocultural needs and desires. Without this knowledge, postsecondary leaders cannot call for changes to initiatives, programs, services, attitudes, or offerings that would improve student outcomes. Education scholars hypothesize the resulting paradox of welcoming diversity but being ill informed and underprepared to serve students, made evident by low matriculation, retention, and graduation rates, may exacerbate existing sentiment among Indigenous communities that higher education is irrelevant, hostile, and unwelcoming to Native peoples" (Brayboy, Solyom, & Castagno, 2015, pg.155).

Indigenous Peoples have been subjected to violence, assimilation, and erasure through the process of colonization for centuries, yet they continue to persevere and thrive. Despite this resistance to colonization, Indigenous Peoples continue to experience extremely high levels of victimization, including sexual assault, physical assault, and homicide (Bachman et al., 2008; Rosay, 2016). Specifically, more than four in five Indigenous men and women, which is roughly three million people, have experienced violence during their lifetime (Bachman et al., 2008; Rosay, 2016). Alongside the high prevalence of victimization for Indigenous Peoples is the high victimization prevalence among college students (see Fisher et al., 2000, 2003, 2010). This study aimed to examine the victimization experiences of Indigenous college students – a population that is at high risk of victimization yet is understudied and underserved. Given that Indigenous college students represent only 1% of the college student population, the experiences of these students often get buried in college victimization studies (Espinosa et al., 2019; Fish et al., 2017; Hussar et al., 2020; Willmott et al., 2016). These studies either do not include Indigenous college students or group them into one large "other" category with students from other racial/ethnic groups that are distinctly different than

Indigenous students (Shotton et al., 2013; Willmott et al., 2016). The current study is one of the first to focus on (1) Indigenous college students experiences with victimization, (2) their help-seeking behaviors and service utilization, and (3) how universities can better support them. Additionally, this study is the first to take a holistic approach to understanding the needs of Indigenous college students by amplifying the voices and perspectives of Indigenous students *and* faculty and staff who work with them.

Over the past few decades, colleges and universities have implemented a wide variety of diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts to create a safer college campus (Battles, 2022; U.S. Department of Education, 2016). Some Institutions of higher education have attempted to remedy their long history of oppressing and excluding Indigenous Peoples through the creation of land acknowledgements (Bryant, 2021). Yet, universities inclusive efforts rarely go beyond these symbolic demonstrations. This is evident by the fact that Indigenous students comprise only 1% of both undergraduate and graduate students and Indigenous faculty and staff only represent 0.5% of employees at 4-year institutions (Brayboy, Solyom, & Castagno, 2015). Additionally, recent trends show that enrollment for Indigenous students has been decreasing since 2016 (NCES, 2022). It is clear that colleges and universities are not adequately supporting Indigenous college students. Therefore, it is necessary to understand the needs of Indigenous college students and how NNCUs can improve their experiences. This dissertation provided foundational knowledge regarding how Indigenous students experience victimization, how they engage with campus services to address their victimization, and what universities need to do to better support them. The findings of this dissertation fill a critical gap in our knowledge and provide universities with concrete recommendations

they can implement to create a more inclusive campus environment for Indigenous college students specifically.

Key Takeaways

First, Indigenous college students in this sample experience victimization, both personally and within their households, at extremely high rates (82% and 66%, respectively). These findings are consistent with prior literature among Indigenous people broadly and highlights the importance of supporting Indigenous college students who experience victimization. However, research focusing on the victimization of college students rarely includes perspectives and experiences from Indigenous college students. Therefore, university programming and services to support college students who have experienced victimization are commonly built around addressing the needs of white students. Considering the high levels of victimization that the Indigenous college students experienced in the current study, it is vital that research and universities understand the service needs and help-seeking behaviors of this population. Study one found that the victimization disclosure experiences of Indigenous college students impacted their decision to seek help and utilize formal services, on- and off-campus. Specifically, students who had negative experiences disclosing their abuse or trauma were hesitant to reach out for help in the future. These experiences greatly impacted Indigenous students' ability to use services later on, in fact some students had yet to use formal services or tell anyone else about their victimization.

Indigenous students sought help in many different ways, both formally and informally. Help-seeking behaviors among Indigenous college students is still relatively unknown due to the lack of research on this topic, study one addressed this gap. Many

Indigenous students utilized formal services in the form of counseling, either on- or off-campus. Most students who utilized counseling had mixed feelings about how useful the service was. While counseling may have been helpful initially, the inconsistency and short-term nature of on-campus counseling made many Indigenous students reluctant to return. Consistent with previous research, Indigenous students in this study were frustrated with the on-campus service provider's ability to connect with them culturally. The lack of cultural competency was a major reason Indigenous students either did not engage or stopped using counseling services on-campus. Indigenous people often cite the lack of cultural understanding of service providers as a barrier to help-seeking (Ellison-Loschmann & Pearce, 2006; Finfgeld-Connett, 2015; Morrison et al., 2006). As shown in study one, counseling services, and other on-campus services, need to be culturally competent in order to ensure Indigenous victims are receiving the help they need in a way that recognizes their cultural needs. The importance of recognizing culture was demonstrated by Indigenous students' use of culturally specific services on- and off-campus. Incorporating culture into university services may provide Indigenous students with a safe place to address their victimization and other needs. Indigenous students also utilized a number of informal methods to address their victimization including maintaining a healthy lifestyle, utilizing informal support systems, and practicing traditional Indigenous healing methods.

Second, faculty and staff who work with Indigenous students have varying degrees of knowledge regarding Indigenous students' victimization experiences and service utilization, which can impact the way they support these students. Study one identified that Indigenous college students experience high levels of victimization and

primarily rely on more informal help-seeking methods. Thus, it necessary that faculty and staff have awareness of this and know how to support Indigenous students. Study two is the first known study to explore faculty and staff's perceptions of Indigenous college students' victimization experiences, service utilization, and how they support students with these experiences. Despite the high proportion of Indigenous students who have experienced victimization, only 54% (n=22) of faculty and staff had awareness of Indigenous students' victimization. This finding underscores the importance of educating faculty and staff on the victimization experiences of Indigenous students and how they can support them. However, the majority of faculty and staff (68%; n=28) believed that Indigenous students did not engage with on-campus services or only engaged with certain services. This it was clear that faculty and staff recognized that there was something preventing Indigenous students from utilizing university services. Faculty and staff commonly attributed Indigenous students' lack of service utilization to the lack of Indigenous representation on-campus, limited accessibility of services, and a general lack of trust for university services and non-Indigenous providers. Similar to the findings for students, faculty and staff perceived that Indigenous college students engaged primarily with the culturally specific services on-campus or counseling services. Faculty and staff often supported Indigenous students with these experiences by validating and listening to them or connecting them with services that could further address their needs.

Study two provided information regarding faculty and staff's perception of Indigenous college students' experiences with victimization and service utilization. This study is the first known study to explore this in the college context. These findings provide a foundation to understanding how to improve services for Indigenous college

students in addition to how universities can better equip faculty and staff to support them. It is necessary to address the needs of Indigenous college students in order to increase their enrollment, persistence, and graduation at NNCUs. Currently, Indigenous students only represent around 1% of the college student population (Espinosa et al., 2019; Hussar et al., 2020). Using the findings from study two can allow NNCUs to create programming that centers on understanding Indigenous students and how to incorporate culture into the services they currently offer. Additionally, these findings highlight how important it is that faculty and staff understand how to support Indigenous students who have experienced victimization and connect them with services. This support may be what Indigenous students need to persist and continue their academic journeys.

Third, study three expanded our understanding of how to better serve Indigenous college students who have experienced victimization from the perspectives of *both* Indigenous college students and the faculty and staff who work with them. This study is the first known study to take this holistic approach. Consistent with the prior two studies, culture was extremely important for supporting Indigenous students. Services that allowed Indigenous students to engage in culture and have their cultural identities validated were perceived as being more effective by faculty, staff, and Indigenous students. In addition to this, having space to build community among other Indigenous students reinforced a sense of belonging for Indigenous students. Being in these spaces allowed Indigenous students to receive help from fellow Indigenous students and staff for their victimization and other service needs. While there were services that were helpful for Indigenous students, participants identified a number of aspects that needed to be improved. Most notably was the need for more Indigenous representation across the

university. Representation is vital for minority students, especially Indigenous students, as it builds connection, creates a sense of belonging, and validates their academic pursuits (Brayboy, Solyom, & Castagno, 2015; Tippeconnic-Fox, 2005; Windchief & Joseph, 2015). Although Indigenous representation was one of the greatest needs for Indigenous students, participants recognized that this would take time to achieve. To address this issue more immediately, faculty, staff, and Indigenous students believed that the current on-campus services, namely counseling services, needed to improve their cultural competency. Indigenous students felt as though those working in the counseling center did not understand their background nor did they recognize their traditional Indigenous healing methods. Lastly, study three highlighted Indigenous students' need for cultural events including, ceremonies, pow wows, smudging, and drumming *on-campus*. Faculty, staff, and Indigenous students discussed how the university needed to provide more cultural events throughout the school year. These displays of culture would help Indigenous students feel less homesick and also be able to partake in cultural healing without going all the way home.

Study three provides important recommendations for how NNCUs can improve the way they support Indigenous students, especially those who have experienced victimization, and what services they still need to provide on-campus. Again, this is the first known study to provide data-driven recommendations on how to better serve Indigenous students from the perspectives of Indigenous students *and* faculty and staff who work with these students. The population of Indigenous college students has consistently grown since the 1970's; however, in recent years, these numbers have started to decline (NCES, 2022). This signals the need for research examining how to better

serve Indigenous students, so they persist and graduate. Additionally, by addressing the needs of current Indigenous students, universities become well-equipped to support future Indigenous students. Although this study provides important recommendations, it is important that other universities take stock of the needs of their *own* Indigenous students, as their needs may be different. The type of university, where it is located, and the number of Indigenous students enrolled could all potentially influence the needs of Indigenous students. Therefore, this study provides universities with a framework to learn how they can better support their Indigenous students.

Altogether, the findings in this dissertation contribute to a small but growing body of literature focused on Indigenous college students. This dissertation also provides insight on an understudied topic regarding the university service needs of Indigenous college students. Past research has established that maintaining cultural identity, having a sense of belonging, and having Indigenous representation all contribute to a more welcoming learning environment for Indigenous college students (Guillory & Wolverton, 2008; Lopez, 2018; Tachine et al., 2018; Waterman, 2012; Wright & Shotton, 2019). However, this is the first known study to consider how victimization experiences may also impact Indigenous college students' learning. This dissertation provides insight into how Indigenous college students experience victimization and how disclosing their victimization impacts their help-seeking behaviors. According to Indigenous students, very few utilize on-campus services unless absolutely necessary. Victimization can impact not only an individual's mental and physical health, but their academic performance as well (BlackDeer et al., 2023; Mengo & Black, 2016; Molstad et al., 2023). Yet in this dissertation, only a little more than half of faculty and staff (54%;

n=22) were aware of Indigenous college students' victimization. According to faculty, staff, and Indigenous students, the lack of cultural competency and Indigenous representation made it difficult for students to utilize on-campus services. Victimization experiences can cause some Indigenous students to delay their studies and take a break, or dropout altogether. Therefore, it is necessary for their academic success to provide them with services that actually address their needs. The third and final part of this dissertation addressed these needs by asking faculty and staff about ways to effectively support Indigenous college students, particularly those who have experienced victimization.

Limitations

This dissertation is among the first to focus directly on the victimization and service needs of Indigenous college students; however, as with all studies, there are limitations worth noting. First, the findings from this dissertation were drawn from one university, so the findings may not be generalizable to all Indigenous students. It is important to note that the university of focus in the current study has one of the largest Indigenous college student populations and is located in a state with a large Indigenous population as well. Thus, these findings can act as a guide for universities, but should be adapted to the needs of Indigenous students at each university. In terms of student participation, the sample size is relatively low. Yet, given the dearth of research in this area, it is imperative that research begin to focus specifically on Indigenous students to learn more about their unique experiences. Lastly, the faculty and staff in this dissertation were both Indigenous and non-Indigenous. It should be noted that, it may be difficult for non-Indigenous faculty and staff to fully grasp the needs of Indigenous

college students. Yet this limitation is addressed with the inclusion of Indigenous college students' perspectives in study three. Additionally, considering Indigenous faculty and staff make up around 0.5% of all 4-year college employees, the perspectives of non-Indigenous faculty and staff are important (Brayboy, Solyom, & Castagno, 2015). Indigenous students are likely to interact with non-Indigenous faculty and staff, so these individuals must be well-equipped to understand and address the needs of Indigenous college students.

Implications for Policy and Practice

The findings of this dissertation lend themselves well to recommendations for policy and practice in higher education specifically, in addition to service provision more broadly. While the current dissertation provides many different avenues for policy and programming, this discussion focuses on four main policy recommendations: (1) adapt current on-campus programming to provide culturally competent services, (2) increase Indigenous representation across the university, (3) allow Indigenous students to engage in their own cultural practices and traditional ways of healing on-campus, and (4) foster a university environment that recognizes and celebrates the wide variety of Indigenous cultures.

Adapting current programming and services on-campus, such as counseling services, will allow Indigenous students to better address their needs on-campus with a provider who understands them. Both Indigenous students and faculty and staff emphasized the importance of culturally competent services. Having these services on campus may help reduce accessibility barriers that Indigenous college students face when seeking help (e.g., lack of transportation). Culturally competent service providers are

able to take Indigenous college students' cultural backgrounds and traditional ways of healing into account and integrate them into their treatment plans.

Indigenous representation was a salient theme across all three studies discussed in this dissertation. Indigenous representation provides Indigenous college students with someone who understands what they have been through and their struggles. In addition to providing support, Indigenous faculty and staff have been shown to improve Indigenous students' persistence and learning (Brayboy et al., 2012; Brayboy, Solyom, & Castagno, 2015; Tippeconnic-Fox, 2005; Windchief & Joseph, 2015). Having this representation can help alleviate feelings of homesickness and isolation that Indigenous students encounter when they attend college far from home. These feelings could exacerbate Indigenous college students' trauma symptoms, making it more difficult for them to remain in college. Thus, having Indigenous professors, advisors, mentors or staff members is likely to act as a protective factor for Indigenous college students, helping them persist. Seeing Indigenous Peoples in various roles at the university can also provide Indigenous students with new career pathways that they may not have thought they were capable of.

To support Indigenous college students, universities need to provide opportunities for Indigenous students to engage with their culture on campus through traditional practices such as smudging, pow wows, dances, and healing rituals. Many current and former Indigenous students in this dissertation discussed the importance of culture in their lives, and the culture shock they experienced when they came to college. Some student participants discussed going home to participate in their traditional ceremonies, while others talked about how they felt disconnected from their culture due to being

unable to go home or participate in their traditional practices. Being able to connect to their culture while on-campus would allow Indigenous students to maintain their cultural identities and also practice traditional healing methods. Showcasing cultural events throughout the school year and university also reinforces a sense of belonging for Indigenous students. This commitment symbolizes that the university values Indigenous cultures and wants Indigenous students at their university.

Space and place were important for Indigenous students to build community, find support, and feel safe. Places specifically for Indigenous students allowed them to be themselves and connect with others like them. Indigenous students stated that they liked these places because they did not have to worry about explaining themselves or being afraid someone may not understand. Additionally, these spaces on campus acted as a safe space where Indigenous students were somewhat protected from microaggressions and potential violent behavior. Creating more Indigenous spaces or implementing Indigenous student support centers can help support Indigenous students and increase feelings of safety on-campus. However, it is important to note that while having these specific "Indigenous" spaces within the university is beneficial to supporting Indigenous students, universities should go beyond simple implementation of Indigenous student support centers or Indigenous student affairs departments. These spaces provide Indigenous students an insulated place to be supported and receive help; however, when they exit these spaces and enter into other parts of the university, they may still be subjected to microaggressions, erasure, or potential violence. Therefore, it is vital to the safety and wellbeing of Indigenous students to promote an inclusive *university-wide* environment where Indigenous culture is recognized and celebrated.

Directions for Future Research

The current study supports a new line of inquiry focusing on Indigenous college students' victimization experiences, their help-seeking behaviors, service needs, and the experiences of faculty and staff who work with them. First and foremost, future research will advance the literature by exploring the victimization experiences of Indigenous college students more in-depth, paying special attention to the types of victimization they experience. Additionally, future research would benefit from exploring what factors foster resilience in response to these victimization and trauma experiences. Learning how Indigenous students display resilience in the face of trauma could lend insights into their help-seeking or service utilization. Almost all participants discussed the importance of Indigenous representation for supporting Indigenous students. Therefore, it would be important to understand the benefits of Indigenous representation for Indigenous college students and the university broadly. This dissertation focused primarily on Indigenous college students' needs and experiences from the perspectives of faculty, staff, and Indigenous students. Additionally, focusing on the challenges and needs of faculty and staff who work with Indigenous college students would further our understanding of how to improve the university environment. Understanding the experiences of faculty and staff can provide universities with more information on how to support these faculty and staff, which in turn will help support Indigenous college students.

This dissertation provides necessary insight for colleges and universities to better support Indigenous students, especially those who have experienced victimization. Indigenous Peoples have often been excluded from higher education or had their experiences erased from the narrative (Brayboy, 2005; Brayboy, Solyom, & Castagno,

2015; Lomawaima, 1999; Tippeconnic-Fox, 2005). However, Indigenous Peoples and communities must be included if universities wish to truly adhere to the principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion. Universities who utilize this knowledge when implementing the recommendations put forth in this dissertation will signal to Indigenous communities that higher education is relevant, safe, and welcoming to Indigenous Peoples.

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APPENDIX A

STUDENT SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

STUDENT SURVEY QUESTIONS

PLEASE DO NOT WRITE YOUR NAME ON THIS
PLEASE REFRAIN FROM USING NAMES (YOURS OR OTHERS) WHEN ANSWERING THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS.

1.	How old are you?	_____ years old
2.	Are you a student at Arizona State University?	☐ - Yes ☐ - No
3.	Are you Native American, American Indian, Alaskan Native or identify as Indigenous?	*Please check*: Yes ☐ or No ☐
4.	Do you identify as any other race or ethnicity other than Native American?	*Please check*: Yes ☐ / No ☐ if yes, please identify your ethnicity: _____
5.	What Tribe(s) do you belong to or are affiliated with?	_____
6.	What is your marital status?	*Please check all that apply:* ☐ - Single ☐ - Long-Term Relationship ☐ - Married ☐ - Widowed ☐ - Divorced
7.	Could you please describe your gender identity?	*Select All That Apply:* ☐ - Male ☐ - Female ☐ - Transgender ☐ - Non-Binary/Non-Conforming ☐ - Two-Spirit ☐ - Other _____ ☐ - Prefer Not to Respond
8.	What is/are your university major(s)?	_____
9.	What is your class standing?	*Please check:* ☐ - Freshman ☐ - Sophomore ☐ - Junior ☐ - Senior ☐ - Graduate
10.	What year did you first start college (including community college and/or Tribal college)?	_____
11.	Did you take any breaks from college?	*Please check:* Yes ☐ / No ☐ If yes, in a short phrase, please explain why. _____ _____

12.	Are you a first-generation college student, meaning the first person in your immediate family to go to college?	*Please check:* Yes ☐ / No ☐
13.	Did you grow up on a Reservation?	*Please check:* Yes ☐ / No ☐ If yes, please indicate how much time you've spent on the reservation: ☐ - More than half my life ☐ - Half my life ☐ - Less than half my life ☐ - Summers only ☐ - Never
14.	Did you grow up in a rural area, urban area, or combination of both?	*Please check **one** of the following:* ☐ - Urban ☐ - Rural ☐ - Combination of both ☐ - Not Applicable
15.	Do you plan on moving to a Reservation to work once you graduate?	*Please check:* Yes ☐ / No ☐
16.	Where do you live now?	*Please check **one** of the following:* ☐ - On-campus, alone ☐ - On-campus, with roommate(s) ☐ - Off-campus, alone ☐ - Off-campus, with parents or family ☐ - Off-campus, with roommate(s)
17.	Are you a parent?	*Please check:* Yes ☐ / No ☐
18.	Please rate how much you value your connection to the Indigenous community?	*Please check **one** of the following:* ☐ - None ☐ - A little ☐ - Neutral ☐ - A lot ☐ - Very Much

19.	Have you ever experienced any of the following abuse? *We have listed a few examples as a reference, but there are many other examples of each type.*		
Controlling Behaviors may include any of the following: *Controlling aspects of your life such as: your money, finances, friends, what you do, where you go, who you contact, your children, pets/livestock, online activity, vehicle, hygiene, spiritual/religious practices, or unwanted communication*			
Physical Violence may include any of the following: *Kicking, hitting, punching, choking, strangulation, branding/marking your body, pinch, biting, stabbing*			
Sexual Violence may include any of the following: *Rape, molestation, grooming, sodomy, genital touching, fondling, incest*			
Emotional or psychological abuse may include any of the following: *Putting you down, calling you names, minimizing your experiences/feelings, making threats or ultimatums, playing mind games*			
	Type of Abuse	It happened to me	It happened to someone else in my household or family
	Have you ever experienced controlling behaviors by another person who controlled certain aspects of your life?	Yes ☐ / No ☐	Yes ☐ / No ☐
	Have you ever experienced physical violence by someone else?	Yes ☐ / No ☐	Yes ☐ / No ☐
	Have you ever experienced sexual violence or abuse?	Yes ☐ / No ☐	Yes ☐ / No ☐
	Have you ever experienced emotional or psychological abuse by someone else?	Yes ☐ / No ☐	Yes ☐ / No ☐

You may have experiences with the following services outside of your victimization experiences, but we would like you to focus on your use of these services in response to the abuses you indicated in this survey.		
20.	Did you use services at ASU in response to your victimization?	*Please check:* Yes ☐ / No ☐
21.	Did you use mental health counseling at ASU?	*Please check:* Yes ☐ / No ☐ If yes, how satisfied were you with this service? *Please check* **<u>one</u>** *of the following:* ☐ - Extremely Satisfied ☐ - Somewhat Satisfied ☐ - Neither Satisfied ☐ - Somewhat Dissatisfied ☐ - Extremely Dissatisfied

		If yes, would you use this service again? *Please check:* Yes ☐ / No ☐
22.	Did you use support groups at ASU?	*Please check:* Yes ☐ / No ☐ If yes, how satisfied were you with this service? *Please check* **<u>one</u>** *of the following:* ☐ - Extremely Satisfied ☐ - Somewhat Satisfied ☐ - Neither Satisfied ☐ - Somewhat Dissatisfied ☐ - Extremely Dissatisfied If yes, would you use this service again? *Please check:* Yes ☐ / No ☐
23.	Did you use ASU medical services?	*Please check:* Yes ☐ / No ☐ If yes, how satisfied were you with this service? *Please check* **<u>one</u>** *of the following:* ☐ - Extremely Satisfied ☐ - Somewhat Satisfied ☐ - Neither Satisfied ☐ - Somewhat Dissatisfied ☐ - Extremely Dissatisfied If yes, would you use this service again? *Please check:* Yes ☐ / No ☐

24.	Did you use legal services at ASU?	*Please check:* Yes ☐ / No ☐ If yes, how satisfied were you with this service? *Please check* <u>one</u> *of the following:* ☐ - Extremely Satisfied ☐ - Somewhat Satisfied ☐ - Neither Satisfied ☐ - Somewhat Dissatisfied ☐ - Extremely Dissatisfied If yes, would you use this service again? *Please check:* Yes ☐ / No ☐
25.	Have you used culturally specific (I.e., ceremony, smudge, traditional	*Please check:* Yes ☐ / No ☐ If yes, how satisfied were you with this service?

	celebration, sweat lodge, etc.) services at ASU?	*Please check* **<u>one</u>** *of the following:* ☐ - Extremely Satisfied ☐ - Somewhat Satisfied ☐ - Neither Satisfied ☐ - Somewhat Dissatisfied ☐ - Extremely Dissatisfied If yes, would you use this service again? *Please check:* Yes ☐ / No ☐
26.	Did you use any services off-campus?	*Please check:* Yes ☐ / No ☐ If yes, please briefly explain what services you used and where? _____ _____ _____ _____ _____
27.	Did anything prevent you from seeking help?	*Please check:* Yes ☐ / No ☐ If yes, please explain if anything prevented you from seeking services or help: _____ _____ _____ _____
28.	Beyond using services, what are some things you have done to maintain wellness in your life?	_____ _____ _____ _____
29.	When experiencing challenges, which of the following skills do you utilize?	☐Insight – I have strong awareness or understanding of someone or something ☐Humor – I use comedy to express myself ☐Initiative – I seek opportunities and act on my own ☐Creativity – I use imagination to produce results/outcomes ☐Appraisal – I take the time to evaluate and assess difficult situations ☐Spirituality – I recognize there are somethings greater than me to avoid being overwhelmed ☐Flexibility – I feel comfortable making compromises and changes

		☐Boundary Setting – I do not hold myself personally responsible with aspects of others' lives ☐Social Support – I have people in my life that are supportive of my decisions ☐Physical Activity – I use physical activity as an outlet

30.	Please list 5 words that come to mind when you think of what it means to be "Resilient"	1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____ 5. _____
31.	Do you consider yourself to be resilient?	*Please check:* Yes ☐ / No ☐ Would you care to explain your answer? _____ _____ _____
32.	Are you aware of the Missing and Murder of Indigenous Peoples (MMIP)? *This includes the Missing and Murder of Indigenous Women, Girls, Relatives, Two-Spirit, and Persons.*	*Please check:* Yes ☐ / No ☐
33.	Please select the type of experiences you have with MMIP.	*Check **all** that apply:* ☐ - It happened to me ☐ - It happened to a friend of mine ☐ - It happened to someone in my family or extended family ☐ - It happened to someone in my community ☐ - It happened to someone I know on social media ☐ - I have professional experience ☐ - I have academic/research experience ☐ - I participate in building awareness and/or activism work ☐ - Other _____ ☐ - None Apply to Me
36.	Have you personally known (or know of) more than one Indigenous person who has	*How many people have you known?* _____

	gone missing or been murdered?	
37.	How did you first become aware of MMIP?	*Please explain*: _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____
38.	Please list 5 words that come to mind when you think about the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Peoples (MMIP).	1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____ 5. _____

39.	In your opinion, what do you think is the biggest barrier to ending MMIP?	Please explain: _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____
40.	What suggestions would you give to stop MMIP?	Please explain: _____ _____ _____ _____ _____
41.	Is there anything more you would like to share with the research team?	Please explain: _____ _____ _____ _____ _____

Thank you for your time in completing this survey.
In closing, we have two final questions for you.

1. Do you wish to be entered into a drawing for a chance to win a $75 Target gift card? If so, please enter your ASU email address. Your ASU email address will not be linked to your answers in any way.

ASU Email: _____

2. Our ASU team is conducting one-on-one interviews with ASU Indigenous students who have personal experience with MMIP and who wish to discuss this further. We invite you to consider participating in an interview. This interview will be conducted by a trained Indigenous professional.

   The interview will be available in person or via zoom, depending on your preference, and will focus on your personal experiences with violence and trauma including MMIP. This interview will last between 1 and 3 hours depending on your pace. Interview participants will be provided with a $75 Target gift card for their time.

   Trigger Warning: This interview and the topics discussed may be emotionally distressing and triggering. Participants may stop at any time. Information regarding how to get help, resources, and services will be available throughout this study. Counseling and support services will be on site for those who may need additional support.

   If you would be interested in participating an interview, please enter your **ASU email** below.
   By providing your email address here, you are agreeing to be contacted by a member of the research team and to have your survey answers linked to your interview responses.

   ASU Email: _____

APPENDIX B

STUDENT INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Interview Questions	Probes (Can ask clarifying questions if needed)
Please refrain from using names (yours or others) or other identifiers when answering the following questions.	
1. Okay, let's start with you telling me a little about yourself and your family.	– Where's home?
2. You're here at ASU. What inspired you to take this journey to be in college?	– Why did you decide to go to college?
3. Can you tell me about some challenges or barriers you had to overcome to get here?	– How did you work through these challenges?
Thank you for sharing. Before we get to questions about MMIP, I'd like to ask you about your own victimization. In the survey that you participated in, you mentioned that you had some experiences with victimization. I'd like to ask you now about any services you may have used. Sound okay? ***<u>Refer to Participant Survey:</u>*** Questions 4 = Received Campus Services of any type Question 5 = Did not receive campus services, but received services off campus Question 6 = Did not use services of any kind	
4. I see you've received some campus services (See Survey Question #20). Now I'd like to ask you only about the <u>campus services</u> that you received. So, I'm not asking you about any services off-campus, only those you used <u>on-campus</u>. Sound good? **[See Survey Questions 21 – 25 for participant service usage]** Can you tell me about your experiences with: o Campus Mental health counseling? o Campus Support Groups? o Campus Medical Services? o Campus Legal Services? o Campus Culturally Specific Service?	
4a. What was <u>helpful</u> for you?	– What about that was helpful to you?
4b. What was <u>not helpful</u> for you?	– What challenges or barriers did you face?

4c. How satisfied were you? 4d. Would you use this service again? Can you tell me more about that? 4e. Is there anything else you would like to tell me about the campus services you used?	– How did you work through these challenges? – Can you tell me more about that? – Can you tell me why you would (or would not) use it again?
[Note: Only ask the following question if participant DID NOT seek university services]	
5. I see you did not receive any campus services but received services elsewhere. Can you share with me why you used these services off-campus and not on-campus? **----OR ----** **5a.** I see you did not receive any services. Can you tell me more about why that is?	– Was there something you received off-campus that you could not get on-campus? **----OR ----** – Did you know that these services were available to you on-campus? – Do you have access to these services?
6. Were there any services you needed that you wish you would have had access to? **(*Campus or community services*)**	– Why are these important to you? – Was there anything you used off-campus that you wish you could use on-campus?
7. What do you wish ASU knew or provided for Indigenous students regarding services?	– Why do you think they need to know this? – Are there any services you used off-campus that you wish were provided to you on-campus?
8. I've been asking you about the services you've used in response to your victimization. Now I'd like to ask you what you do to	– This could include things you do culturally, spiritually, physically, creatively, socially, and things like that.

take care of yourself more holistically or more generally?	– As a Native student it can be hard to balance your traditional values and navigating college life. Since you've been in college, are there any other coping mechanisms that you've adopted?
[BREATHING BREAK] That's the end of my questions about your victimization and the services you have used. Before we dive-in and talk about MMIP, I just want to check in with you to see how you're doing and see if you want to take a break? Now I'd like to ask you about your experiences with Missing and Murdered Indigenous Peoples, which I'm referring to for short as MMIP. If you ever need a break or would like to stop, please let me know. [ENSURE PARTICIPANT IS READY]	
9. I see in the survey [Question #33] that you have ___ and ___ experience with MMIP. Can you tell me your story about what happened?	(Can ask clarifying questions if needed) If it is personal/familial/community: – Do you have multiple experiences with MMIP/MMIWG? – Are you comfortable sharing details about their disappearance/murder? o Have they ever been away for a long time before? o Where did this occur (tribal land, border town, urban area, etc.)? o Was this person a child or adult? o Who do you think it was who did this to your loved one? o What actions were taken? Was it reported to law enforcement? o What was the process in moving this case through the criminal justice system? o Were they ever found?
[DO NOT READ ALOUD] **[Interviewer's checklist for personal experience information. Do we have this information from participant?]** ☐ Missing before?	

☐ Where did they go missing from? Tribal, border town, urban, other ☐ Child or Adult? ☐ Perpetrator? ☐ Actions taken/reported to LE? ☐ CJ system process? ☐ Found?	
10. You've shared with me a lot of personal traumas related to MMIP. These experiences can have profound impacts on you. Can you now tell me how you've handled those stressful experiences? I'm hoping you can walk me through some of the <u>good ways</u> and even some of the <u>bad ways</u> that you've handled these situations.	– I want to focus on the good things that you did. Can you talk about how you were resilient in these instances? – How did you manage/navigate those experiences? – Are there any other examples that you can think of?
11. How does being an Indigenous person play a role in your <u>resiliency</u> in the face of MMIP? **[IF NEEDED]** *We think of resiliency as the ability to adapt or respond positively to stress and adversity.*	– Each Tribe has their own traditions. I wonder if any of those traditions helped you become more resilient in the MMIP experiences you faced. For example, community support, family support, or culture. – Has your support system changed over your life? Since you entered college?
[BREATHING BREAK] Now that you shared your story, I just want to take a breathing break before I ask you some broader/general questions about MMIP. **[ENSURE PARTICIPANT WELLBEING]**	
12. Why do you think MMIP is happening? **[If needed]** **I can give you time to think if you would like.**	– Can you tell me more about that? – Can you explain that more? – Why do you think this is happening in your community, your state, and the nation? – Is there anything else that comes to mind?

13. What can be done to put a stop to MMIP?	– How do you think it could be stopped in your Indigenous community, your state, and the nation? – Is there anything that would help prevention, awareness, the community, the government, or laws? – Is there anything else that comes to mind?
14. You gave some ideas about how we could stop MMIP more generally. Now I'd like to ask you, what do you think ASU could do to stop MMIP?	– Is there anything that ASU could change that would reduce MMIP or that would keep Indigenous Peoples safer? – For example, are there curriculum changes, resources, awareness, administrative changes, programming/services, or community partnerships that would stop MMIP?
15. What do you wish people knew about MMIP? **[If needed]** **I can give you time to think about the question if you would like.**	– What do you wish service providers, universities, general public, lawmakers, or Tribal Nations knew about MMIP? – What are some examples? What are some things that make you think or say that? – Why do you think people should know this?
16. The last question I have for you today is to ask you what you hope your future looks like?	– Where do you see yourself going? – Where would you like to end up once you graduate? (For example: job, location) – College opens up a lot of opportunities, have you thought about your future after graduation?

That's the end of the interview. Thank you so much for taking the time to provide such thoughtful responses.

17. Is there anything else you'd like to share with me today?

18. How did it feel to talk about these things?

[PROVIDE GIFT CARD AND TURN OFF RECORDING – END OF INTERVIEW]

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APPENDIX C

STAFF AND FACULTY INTAKE FORM

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. Before the interview begins, please answer the following demographic questions about yourself.

1. What is your age? _____ years old
2. What is your gender identity? (please specify) _____
3. What is your race/ethnicity? _____
    a. What is your tribal affiliation? _____
4. How long have you lived in Arizona? _____ number of years
5. What is your highest level of education? (please circle one)
    a. High School Diploma/General Education Development (GED)
    b. Associate's Degree
    c. Bachelor's Degree
    d. Master's Degree
    e. Juris Doctorate
    f. Doctoral Degree
6. Did you attend ASU?
    a. Yes
    b. No
7. What is your current position? _____
8. How long have you been in this position? _____number of years
9. How often do you work with Native American/Indigenous students?
    a. Everyday
    b. Sometimes
    c. Occasionally
    d. Rarely
    e. Never
10. In what capacity do you work with Native American/Indigenous students?

    _____

The following questions ask you about your work here at ASU. Using the scale, please rate your level of agreement by selecting the option that most fits your feelings about each statement.

11. I always find new and interesting aspects in my work.
    a. Strongly agree
    b. Agree
    c. Disagree
    d. Strongly disagree
12. There are days when I feel tired before I arrive at work.
    a. Strongly agree
    b. Agree
    c. Disagree
    d. Strongly disagree
13. It happens more and more often that I talk about my work in a negative way.
    a. Strongly agree
    b. Agree

c. Disagree
d. Strongly disagree

14. After work, I tend to need more time than in the past in order to relax and feel better.
    a. Strongly agree
    b. Agree
    c. Disagree
    d. Strongly disagree
15. Lately, I tend to think less at work and do my job almost mechanically.
    a. Strongly agree
    b. Agree
    c. Disagree
    d. Strongly disagree
16. I find my work to be a positive challenge.
    a. Strongly agree
    b. Agree
    c. Disagree
    d. Strongly disagree
17. During my work, I often feel emotionally drained.
    a. Strongly agree
    b. Agree
    c. Disagree
    d. Strongly disagree
18. Over time, one can become dis-connected from this type of work.
    a. Strongly agree
    b. Agree
    c. Disagree
    d. Strongly disagree
19. After working, I have enough energy for my leisure activities.
    a. Strongly agree
    b. Agree
    c. Disagree
    d. Strongly disagree
20. Sometimes I feel sickened by my work tasks.
    a. Strongly agree
    b. Agree
    c. Disagree
    d. Strongly disagree
21. After my work, I usually feel worn out and weary.
    a. Strongly agree
    b. Agree
    c. Disagree
    d. Strongly disagree
22. This is the only type of work that I can imagine myself doing.
    a. Strongly agree

b. Agree
c. Disagree
d. Strongly disagree

23. Usually, I can manage the amount of my work well.
    a. Strongly agree
    b. Agree
    c. Disagree
    d. Strongly disagree
24. I feel more and more engaged in my work.
    a. Strongly agree
    b. Agree
    c. Disagree
    d. Strongly disagree
25. When I work, I usually feel energized.
    a. Strongly agree
    b. Agree
    c. Disagree
    d. Strongly disagree

APPENDIX D

STAFF AND FACULTY INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Please refrain from using names (yours or others) or other identifiers when answering the following questions.

1. Can you please begin by telling me a little about yourself and how you came to be in this position?
    a. [Probe]: What drew you to this type of work?
2. What kind of work do you do here? [PROBE: can you tell me a little bit more about it?]
3. On the intake form you said you worked with Indigenous or Native American students. Can you tell me about your work with this population?
    a. [Probe]: How do you and your department/organization support the Indigenous students you work with?
        i. [Probe]: Does your department help students with the transition to college?
        ii. [Probe]: How about for the transition from home to independent living?
    b. [Probe]: Do you notice any unique strengths that Indigenous students have?
    c. [Probe]: Do you notice any unique barriers that Indigenous students have?

Questions about the students that the employees work with

4. From what you've seen in your work, do you think Indigenous students are likely to engage with ASU campus services?
    a. [Probe]: What are some reasons you think students don't engage with campus services?
5. From your experience, what challenges do Indigenous students face?
    a. [Probe]: How is that similar or different from students who are not Indigenous?
6. In your role, you may hear about Indigenous students experiencing different types of victimization. Has this come up in your interactions with Indigenous college students?
    a. [Probe]: Have the Indigenous students you've worked with talked about being victimized or experiencing any trauma in their lives?
    b. [Probe]: What types of victimization or experiences of trauma do Indigenous students share with you? [no names, just examples]
7. (*If not discussed in question 5*) Do you find that Title IX impacts these discussions?
    a. [Probe]: How does Title IX shape your role here at ASU?
    b. [Probe]: Do you think it makes it difficult for students to talk to you about their victimization experiences?
8. Do you find that Indigenous college students seek help for their victimization experiences when they need it? Are they able to obtain the help that they seek?
    a. [Probe]: Why or why not?

b. [Probe]: What are some barriers Indigenous students face when seeking help?
c. [Probe]: What do you think could be done to reduce these barriers for students?

9. In response to their victimization experiences, what do you think are some of the greatest needs for Indigenous students?
    a. [Probe]: Are they receiving it?
    b. [Probe]: Where are they getting it? On- or Off-Campus
    c. [Probe]: Is the university adequately providing these services? Why or why not?
    d. [Probe]: What programs are working for Indigenous students?
        i. [Probe]: Why do you think these programs are working so well?

Transition to Service Provider Focus

10. What challenges do you face in your role here at ASU while working with Indigenous students?
    a. [Probe]: Are there any barriers you face when working with Indigenous students?
        i. [Probe]: How about any unique barriers you face when specifically working with Indigenous students?
11. What do you wish was provided to you to help support Indigenous students?
    a. [Probe]: Such as trainings, funding, resources, etc.
    b. [Probe]: If provided, how would this help you?
12. What do you wish the university knew about your work with Indigenous students?

Transition to Stress and Burnout

13. What kind of stress do you experience in your job while working with Indigenous students specifically?
    a. [Probe]: What about feelings of burnout?
    b. [Probe]: Are these feelings specific to working with Indigenous students or students more broadly?
    c. [Probe]: How do you deal with these feelings?
    d. [Probe]: Does the university provide you with any support?
        i. What do you wish the university would provide you to help with burnout and stress?

That's the end of the interview. Thank you so much for taking the time to provide such thoughtful responses. Is there anything else you'd like to share with me today?
I am trying to talk to as many people as possible so my research can be as comprehensive and inclusive as possible. Can you think of other staff or faculty members at ASU who work with Indigenous students? Can you provide their names/departments/emails?

APPENDIX E

STUDENT SURVEY INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Please Read Carefully Before Deciding to Participate in this Survey

Title of the study: Understanding college students' experiences with Missing and Murdered Indigenous Peoples

Purpose of the study: To learn about the experience of Indigenous college students and their knowledge and experience with the Missing and Murder of Indigenous Peoples (MMIP), victimization, help-seeking, and resiliency.

What You Will Be Asked to do in the Survey: You will be asked to answer questions about the Missing and Murder of Indigenous Peoples (MMIP), victimization, experience with service providers, and resiliency. Please refrain from using names (yours or others) when completing the survey. Any names or identifiers will be redacted in the data.

Who Can Participate in the Survey: In order to be eligible to participate in this survey, you must (1) identify as Indigenous, (2) be an Arizona State University student, and (3) be age 18 or older.

Number of People Asked to be Part of the Survey: A maximum of 3,000 Indigenous ASU students.

Time Required: Depending on your pace, about 10-20 minutes to complete the survey

Confidentiality: All of your answers will be confidential. Please do not use names or any other identifiable information during the interview so that we can keep your identity confidential. The computer software used for the survey provides that any information obtained will not be linked to your answers. No one will be able to link your answers to you. Your individual answers will not be shared with any student organizations, police, or service providers. De-identified data collected as a part of this study will not be shared outside the research team. The results of the study will present patterns of how everyone answered. You will have the opportunity to provide your email address at the end of the survey to (1) enter for a drawing to receive a $75 gift card and (2) for us to contact you to invite you participate in a follow-up interview. If you provide your email address, your survey responses will remain confidential.

Benefits of Participating in the Study: Sharing your personal experiences may allow you to feel "heard" or feel good that your story has been told. If you participate in the survey, you may choose to be entered in a drawing to receive a $75 Target card.

Voluntary Participation and Right to Withdraw from the Study: It is your choice to participate in this study or to not participate. This survey will not affect how you are treated at the university. Please know that you do not have to answer any questions that you do not want to answer, and you can stop participating at any time. No one will be upset or angry if you decide not to participate or if you stop participating at any time for any reason. Please see below for a list of organizations that offer free support.

Whom to Contact if you Have Questions About the Study: Dr. Kate Fox, School of Criminology and Criminal Justice, Arizona State University, 411 N. Central Avenue, Phoenix Arizona 85004; Telephone: (602) 496-2347; Email: katefox@asu.edu.

Whom to Contact About Your Rights as a Research Participant in the Study: This research has been reviewed and approved by the Arizona State University's Social Behavioral IRB; Telephone: (480) 965-6788; Email: research.integrity@asu.edu.

Project Funding: This project is funded by Arizona State University's Women and Philanthropy.

Agreement: By answering the survey questions, you consent to participate in this study.

Where to go for free help if you need support or want to talk more: Answering questions about MMIP can be triggering/traumatizing. You may wish to find free/no-cost support from:

- Arizona State University counseling services, available Mon-Fri 8am-5pm: 480-965-6145
- Arizona State University's EMPACT crisis counseling services, available 24/7: 480-921-1006
- National Crisis Text line, available 24/7: Text HOME to 741741
- StrongHearts Native Helpline, available 2/47 to call or text: 1-844-762-8483

If you feel your safety will be at risk by keeping this form, you may throw it away after participating.

Thank you for your time!

APPENDIX F

STUDENT INTERVIEW INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Please Read Carefully Before Deciding to Participate in this Interview

Title of the Study: Understanding college students' experiences with Missing and Murdered Indigenous Peoples

Purpose of the Study: To learn about the experience of Indigenous college students and their knowledge and experience with the Missing and Murder of Indigenous Peoples (MMIP), victimization, help-seeking, and resiliency.

What You Will Be Asked to do in the Interview: You are invited to participate in an interview about experiences with Missing and Murdered indigenous Peoples (MMIP). If you decide to be in this study, you will be asked questions about your personal experiences with violence and trauma, including MMIP. Please refrain from using names (yours or others) when participating. Any names or identifiers will be redacted in the data files.

Who Can Participate in the Interview: In order to be eligible to participate in this survey, you must (1) identify as Indigenous, (2) be an Arizona State University student, (3) be age 18 or older, and (4) have experience with MMIP.

Number of People Asked to be Part of the Survey: A maximum of 200 ASU students.

Time Required: About 1 to 3 hours, depending on your pace.

Confidentiality: All of your answers will be confidential. Please do not use names or any other identifiable information during the interview so that we can keep your identity confidential. By agreeing to participate, you are agreeing to have your previous answers to our survey linked to your interview responses. Your individual answers will not be shared with anyone, including the university, student organizations, police, or service providers. De-identified data collected as a part of this study will not be shared outside the research team. We request to audio record the interview. The interview will not be recorded without your permission. If you prefer not to be audio recorded, we will take detailed notes of your responses. The audio files and written notes will be stored in the researcher's private, locked office and on a password-protected university computer. After the audio files are transcribed verbatim and data collection is complete, the recordings will be destroyed.

Benefits of Participating in the Study: Sharing your personal experiences may allow you to feel "heard" or feel good that your story has been told. Your answers can also help Indigenous-led researchers and the university to better understand the needs and experiences of Indigenous students. Participants will be given a $75 Target gift card.

Voluntary Participation and Right to Withdraw from the Study: It is your choice to participate in this study or to not participate. This interview will not affect how you are treated at the university. Please know that you do not have to answer any questions that you do not want to answer, and you can stop participating at any time. No one will be upset or angry if you decide not to participate or if you stop participating at any time for any reason. Please see below for a list of organizations that offer free support.

Whom to Contact if you Have Questions About the Study: Dr. Kate Fox, School of Criminology and Criminal Justice, Arizona State University, 411 N. Central Avenue, Phoenix, Arizona 85004; Telephone: (602) 496-2347; Email: katefox@asu.edu.

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Project Funding: This project is funded by Arizona State University's Women and Philanthropy.

Agreement: By answering the interview questions, you consent to participate in this study.

Where to go for free help if you need support or want to talk more: Talking about MMIP can be triggering/traumatizing. You may wish to find free/no-cost support from:

- Arizona State University counseling services, available Mon-Fri 8am-5pm: 480-965-6145
- Arizona State University's EMPACT crisis counseling services, available 24/7: 480-921-1006
- National Crisis Text line, available 24/7: Text HOME to 741741
- StrongHearts Native Helpline, available 2/47 to call or text: 1-844-762-8483

<u>If you feel your safety will be at risk by keeping this form, you may throw it away after participating.</u>

Thank you for your time!

APPENDIX G

STAFF INTERVIEW INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Please Read Carefully Before Deciding to Participate in this Interview

Title: University Support Staff Experiences with Indigenous Students.

Purpose of the Study: To learn about the (1) perceptions of university support staff regarding the unique qualities, needs, challenges, and barriers Indigenous students face when seeking help or using services, and (2) what the university needs to do better to address these needs and what should be provided to better serve these students.

What You Will Be Asked to do in the Interview: You are invited to participate in this survey because you currently work at Arizona State University and work with Indigenous students within the university context. If you decide to be in this study, you will be asked questions about your experiences working with Indigenous students and your perceptions of needs, challenges, and barriers these students face when accessing services. Please refrain from using names (yours or others) when answering the following questions. Any names or identifiers will be redacted in the data files.

Who Can Participate in the Interview: In order to be eligible to participate in this interview, you must (1) be an Arizona State University employee, (2) be age 18 or older, and (3) have experience working with Indigenous students.

Number of People Asked to be Part of the Interview: A maximum of 50 university student support staff.

Time Required: About 30 minutes to 1 ½ hour, depending on your pace.

Confidentiality: All of your answers will be confidential. Please do not use names or any other identifiable information during the interview so that we can keep your identity confidential. No one will be able to link your answers to you. Your individual answers will not be shared with the university or any student organizations, police, or service providers. De-identified data collected as a part of this study will not be shared outside the research team. We request to audio record the interview. The interview will not be recorded without your permission. If you prefer not to be audio recorded, we will take detailed notes of your responses. The audio files and written notes will be stored in the researcher's private, locked office and on a password-protected university computer. After the audio files are transcribed verbatim and data collection is complete, the recordings will be destroyed.

Benefits of Participating in the Study: Sharing your personal experiences may allow you to feel "heard" or feel good that your story has been told. Your answers can also help the students you serve and allow the university to better understand their needs and the needs of university staff. Participants will be given a $10 Starbucks gift card.

Voluntary Participation and Right to Withdraw from the Study: It is your choice to participate in this study or to not participate. This interview will not affect how you are treated at the university. If you feel upset during the at any time during the interview, please know that you do not have to answer any questions that you do not want to answer, and you can stop participating at any time. No one will be upset or angry if you decide not to participate or if you stop participating at any time for any reason.

Whom to Contact if you Have Questions About the Study: Kayleigh Stanek, M.S., School of Criminology and Criminal Justice, Arizona State University, 411 N. Central Avenue, Phoenix, Arizona, 850054; Telephone: (712) 310-5107; Email: kstanek1@asu.edu or Dr. Kate Fox, School of Criminology and Criminal Justice, Arizona State University, 411 N. Central Avenue, Phoenix, Arizona 85004; Telephone: (602) 496-2347; Email: katefox@asu.edu.

Whom to Contact About Your Rights as a Research Participant in the Study: This research has been reviewed and approved by the Arizona State University's Social Behavioral IRB; Telephone: (480) 965-6788; Email: research.integrity@asu.edu.

Project Funding: This project is funded by Arizona State University's Women and Philanthropy.

Agreement: By answering the interview questions, you consent to participate in this study.

Thank you for your time!

APPENDIX H

IRB APPROVAL

ASU Knowledge Enterprise Development

APPROVAL: EXPEDITED REVIEW

Kathleen Talbot
WATTS: Criminology and Criminal Justice, School of
602/496-2347
katefox@asu.edu

Dear Kathleen Talbot:

On 1/27/2022 the ASU IRB reviewed the following protocol:

Type of Review:	Initial Study
Title:	Women and Philanthropy Research on Missing and Murdered Indigenous People (MMIP)
Investigator:	Kathleen Talbot
IRB ID:	STUDY00015240
Category of review:	
Funding:	Name: Women and Philanthropy, Grant Office ID: FP26430, Funding Source ID: FP26430
Grant Title:	FP26430;
Grant ID:	FP26430;
Documents Reviewed:	• _W&P MMIP FLYER - 1_25_2022.pdf, Category: Recruitment Materials; • Proposal Summary, Category: Sponsor Attachment; • Protocol, Category: IRB Protocol; • STAFF Informed Consent 1_9_2022.pdf, Category: Consent Form; • STAFF interview questions 1_19_2022.pdf, Category: Measures (Survey questions/Interview questions /interview guides/focus group questions); • STAFF recruitment email 1_12_2022.pdf, Category: Recruitment Materials; • STUDENT Interview Informed Consent 1_9_2022.pdf, Category: Consent Form; • STUDENT Interview Questions 1_19_22.pdf, Category: Measures (Survey questions/Interview questions /interview guides/focus group questions); • STUDENT Survey Informed Consent 1_9_22.pdf, Category: Consent Form; • STUDENT Survey Questions 1_13_2022.pdf, Category: Measures (Survey questions/Interview questions /interview guides/focus group questions);

The IRB approved the protocol from 1/27/2022 to 1/26/2027 inclusive. Three weeks before 1/26/2027 you are to submit a completed Continuing Review application and required attachments to request continuing approval or closure.

If continuing review approval is not granted before the expiration date of 1/26/2027 approval of this protocol expires on that date. When consent is appropriate, you must use final, watermarked versions available under the "Documents" tab in ERA-IRB.

In conducting this protocol you are required to follow the requirements listed in the INVESTIGATOR MANUAL (HRP-103).

REMINDER - - Effective January 12, 2022, in-person interactions with human subjects require adherence to all current policies for ASU faculty, staff, students and visitors. Up-to-date information regarding ASU's COVID-19 Management Strategy can be found here. IRB approval is related to the research activity involving human subjects, all other protocols related to COVID-19 management including face coverings, health checks, facility access, etc. are governed by current ASU policy.

Sincerely,

IRB Administrator