

# Histories of Trauma and Resilience in Alaska

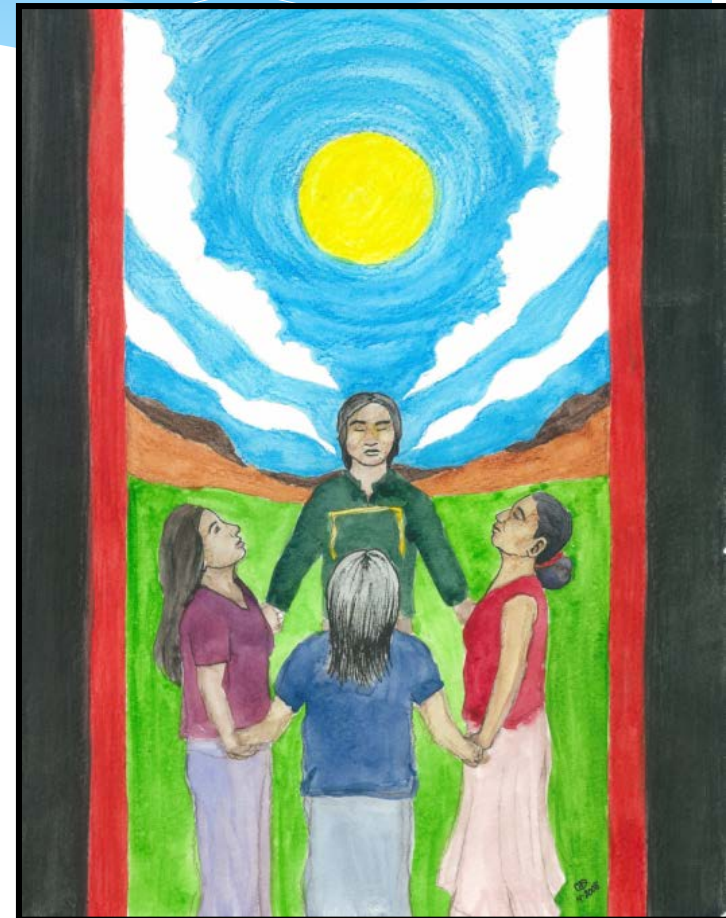
## Dance of Life



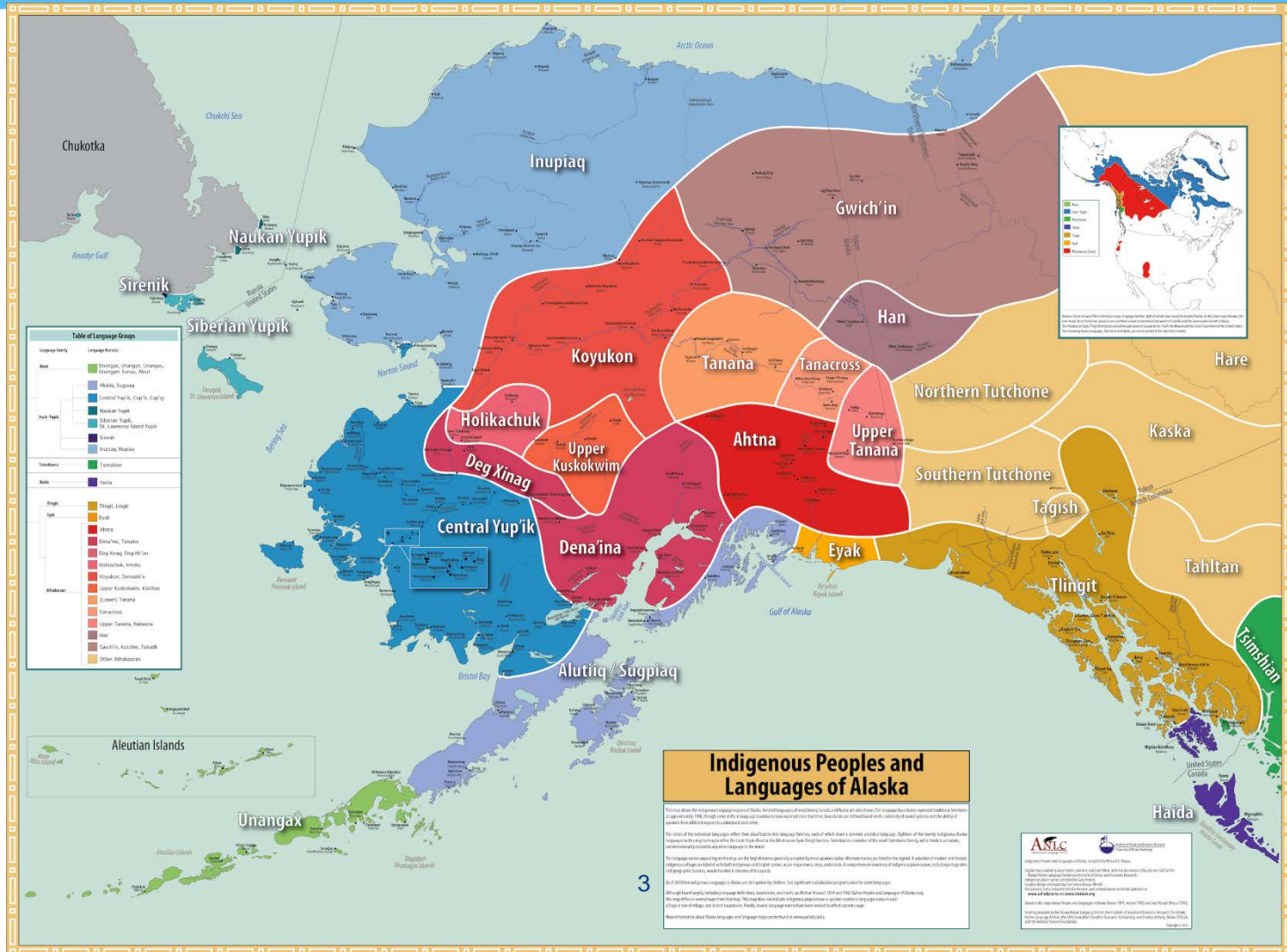
Cancer Education for Alaska Community Health Aides

# Acknowledgements

- \* Alaska's Community Health Aides/Practitioners
- \* Project team at the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium
- \* Dr. Gert Mulvad and Dr. Rhonda Johnson



# Native Alaska



# Russian Colonization: 1740s - 1867



<sup>4</sup>  
<https://www.nlm.nih.gov/nativevoices/timeline/636.html>

# Missionaries

1819: U.S. congress pays missionaries to “civilize” American Indians



# The Great Deaths



Presumed orphans in Nushagak, 1919

# Boarding Schools

“...all the Indian there is in the race should be dead. Kill the Indian in him and save the man.” -Richard Pratt



Property of University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections Division

# Pedophilic Priests in Alaska



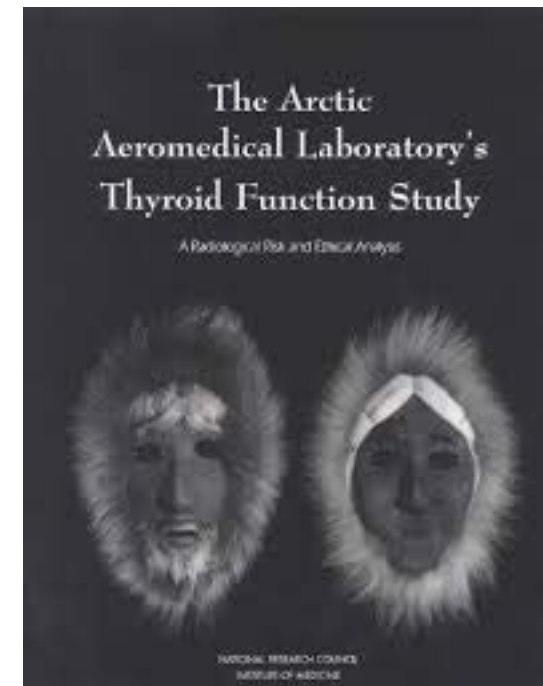
“Patrick Wall, a former Benedictine priest and consultant for a Costa Mesa California law firm that has worked on more than 300 church abuse allegations nationwide, said rural Alaska was a prime place to send abusive priests. Alaska’s isolation and its cultural reverence for authority figures, such as elders and priests meant parishioners would be less likely to speak up.”

-The Boston Globe, 2005 <sup>8</sup>



# Traumatic History of Research in Native Communities

“In 1956 and 1957, the U.S. Air Force's former Arctic Aeromedical Laboratory (AAL)... conducted a study of the role of the thyroid gland in human acclimatization to cold... the researchers administered a medical tracer, the **radioisotope Iodine  $^{131}$ (I $^{131}$ )**, to 121 people—**102 Alaska Native** subjects and 19 white military personnel... the AAL researchers determined that the thyroid did not play a significant role in human acclimatization to extreme cold.”



# Traumatic History of Medicine in Native Communities



Copyright Alva Nelms 2010

*Anti-sterilization abuse protest; photo by Alva Nelms*

3,406 American Indian women sterilized without their consent between 1973-1976, including 36 under age 21

-US National Library of Medicine

# Impact on Health

“...the impact of stress and trauma associated with federal policies of removal, reservation, and assimilation on the individual cannot be understated as a contributing factor to generational health deterioration in Native communities.”

– Crystal Echo Hawk



# Community-Based Participatory Research a Preferred Approach

“The majority of tribal Nations prefer, if not mandate, that CBPR be used in most proposed studies involving their communities today.”

Burhansstipanov, 2005

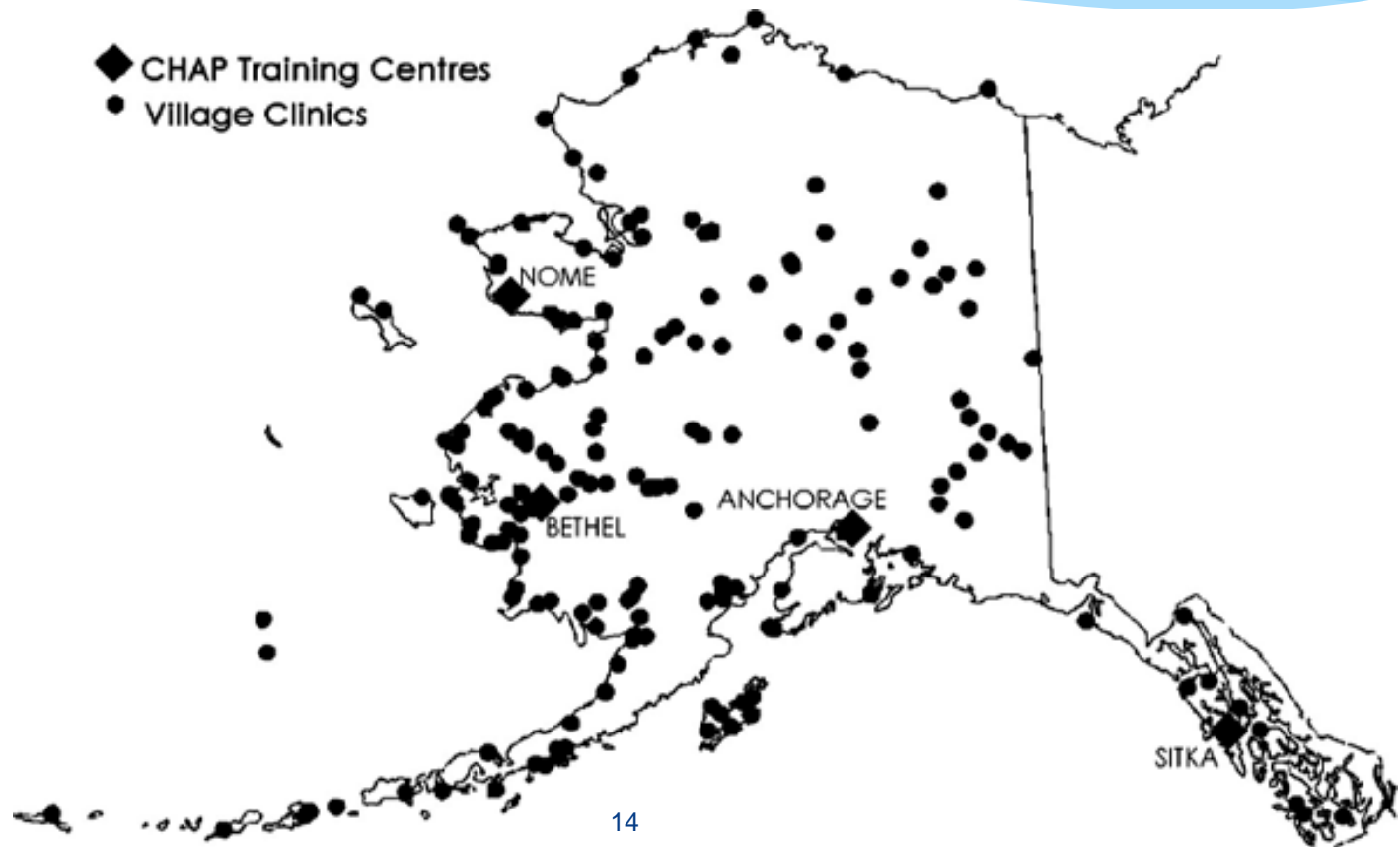


# Similarities?

- \* Are there similar histories among the people/populations you work with?
- \* How do these histories impact your work?



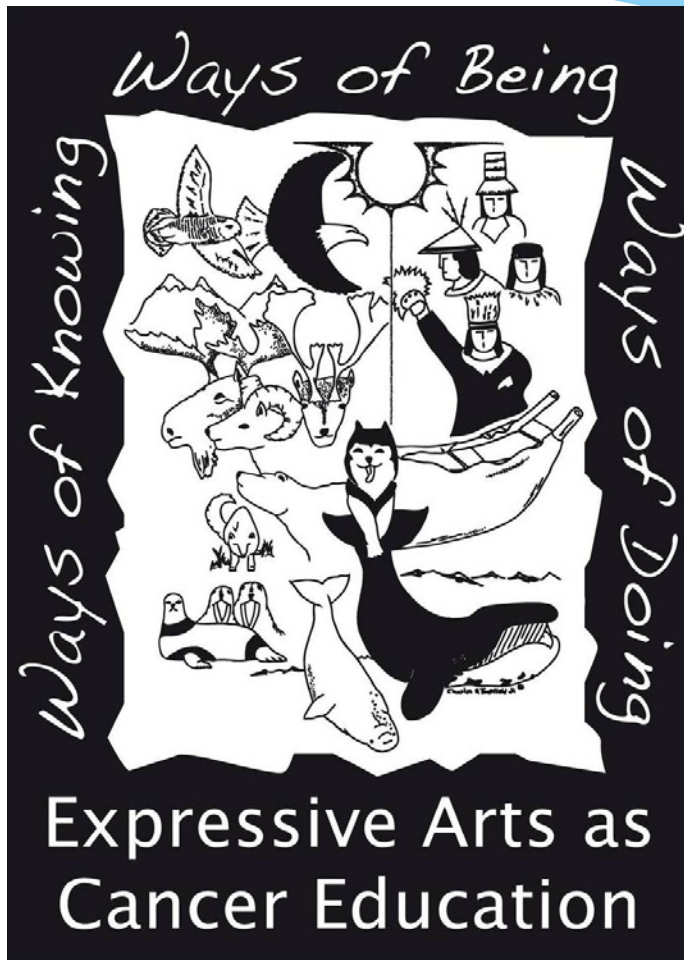
# Alaska's Community Health Aides/Practitioners



# In-Person Cancer Education



# Lessons Learned: Culturally-Relevant Ways of Knowing



- \* Story
- \* Humor
- \* Relationships
- \* Expressive Arts
  - \* Dance
  - \* Song
  - \* Drawing
  - \* Sculpting



# Culturally-respectful online cancer education with, and for, Alaska Native people includes:

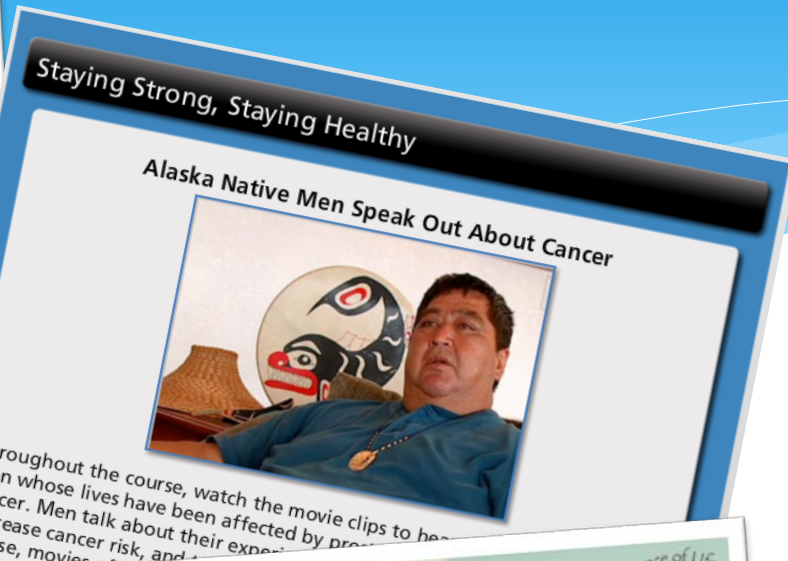
- \* Local information (data, stories, visuals, etc.)
- \* Personal stories
- \* Visuals
- \* Respect for individual learners' cultures.

Cancer treatment can include many different ways of healing to support a person's physical, emotional, and spiritual journey.



*I think this is a great step in the right direction for educating ourselves about cancer, how to cure it; how to manage it/live with it everyday. Quyannakpuk for making these first steps!"*

# Online Cancer Education Modules



## What is Grief?

Grief is one of the ways people react to losing someone or something they care about. A person, their family, and community may grieve the loss of how things used to be. Loss can be felt by a person or by a group.

*"Grief shared is grief diminished."*  
~ Claudette Amadon, Former Oncology Nurse at ANMC



Click to listen to a story about grieving the loss of how things used to be.



# Informative and Culturally-Respectful

- Was this cancer education module respectful of you and your culture?
  - 96% Yes
- Did you learn what you hoped to learn?
  - 100% Yes

*“This was a meaningful and well made learning module, as every single one of us can take tips and apply it in our lives Also the subject matter is sacred, has to do with honoring our loved ones and most often we are uncertain and don't know how to approach something as important as those two things”*

*“brought me to tears couple of times, and I think it will help in destroying the silence that surrounds cancer“*



"Because I did a self-exam, breast cancer was found and treated early. I call myself a Thriver. So my beautiful Alaska Native sisters, I have a very important message for you, because YOU are a very important person: do your exams!"

# Thank You for Listening!



*“I am happy to have learned this,<sup>20</sup> and that I am able to share it now”*

Igamsiqanaghalek

St. Lawrence Island Yup'ik

Quyanaq  
North Slope Inupiaq

Quyana  
Yup'ik/Cup'ik

Ha'w'aa  
Haida

Spasciba  
Russian/Alutiiq

Tsin'ee  
Tanacross

Qagaasakung  
Aleut (Unangax)

Mahsi'  
Gwitch'in/Han

TSIN'AEN  
AHTNA

**THANK YOU**

Tsen'ii  
Upper Tanana  
Ana-ba-see  
Koyukon

[kcueva@alaska.edu](mailto:kcueva@alaska.edu)  
[akchap.org](http://akchap.org)

Maasee'  
Tanana

Chin'an  
Dena'ina (Tanaina)

Doy'ksin  
Tysm'sen

Quyanaqpuuk  
Inupiaq Nome

DOGEDINH  
DEG HIT'AN

Baasee'  
Ruby Athabascan

GUNALCHE'ESH  
TLINGIT

Awa'ahda  
Eyak