

Integrative Medicine on the Frontlines- the Clinics of Standing Rock



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Relevant financial disclosure- Geeta Maker-Clark, MD Daphne Singingtree

- ▶ We have nothing to disclose



Objectives

- ▶ Understand what the Dakota Access Pipeline is and why the movement began
 - ▶ Know the basic tenets of the NODAPL movement
 - ▶ Describe the clinic set up at Standing Rock
 - ▶ Understand what a decolonized medical system means
 - ▶ Look at the lessons of Standing Rock and see how it can be applied in other settings
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The Dakota Access Pipeline

- ▶ The “Dakota Access” Pipeline (DAPL) is a \$3.8B, 1,100 mile fracked-oil pipeline from the Bakken shale fields of North Dakota to Peoria, Illinois
- ▶ DAPL crosses Lakota Treaty Territory at the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation and goes underneath the Missouri River, the longest river on the continent
- ▶ Construction of the DAPL engenders a renewed fracking interest in the Bakken shale region, as well as endangers a source of fresh water for the Standing Rock Sioux and 8 million people living downstream
- ▶ DAPL also impacts many sites that are Sacred to the Standing Rock Sioux and other indigenous nations






DAPL Violated numerous laws

- ▶ Fort Laramie Treaty of April 29, 1868
 - ▶ The DAPL violates Article 2 of the 1868 Fort Laramie Treaty which guarantees that the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe shall enjoy the “undisturbed use and occupation” of our permanent homeland, the Standing Rock Indian Reservation.
 - ▶ The U.S. Constitution states that treaties are the supreme law of the land
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Executive Order 13007 on Protection of Sacred Sites

- ▶ “In managing federal lands, each executive branch agency shall avoid adversely affecting the physical integrity of such sites.”
- ▶ There are historical ceremony sites and burial grounds in the immediate vicinity of the Missouri River crossing.
- ▶ The Army Corps did not deny the DAPL permit to protect these sites





National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)

- ▶ A detailed Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) must be completed for major actions that affect the environment
- ▶ Army Corps of Engineers must comply w/ NEPA for the permit for the Missouri River crossing
- ▶ Agencies get around this by providing a lesser study, a brief Environmental Assessment (which Dakota Access has done).
- ▶ A full EIS would be an interdisciplinary approach for the integrated use of natural and social sciences to determine direct and indirect effects of the project and “possible conflicts...with Indian land use plans and policies... (and) cultural resources”



Executive Order 12898 on Environmental Justice

- All agencies must determine if proposed project disproportionately impacts Tribal community or other minority community
- The DAPL was original routed to cross the Missouri River north of Bismarck
- The crossing was moved to “avoid populated areas”, instead of crossing upriver of the state’s capital, it crosses the aquifer of the Great Sioux Reservation

The NODAPL Movement

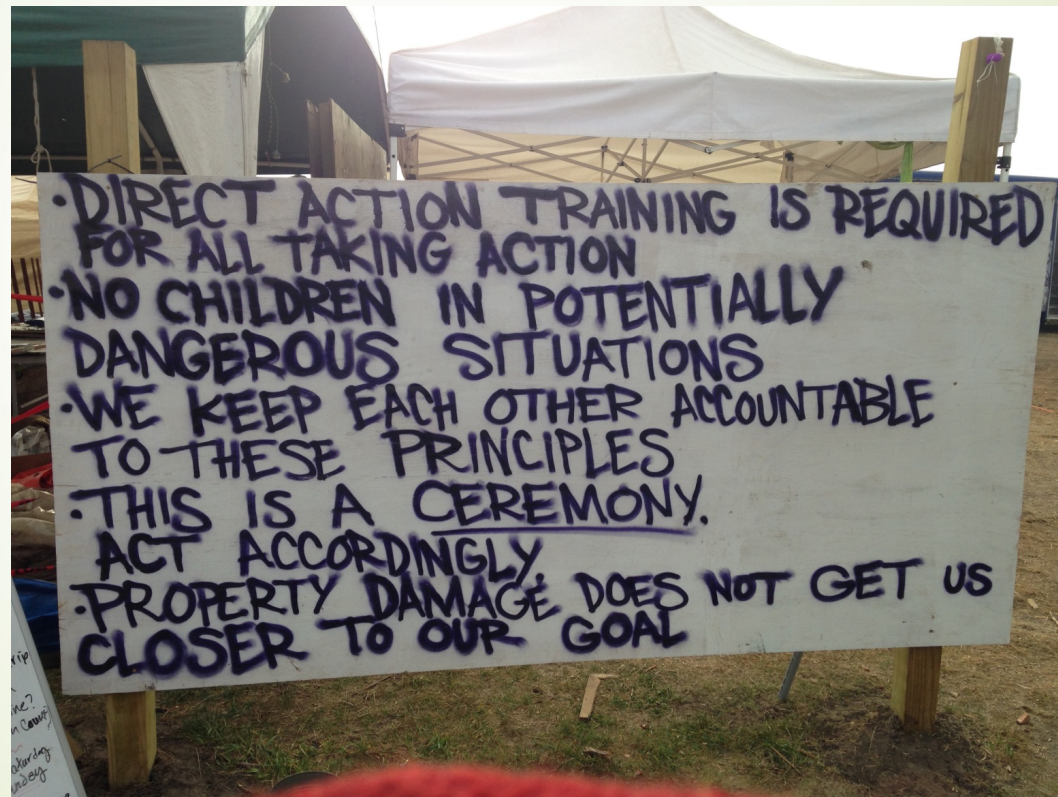
- On April 1st, 2016, tribal citizens of the Standing Rock Lakota Nation and ally Lakota, Nakota, & Dakota citizens, under the group name “Chante tin’sa kINANZI Po” founded a Spirit Camp along the proposed route of the Bakken oil pipeline, Dakota Access
- Developed organically, inspired by youth activists, women, and local residents. No formal leadership, or organizational entity “in charge”.



The largest gathering of different tribes in history. Indigenous people the world over came together with our non-native Allies to unified against DAPL.



Using direct action principles from other movements, with the prayer and ceremony at its core



Protests at Standing Rock became more than a fight about this pipeline over this reservation. It started as a NoDAPL movement, but it gave birth to the Water is Life Mni Wiconi movement. The first indigenous led movement of this size, supported by the world, which is continuing its work today.



The Standing Rock Medic Healer Council



- ▶ Formed to coordinate medical and healer supplies, human resources, and other types of medical/healing aid between the following groups:
 - ▶ 1. All the camps who stand with Standing Rock
 - ▶ 2. Standing Rock Emergency Services
 - ▶ 3. Indian Health Services
 - ▶ 4. Standing Rock Tribal Council
 - ▶ 5. Mni Wiconi Integrative Health Clinic
 - ▶ 6. The greater allopathic & healer community
 - ▶ 7. Mni Wiconi Midwifery Field Clinic
- ▶ This group is specifically to connect those wanting to offer support to those on the ground coordinating aid
- ▶ Started by street medics and herbalists, with volunteer EMTs, RNs, MDs and other professionals joining and contributing.
- ▶ Circular leadership model, presenting opportunities and challenges.



Needs as Medical Underserved Area

- ▶ Sioux County Dakota and the Standing Rock Reservation have a US Health & Human Services designation as a Medically Underserved Area
- ▶ This designation is given to with less than a 62 Index of Medical Underservice (IMU) out of a possible 100
- ▶ Sioux County has an IMU of 20, indicating a sincere need for qualified practitioners to support the health of the local community as well as the needs of the water protectors maintaining the camps

Three Clinics served thousands between April 2016 and February 2017 with only one known fatality, a drowning victim who was not seen by the medical team

- **Sacred Stone** -- the first camp located on private land of LaDonna Brave Bull Allard



Oceti Sakowin -- Main Camp – In addition to herbalists, medical treatment, there was areas for body work, massage therapists, chiropractors, midwives.



Rosebud or Sicangu Camp

(Zaniyan Wellness started by Daphne Singingtree)



At Rosebud the focus was on an integrative model

- Medical doctors worked side by side with herbalists, acupuncturists, natural healers of all kinds.
- An herbal tipi provided classes as well as tea and immune support.



Sorting and organizing donations was a full time job for many



Volunteer Clinic Staffing

- Herbalists
- Midwives
- Native/indigenous healers and elders
- MD/DO
- NP
- Street Medics
- Massage therapists
- Psychotherapists
- Craniosacral therapists
- TCM doctors
- Reiki practitioners



Patients

- ▶ Activists and people doing direct actions
- ▶ Standing Rock and other local tribes
- ▶ Sent to IHS clinic/hospital in Fort Yates if needed higher level of care
- ▶ Local residents who came to get alternative care
- ▶ Patient load varied from dozens to hundreds a day

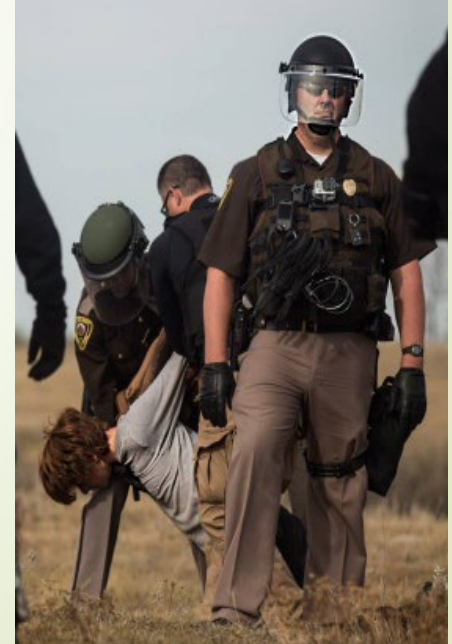


Standing Rock Medics Treated:

- Injuries related to police actions
 - Rubber bullet injuries
 - Tear Gas and Mace
 - Trauma due to force used by police including water cannons, dog bites, restraint injuries
 - Exploding tear gas canisters almost blew off one woman's arm
 - Several people lost vision in one eye due to bullet injuries.



Lots of minor injuries
frequent major injuries



Tear gas was treated with
milk of magnesia



November 20, 2016

26 people were hospitalized and more than 300 injured when militarized police trained water cannons, teargas, and other “less-than-lethal” weapons in below-freezing weather. After this event the world started watching, as peaceful prayerful protestors lives were endangered.



Sub Freezing Winter Conditions did not Stop Protesters



In addition to police action related injuries, the clinics treated:

- ▶ Respiratory Illness rampant in camp made worse by
 - ▶ Close living quarters, lack of handwashing stations
 - ▶ Exposure to wood and cigarette smoke
 - ▶ Exposure to tear gas and unknown chemicals sprayed
 - ▶ Called the DAPL cough or camp crud lasted months for some
- ▶ Injuries related to camp life without electricity or running water
- ▶ General Health Issues – compounded by poverty and lack of access to care
- ▶ During the winter – Hypothermia and frostbite



Mental Health & PTSD Care Provided



Emotional/Psychological Self Care

Normal Physiological Symptoms after traumatic event

- Anxiety, feeling unsafe, fearful, Startle easily, react intensely
- Trouble sleeping; nightmares, waking up a lot,
- Emotional - Anger, impatience, frustration, Sadness - crying, withdrawal from people
- Disassociation - numbness, tuning out, feeling far away,
- Feeling helpless/powerless, Confused, overwhelmed
- Shaking/trembling - allows panic energy to be released from body
- Desire to use Substances - alcohol/Drugs - may help short term, but you must feel it to move on & let go

Deep Breathing - resets & relaxes nervous system
- fill lungs completely, belly breathing in through nose,

Grounding - feeling connection to the earth, Sit by river, tree,
Body Scan - Sensing your feet, legs, torso, arms, neck, head

Connection - talk about your experience with supportive person
- spend time with friends

Prayer - trusting Spirit/Creator to support you, Ceremony; Sweat lodge
- asking for strength, peace, forgiveness

Sing, Drum, make music, make Art, write
Dance, Yoga, martial arts

Hug each other, Check in with our relatives,
Listen, offer help, share stories, be together
Listen to Elders, play with children/dogs

Sleep, Eat well, Drink water, Stay warm
Move, Create, be productive,

There are therapists available for personal support sessions, Visit Medic tent
text 203 887 9158 FB Group Standing Rock Medic & Healer Council




Communication

- ▶ Cell service was limited and unreliable, and available only in few places in camp. Texting thru protected sites available at times.
- ▶ Cell service was deliberately disrupted, hacked both hardware and software by security company hired by DAPL
- ▶ Radio communication limited to non professional grade walkie talkies.
- ▶ Communication between the three camps were limited.
- ▶ No established lines of communication with EMS other than 911



Decolonized Medicine

The medic clinics at Standing Rock were created with a goal to provide a different, respectful and decolonized system of care:


- ▶ Care that recognizes the history of systematic oppression toward Native Americans, people of Color and those living in poverty
 - ▶ Volunteers that worked without the hierarchy present in the system run by the medical insurance industrialized complex
 - ▶ Care that did not assume western medicine as the ideal or best for everyone in every situation
 - ▶ Recognition of spiritual paths of healing
 - ▶ Allopathic medical training requires a level of resources and support not available to all people
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Challenges for Operations

- ▶ Police violence and arrests, police targeted medics. Numerous medics beaten and arrested
- ▶ Volunteers often came for short stints making creating systems difficult and cohesive teamwork difficult
- ▶ Organizing supplies and donations was huge job often understaffed, and overwhelming amounts of unneeded supplies (people's hearts were in the right place)
- ▶ Personalities and egos could get in the way of good care
- ▶ Conditions were brutal, cold, windy, no running water, electric limited to generator and solar
- ▶ Staffing was either was too few or too many practitioners



Challenges for Practitioners

- ▶ Dichotomy that exists between Western medicine and alternative or traditional medicine leads to mistrust on both sides
 - ▶ Allopathic medicine does not trust 'traditional' medicine, as it often cannot be understood using current scientific thinking
 - ▶ Traditional medicine practitioners often do not trust Western medicine, as it is ethnocentric and does not respect different cultural practices and beliefs
 - ▶ Communication with providers who are culturally sensitive and trauma informed, and understand the long history of colonized medicine
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Last days of protests were chaotic, with Standing Rock Tribal Government concerns for safety of growing camp with possible floods. Camps were evicted during sub zero winter conditions, without allowing volunteers to finish clean up. Valuable resources and donations lost.





Future Implications

- ▶ Standing Rock Clinics were great examples of things that were done right and areas that need work.
- ▶ Everyone who came with a good heart to serve
- ▶ Realize conflicts between medical and non-medical practitioners happen, learning how resolved them is the key to future collaborative models
- ▶ Lessons learned can be applied in natural disasters, large public events, as well as future protests
- ▶ Powerful unification of practitioners with common shared goals with respect for different modalities of treatment and schools of thought
- ▶ Integrative care models are be developed including Holistic Community Health Workers

Mni Wiconi – Water is Life

