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COMPLETING THIS ACTIVITY

Upon successful completion of this activity 1 contact hour will be awarded

Successful completion of this continuing education activity includes the following:

- Attending the entire CE activity;
- Completing the online evaluation;
- Submitting an online CE request.

Your certificate will be sent via email

If you have any questions about this CE activity, contact Michelle Daugherty at mdaugherty@cardeaservices.org or (206) 447-9538



Disclosures

None of the planners or presenters of this CE activity have any relevant financial relationships with any commercial entities pertaining to this activity.

March 25: Decolonizing gender identity and sexuality

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1. Basics

- Native peoples are not a monolith. (It bears repeating)
 - 573 federally recognized tribes/nations in the US; more than 600 bands/tribes in Canada
- Gender and sexuality are culturally specific, but also mobile and variable over time.
 - Does “heterosexuality” mean now what it meant in 1900? In 1600?
- Terminology matters: some communities have specific terms for diverse gender expression, others do not or have lost it.
 - In Cherokee we have *asegi*.
- Native peoples have only recently been taken as authorities of our own gender and sexual identities.

2. From Berdache to Two Spirit

- **Berdache:** a colonial term used by white missionaries and anthropologists for those who diverged from white gender norms, especially “passive” male partners in homoerotic sex.
 - Sex/gender is complicated and intertwined.
- **Two-Spirit:** coined in 1990 at the 3rd Annual Native American/First Nations gay and lesbian conference in Winnipeg, Canada (now, International Two Spirit Gathering).
 - Meant to replace berdache.
 - A collective response to those who studied gender diversity by speaking for Indigenous communities, rather than allowing them to speak for themselves.

3. Two-Spirit complications

- Two-Spirit is an umbrella term and thus imprecise.
- Not all communities use or accept it.
- While it emerged out of the need to provide more positive language for gender variant Native people, it is not universal.
- The “two” in two-spirit implies a dualism that some critics say reinforces a colonial binary.
- The “spirit” in two-spirit implies a religious role that has become romanticized.

Queer, indigiqueer, and two-spirit voices

- The debate is not about traditional vs. modern.
- Not about urban vs. rural or reservation.
- Also not about whether two-spirit is perfect.
- Rather, how do we validate those who do identify as two-spirit, queer, indigiqueer, or using their own terms?

What does this mean for healthcare?

- Not assuming you know what two-spirit means for each person.
- Not assuming Western concepts fit our experiences.

**"DIVERSITY"
AND "INCLUSION"**

**UNIVERSITY
ADMINISTRATORS**

Is this **DECOLONIZATION?**

Decolonial responses

- Decolonization is about asking how we know the things we know.
 - How did heterosexuality become the norm?
 - What had to happen for that to be true?
 - How does a norm function?
- Decolonization is about putting into practice Native lifeways and knowledges, and centering our experiences as true, valid, and legitimate.
- It is not simply “inclusion” but radically altering what counts as truth, knowledge, and experience.

Further Reading/Resources

- [Indian Health Service: https://www.ihs.gov/lgbt/health/twospirit/](https://www.ihs.gov/lgbt/health/twospirit/)
- *Queer Indigenous Studies: Critical Interventions in Theory, Politics, and Literature*, edited by Qwo-Li Driskill, Chris Finley, Brian Joseph Gilley, and Scott Lauria Morgensen (2011)
- *When Did Indians Become Straight? Kinship, the History of Sexuality, and Native Sovereignty*, by Mark Rifkin (2011)
- *As We Have Always Done: Indigenous Freedom Through Radical Resistance*, by Leanne Betasamosake Simpson (2017)