



CHBS Canopy

Inclusive Excellence

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Native American Heritage History Month Ends

Let us end this month recognizing some of the contributions to life in what we refer to as North America. A conservative estimate is there are 370 million indigenous people spread across 70 countries worldwide. These individuals, groups, tribes, and sovereign nations are very diverse with differing histories related to place, practices, removal, colonization, resistance to settlers, and their ability to survive despite repeated attempts of genocide.

There are 574 federally recognized *American Indian Tribes* and *Alaska Natives*. Some U.S. Indigenous groups may not be listed as federally recognized due to treaties that came before the establishment of the federal Indian Bureau. Some states like Oklahoma and Virginia may recognize still other Indigenous groups. [Virginia](#) recognizes nine American Indian tribes, while still others await state or federal recognition. You may be familiar with major groups such as the Cherokee, the Lakota, the Seminoles, or the Sioux through media or school.

“As colonialism took hold, the Europeans often lapsed into the appropriation and plagiarism of Indigenous knowledge resulting in many people being unaware of the vast contributions that Indigenous people have made to the world.” Below are [some examples](#) we collectively benefit from that arose from Indigenous ingenuity, knowledge, and practices.

The U.S. Democracy was influenced by Inca, Mayan, and Aztec cultures. Many concepts in the United States Constitution can be traced back to the Iroquois Confederacy of 1142, the oldest living participatory democracy on earth.

- Consensus decision building processes are based on Indigenous belief that everyone’s voice is worth hearing, that concerns come from a place of integrity and are valid. Decisions were made through discussion rather than majority rules or Robert Rules of Order.
- Beyond the taking of land and the destruction of Indigenous community life, the wealth of land was often taken in the form of gold, silver, coal, oil, and water. Within a 150-year span, 180-200 tons of gold from the Americas was extracted by the Europeans. Native Americans did not believe the land or people were for sale or that ownership existed. More often the belief was that the land, its riches, and the animals on it were placed there by the Great Spirit for responsible use and care. From [Indigenous Peoples](#), land has represented culture, relationships, spirituality, ecosystems, social systems, and law.
- It is [estimated](#) that 60% of the American diet comes from the original Indigenous populations’ diet. Corn, 14 different beans, maple syrup, wild rice, pumpkin, and avocado all started with Native American farmers. They farmed over 3000 varieties of potatoes across the Americas. Tomatoes originated in the Americas before being taken back by the Spanish and Italians who made these foundational to many meals. The notion of barbeque arises from the Caribbean Taino Indigenous practices of cooking skewed meat over an open flame and lathering it with various sauces. This has contributed to the many ways American’s prepare meals from the hot dog to venison on the grill. The Taino Indians were virtually wiped out by European diseases for which they had no immunities.

- Raised bed agriculture comes from Natives in South and Central America invented the technique of enriching soil and piling it to build raised garden plots called [chinampas](#).
- Indigenous groups trails laid foundation from our earliest roads and trails through trade paths.
- The next time it rains, and you put on rubber rain boots or recognize the rubber in your car's tires, consider its initial development came from Indigenous people.
- Historic knowledge of plant life is foundational to medicines and use of plant materials for healing.
 - [Native Americans](#) chewed willow bark to soothe aches and pains. The active ingredient in the bark is salicin, a chemical that in 1897 formed the basis of the discovery of aspirin. Salicin is a precursor to salicylic acid, the active ingredient in many over-the-counter acne treatments and dandruff-fighting shampoos today.
 - Native American healers pioneered pain relief. In what is now Virginia, natives used jimson weed (scientific name *Datura stramonium*) as a topical analgesic, grinding the root to make a plaster that they applied to external injuries such as cuts and bruises.
 - Native Americans also used [capsaicin](#), a chemical found in hot peppers, for topical pain relief.
 - The concept that led to the development of vaccines — protecting oneself from a virus or disease by exposing oneself to a modified version of it — was not lost on Native Americans. Dr. Sophie E. Neuner, a research associate at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, points to tribes inoculating themselves by ingesting small amounts of substances to protect their bodies from the harmful effects of the same substances in larger quantities.
 - The world can thank Native Americans — the Iroquois and Seneca tribes, in particular — for inventing baby bottles and baby formula, important to infants' health when breast milk is not available.
 - According to [the History channel](#), Native Americans invented syringes.
- Native Americans developed and communicated with sign language. They used a system of hand signals to facilitate trade and other communications with other tribes.
- Canoes and kayaks were developed and used in many byways and rivers of the country that we now use for recreation in our natural parks and spaces.

Indigenous People contributions are many and this impacts much of our daily lives from diet to transportation.

What's in a name. The author uses the term "Indigenous" to represent the self-identified, pre-colonial Peoples who existed on land before settlers came. As a collective term, it is designed to be inclusive regardless of a group's relationship to governmental status. The term "Indigenous" has not been defined by the United Nations but recognizes a set of criteria as guidance. In the U.S. non-Native individuals often struggle with appropriate language (American Indian vs. Native American). If you are speaking with or references a specific group, the preference is to respectfully refer to them by their self-defined identifiers such as Klingit/Tlingit (Alaska/Canada), the Eastern or Western Band of the Cherokee Nation or the Hopi or Navajo Tribe (Arizona). Indigenous People may refer to First Nation People (Canada), the Saami (Northern Europe), Aborigines (Australia), or Māori (New Zealand). The most appropriate strategy is to ask how people would like to be identified. This is most often considered the most respectful strategy for referring to a group's identity.

Gender Affirming Care

The [Transgender Legal Defense and Educational](#) Fund identifies a list thirty major medical associations that recognize the necessity of treatments and the limiting of insurance exclusion of care.

According to the [Human Rights Campaign](#),

Gender-affirming care, sometimes referred to as transition-related care, is life-saving healthcare for transgender people of all ages. It is not a single category of services but instead is a range of services, including mental health care, medical care, and social services. At all ages, clear, well-established, evidence-based standards of care exist for who can access what form of gender affirming care, and when they are eligible to receive it.

Trans and non-binary people may experience [gender dysphoria](#), a deep sense of unease and distress that occurs when your assigned at birth identity based on biological sex does not match your gender identity. This is a diagnosis made by physicians, psychologist, or other experienced clinicians. Gender dysphoria is diagnosed when two of the major symptoms are present for at least six months. For many, they can experience symptoms for years as society does not readily accept when discomfort or distress about one's gender identity is voiced. Symptoms* vary with age, as do levels of distress, and how a person may want to live within a gender identity. Children may

- Insist and strongly want to be or represent a gender different than their assigned biological sex
- Want to dress in clothes that match their gender identity
- Prefer toys or activities of the other gender in play or fantasy, or
- Feel a strong dislike towards their genitals or want to have physical characteristics of the other gender.

As adults or as feelings intensify, a person may

- Want to alter their genitals to match their gender identity or
- Want to be treated as or referred to as their gender identity (pronouns).

**Symptoms provided do not replace professional diagnosis, but only provide some suggestions a person may experience.*

It is important to recognize that surgical responses are not initial typical medical responses to gender dysphoria. Gender affirming care starts with supportive psychological and support with the care of medical and clinical professionals. If surgical responses become part of care, this has typically taken years for this to be a decision and issues of insurance coverage or costs often prohibit such actions.

It is important to recognize that while replicable care is available, the Internet has made it easier for individuals to “self-diagnosis” and to seek treatment through short cuts available often outside the country as medical treatment (especially plastic surgery) is viewed as cheaper. It is also true that there are high quality medical treatment and providers with lots of experience abroad. Persons seeking medical interventions and treatments should be cautious. Botched surgeries can happen internally or external to the USA. It is important to seek care that is holistic and involves a variety of specialist in this area.

The main goal of gender dysphoria treatment is to help overcome feelings of distress that can lead to feelings of worthlessness, depression, anxiety, and for some suicidal ideation. A June, 2023 [population study](#) out of Denmark established people “who identify as transgender have significantly higher rates of suicide and suicide attempts compared with the rest of the population.” There are many studies that have supported this assertion which contributes to the urgency of helping families, friends, teachers and other professionals of recognizing young people and young adults who may be experiencing distress are in need of supportive community members to literally save their lives. How everyday people respond to people's distress impacts their self-acceptance and sense of value in society.

For some, coming to understanding is a stretch from what we have known and believed. However, the information has long been available, but suppressed, questioned, or found problematic in our mainstream accepted literature. These types of responses have been rooted in bias and our discomfort with most things

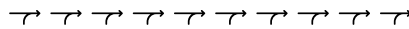
associated with the body, if it is not the mechanics of function. Here are some popular materials that may assist in developing your understanding.

Videos

- *The Trans List* – 2016 HBO documentary, currently available on *the max*. Trans people sharing perspectives.
- *The Brandon Teena Story* – 1993 documentary on the murder of a trans male available on *freevee and tubi* or rent on *Prime Video*
 - *Boys Don't Cry* is the 1999, Hilary Swank portrayal of Brandon Teena's Story (has graphic content)
- *Transmilitary* – 2018 SXSW award winning video available on [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ugk1Uj1t1p0)

Books

- *Maeve Rising: Coming Out Trans in Corporate America* (2023). Title says it all.
- *Becoming Nicole: The inspiring story of transgender actor-activist Nicole Maines and her extraordinary family* (2016). The story of a family in the midst of a discrimination case
- *Warrior Princess: A U.S. Navy Seal's Journey to Coming Out Transgender* (2013). Title says it all.



Plan to join us!

Viewpoints on Health

February 29, 2024

Guest Speaker: **Dallas Ducar**

Topic: *Gender Affirming Care*

Faculty/staff and student sessions

General public session

4:00 – 5:00 p.m.

Wilson Auditorium



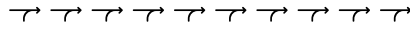
Events and Dates to Remember

Deep Impact: Native American Speaker

Wednesday, November 29, 2023

7:00 PM - 9:00 PM

Success Center 1075

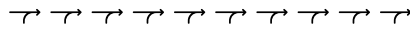


30+30: Awareness to Action Inclusive Future Tour

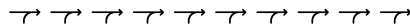
Leading public updates to demonstrate current levels of accessibility, belonging, equity, diversity, inclusion activity, celebrate the champions involved, and invite information exchange toward continuous improvement; amplifying the power of our community's collective intelligence, expertise, and skill.

Inclusive Signage

November 30, 2023, 2:00 p.m. [For more information](#)



Worlds AIDS Day
December 1, 2023



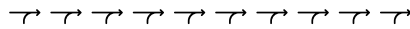
International Day of Persons with Disabilities

December 3, 2023

The United Nations raises awareness about the ways in which disabilities affect people economically, socially, and politically, and it promotes the rights of people with disabilities. It also aims to ensure the well-being and dignity of those who are disabled, by educating people to understand what it is like to live it a disability.



INTERNATIONAL DAY OF
PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES



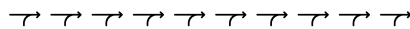
Hanukkah (or Chanukah) begins at sundown on Thursday, December 7, 2023, and ends the evening of Friday, December 15, 2023 (8 nights).

Public Menorah Lighting

Sunday, December 10, 2023

4:30 PM - 6:30 PM

Warner Commons 6



The Feast of Our Lady Guadalupe is commemorated on **December 12** by Mexican American and Latinx communities in the United States. It is a Catholic holiday in honor of the Virgin Mary, who is the patron saint of Mexico. She is one of the most important religious devotions for the Mexican people, a national symbol of the country, as well as the Patroness for the Americas.