

## **Title: A Theoretical Tribal Circle Policy Model for Positive Peace to Improve the Lives of Native Americans in the United States**

Abstract: The United States has a unique nation-to-nation relationship with and owes a trust responsibility to Indian tribes. The federal government's trust relationship with Indian tribes (which is based on treaties, agreements, statutes, court decisions, and executive orders) charges the United States with moral obligations of the highest responsibility. Yet, despite the United States' historic and sacred trust responsibility to Indian tribes, there is a history of deeply troubling and destructive federal policies and actions that have hurt Native communities, exacerbated severe inequality, and accelerated the loss of tribal cultural traditions.

Historically, Native Americans and their families have been underrepresented in the social sciences literature. Scholars have attributed this near invisibility to shifting census categories, underrepresentation in samples, and residence in more rural geographic areas. They are everywhere in the mind but "nowhere" in the lives of most Americans. That disparity and the invisibility it suggests are likely not accidental. This underrepresentation also creates a lack of reliable data and research to assist in forming policies or establishing needed programs.

In support of the possibility of moving toward a positive sustained peace, a few International policy suggestions for peace between countries, as well as cultural based teachings from the Tribal Circle Process will be shared with the audience within a medicine wheel model created by the presenter. All of us, including the federal government, have an important role in helping to improve the lives of Native Americans. Strengthening partnerships and sustaining engagement serve as linchpins to bring together the necessary resources, following a culturally appropriate model, to achieve Positive Peace and improve life outcomes for the next seven generations.