

ABSTRACT

The Native American Wellness Scale (NAWS): The Development of a Multidimensional
Quality of Life Measure for Native Americans

by

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Native Americans are at a higher risk for psychosocial, health, mental health, and substance abuse problems than other ethnic groups. Previous research suggests that many problems experienced by indigenous populations are associated with a lack of culturally appropriate assessment measures for this population, as well as the failure of providers and researchers to consider the effects of historically traumatic experiences on quality of life (QOL). The purpose of this study is to develop, refine, and evaluate the psychometric characteristics of a holistic, self-report instrument called the Native American Wellness Scale (NAWS). The present study is grounded in Native American Postcolonial Psychology and Historical Trauma Theory and uses the indigenous wellness model of the Medicine Wheel to guide the development of the NAWS. The key research question is: (a) Will the NAWS be a valid and reliable measure of wellness in a heterogeneous sample of Native Americans? It is hypothesized that the NAWS will be a valid and reliable predictor of Native American wellness. A sample of ($N \approx 182$) self-identified indigenous men and women will complete a demographics questionnaire and measures assessing wellbeing dimensions and symptoms of historical trauma. The NAWS will be developed using classical test development methods, including factor, reliability, and validity analyses. The NAWS could be a cost effective catalyst for affecting social change in Native populations by focusing on early, culturally appropriate assessment.