

A California Indigenous Perspective on Women's Wellness/Well-being Practices

Skye K. Innerarity, LMFT #104388 (She/Her)



Skye is a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist with an established private practice in Sacramento, CA, where she utilizes a genuinely warm, humorous, and direct approach to gently challenge clients and invite them to step out of their current comfort zone and step into authentic living. She advocates for culturally conscious and meaningful practices and ways of being (e.g. language revitalization, basketweaving, ceremonial practices, song and dance, traditional tattooing and piercing, etc.) as a way to actively address mental health concerns in Indigenous communities. As a Northern Sierra Miwok woman and citizen of the Lone Band of Miwok Indians, Skye intimately understands the impact of intergenerational trauma and she also understands the profound impact of clinically holding and protecting space for others to name, process, and explore their own survivance in order to further facilitate healing and growth. It is through this intersection of academic, personal, and professional experiences that Skye strives to strategically and insightfully contribute her learned and lived knowledges to her community and the individual and collective healing work ahead.

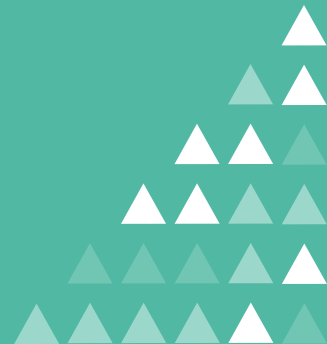


Learning Objectives

1. Define Indigenous Feminism and apply it to wellness/well-being practices.
 2. Identify ways in which California Indigenous women actively embody and enact wellness/well-being practices- paying careful attention to not only how this enhances their quality of life but also enhances the quality of life of those around them in community.
 3. Explore examples of how California Indigenous women actively embody and enact wellness/well-being practices local to Contra Costa County.
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Indigenous Feminism

“... [is] an intersectional theory and practice of feminism that focuses on decolonization, Indigenous sovereignty, and human rights for Indigenous women and their families” (Gearon, 2021).



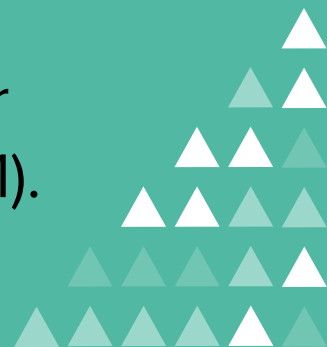
Decolonization and Indigenous Sovereignty

“... requires we not only seek rights but reclaim and uphold our traditional roles and responsibilities, our feminism is as diverse as the hundreds of tribes across Turtle Island, each at their own stage of post-colonial evolution and with their own beliefs and practices” (Gearon, 2021).



Human Rights for Indigenous Women and Their Families

“...aspects to this developing feminism that are uniquely Indigenous, key issues like the disproportionate sexual abuse of Indigenous women and missing and murdered Indigenous women epidemic, priorities like our responsibility to Mother Earth and our homelands, and key barriers like the reality of colonization and its ongoing attempts to assimilate and terminate us (or rather, assimilate us to terminate us)” (Gearon, 2021).



Examples of Embodied Indigenous Feminism

Native American Health Center

“Native American Health Center provides a variety of weekly group sessions and quarterly community events, including an elders support group, substance abuse recovery group and Positive Indian Parenting Groups. The Native Wellness Center is designed to strengthen family communications, build a strong community, and to help Native Americans navigate the complex human service systems in Contra Costa County. Expected results from these activities include increased culturally relevant mental health services offered to Native American Community in Contra Costa County” (Contra Costa County Mental Health Services, 2010).

- Home Page: <https://www.nativehealth.org/>
- Upcoming Events Calendar: <https://www.nativehealth.org/events/>
 - Indigenous Red Market: <https://www.indigenousredmarket.com/>

Examples of Embodied Indigenous Feminism

Sogorea Te' Land Trust

“Sogorea Te' Land Trust is an urban Indigenous women-led land trust based in the San Francisco Bay Area that facilitates the return of Indigenous land to Indigenous people... Through the practices of rematriation, cultural revitalization, and land restoration, Sogorea Te' calls on Native and non-native peoples to heal and transform the legacies of colonization, genocide, and patriarchy and to do the work our ancestors and future generations are calling us to do” (*Purpose and vision*, 2023).

- Home Page: <https://sogoreate-landtrust.org/>
- Shuumi Land Tax: <https://sogoreate-landtrust.org/pay-the-shuumi-land-tax/>
- Other Ways to Engage: <https://sogoreate-landtrust.org/other-ways-to-engage/>

Takeaways and Personal Application

- “Indigenous feminism requires us to not only fulfill our cultural roles but also to correct how those roles have been twisted by colonization and patriarchy. It demands that we ask difficult questions and have difficult discussions. We must question and challenge even what’s been taught to us as ‘traditional’” (Gearon, 2021).
- **Indigenous Feminism is embodied and all benefit from it!**

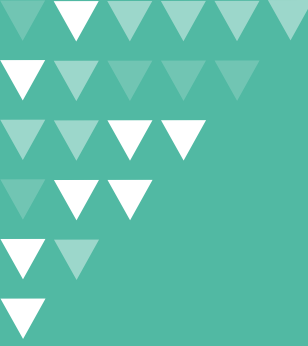


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