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CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE
ON
NEW MEXICO TRIBAL LAND
1999 - 2004

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I. Introduction: Native Americans and Crime

There are twenty-two distinct pueblos or tribes in the state of New Mexico (see Appendix I for a map of New Mexico's tribal land). For the most part, the tribes are grouped in the North-central and Northwest portion of the state. The tribes have a distinct heritage, and each operates under its own sovereign government. Nonetheless, the tribes share commonalities in terms of history and current social concerns. They are impacted by many of the same issues—from poverty and underemployment to domestic violence and alcohol related crime. And though the tribes are sovereign entities, they are intricately linked to the outside world.

Recent national reports have highlighted the crime problem amongst Native American populations (see Greenfield and Smith's 1999 report, "American Indians and Crime." For local trends, see the Statistical Analysis Center's 2004 report, "Crime and the New Mexico Reservation: An Analysis of Crime on Native American Land (1996-2002)."). Interesting, a 2004 report conducted by this office did not find that tribal rates of violent crimes exceed those of the city, state, or nation. While a few of the tribes were found to have high rates across several offending categories, the research indicated that most New Mexico tribes do not evidence high rates of violent crime.

Reports indicate that Native Americans suffer victimization at higher rates than the general population. The average violent crime rate among Native Americans is 124 per 1000 persons 12 or older—a rate 2 ½ times the national rate (Greenfield and Smith 1999:2). According to the Office of Justice Program's 1999 Fiscal Year Program Plan report,¹ rape and sexual assault, aggravated assault, simple assault, and robbery rates translate into 1 violent crime for every 8 Native Americans 12 or older, compared to 1 for every 20 residents 12 or older nationally. Additionally, these violent crimes are correlated with alcohol abuse. Alcohol related offending also constitutes a significant problem for Native Americans (Greenfield and Smith 1999). Native American youth—while only one percent of the national youth population—are arrested at double (or in some cases triple) the rate of other youth (Bad Wound 2000). Gang activity has increased among Native American youth; in 2000 it was estimated that there were at least 113 gangs on American tribal lands (Bad Wound 2000). Gang problems are greater for larger tribes. In an OJJDP study of gang violence in Indian Country conducted in 2000, researchers found that 7% of tribes with populations of less than 2000 had gang problems, while 69% of those with populations over 2000 had gang problems (Major et al. 2000:4).

Where victimization rates are high, women and children often suffer the worst. Among low-income Native American women, rates of domestic abuse (physical and sexual) are higher than among average American women (BMC Medicine News Release May 23, 2004). There are estimates that one in ever four girls and one in every seven boys will

¹ <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/99progplan/chap11.htm>

suffer sexual abuse on tribal lands (Indian Health Service and Office for Victims of Crimes 2003, "Child Abuse Project"²). Though existing data indicate that victimization rates are higher for Native American women and children, much of the available crime data is thought to be unreliable, due to low levels of reporting and a lack of law enforcement manpower available to record and maintain crime reports in tribes across the country.³ In recent decades, the Justice Department has funded multiple projects aimed at improving crime data collection on tribal lands. As reports of the Native American victimization problem were published, the government also increased funding for the treatment and counseling of victims of crime. The Indian Health Service Child Abuse Project provides telepediatric medical care, affording medical evaluation and quality health care to sexually and physically abused children in rural and isolated areas.

As the state with the fifth largest Native American population, New Mexico has a unique interest in issues impacting Native Americans. Issues impacting the tribal community have a significant effect on the state as a whole. This report explores the problem of reported child sexual abuse among Native Americans in New Mexico. The report draws upon data collected by the All Faiths Safehouse of Albuquerque. The Safehouse maintains a database of all child abuse cases reported to and processed by them.

II. Literature Review

Child Sexual Abuse in the United States

Child abuse is a national problem. In 2002, the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System reported 1400 child fatalities resulting from abuse or neglect. Though child abuse rates have increased in recent years, experts disagree as to whether this represents a true increase in the incidence of child abuse and neglect, or whether reporting procedures have improved (NCANDS). Though numbers have increased, data most likely continues to suffer from underreporting. Additionally, the National Crime Victimization Survey does not include victims under twelve, thus children and child abuse are not represented.

Children suffer from sexual abuse at high rates. According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, 33% of all victims of sexual assault were aged 12 to 17, while 34% were under 12 (in a sample of those cases reported to law enforcement from 1991 to 1996) (Snyder 2000:2). The age of victims varies based on the type of offense; juveniles were victims in 84% of forcible fondling cases, 79% of forcible sodomy cases, and 75% of sexual assault with an object cases (Snyder 2000). Approximately half of these victims were under the age of 12 (Snyder 2000). In the case of forcible rape, juveniles were the victims in 46% of cases. In another survey of sexual assault and rape, researchers found that 90% of victims under 12 knew their offender (Chaiken and Robinson in Greenfield 1997:iii). A self-report survey of rapists and sex offenders serving time in prison found that two-thirds of the offenders admitted to raping victims under 18; 58% of those individuals admitted that their victims were 12 or younger (Chaiken and Robinson in

² <http://www.ihs.gov/nonmedicalprograms/cap/index.asp>

³ <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/99progplan/chap11.htm>

Greenfield 1997:iii). A 1994 BJS study of eleven states and Washington D.C. found that half the victims who reported being raped in 1992 were under 18 years old (Langan and Harlow 1994).⁴

In general, girls are more likely to be sexually victimized than are boys. Females were six times more likely than males to be the victims of sexual assaults (in a sample of those cases reported to law enforcement from 1991 to 1996) (Snyder 2000:4). Seven percent of girls in grades five to eight, and twelve percent in grades nine through twelve report that they've been sexually abused (RAINN Statistics). Though not at such high rates, boys are also victims. Three percent of boys in the fifth to eighth grades and five percent in ninth to tenth report have been sexually abused (RAINN Statistics). The peak year of victimization for girls is 14, while the peak year for boys is 4 (Snyder 2000).

In terms of victim-offender relationship, 27% of all offenders were family members of victims (in a sample of those cases reported to law enforcement from 1991 to 1996) (Snyder 2000:10). As child victims get older, they are increasingly likely to have been assaulted by non-family members. Forty-nine percent of victims under age six, 42% of those aged six to eleven, and 24 % of those twelve to seventeen were assaulted by family members (Snyder 2000:10). Female offenders (4% of cases reported to law enforcement) are most likely to victimize children under 6 (Snyder 2000:8).

Child Sexual Abuse on Tribal Lands

A recent literature review indicated that there have been five self-report studies of sexual abuse and two studies of reported sexual abuse cases among Native Americans (Malley-Morrison and Hines 2004). In general, these studies suggest that the rates of child sexual abuse among Native Americans reflect those of the larger society—between 14 and 18 percent of females and between 2 and 3 percent of males (Malley-Morrison and Hines 2004:83). These studies also indicate that child sexual abuse rates likely differ from tribe to tribe. Some studies indicate that rates may actually be higher among Native Americans. A study of adults from a southwestern tribe found that 49% of the adult women surveyed and 14% of the adult men had experienced child sexual abuse (Robin et al. 1997). This same study revealed that in the majority of cases, the perpetrators were either family members or others known to the victim, and that the majority for both males and females involved penetration (Robin et al. 1997).

Any analysis of child abuse or domestic violence on tribal lands must be conducted with attention to the unique cultural heritage and experience of Native Americans. Though Native American women experience the highest rate of violence (when compared to females of other ethnic groups); it is estimated that only 70% of sexual assaults are reported, so existing data suffers from underreporting (Bhungalia 2001). Tribal law enforcement—like that off tribal lands—is not always well trained to process domestic

⁴ June 22, 1994 (202-307-0784)

abuse cases. According an activist with Indigenous Perspectives, native women may be treated as if their claims of abuse are false (Bhungalia 2001).

In a reservation community, 911 would dispatch police to a scene of domestic violence, but police would call the victim by cell phone and decide himself when or if he should go to the victim's home. Often the women would wait for an hour and other times the abuser would answer when the police called, and would say everything was fine, and there was no need for them to come. Native women...who called for help were often re-victimized by the police (Wilson in Bhungalia 2001).

Not only do Native American victims of abuse learn to distrust local law enforcement. They also have an inherent distrust of "the system." Historically, Native Americans were subject to internment, forced sterilization, separation from their children, and other atrocities. The legacy of these experiences is a mistrust of outside agencies. Consequently, when women and children are not being well-served by local tribal agencies, they may be resistant to seeking help off of the reservation. Additionally, where outside agencies do come across cases of domestic violence, they may ignore these cases due to "alleged confusion between federal and tribal jurisdiction" (Bhungalia 2001). This becomes especially complicated where the perpetrators are non-native and the victims are native (70% of violence against native women is committed by perpetrators of different races) (Bhungalia 2001). Thus, justice may be illusive for these women, as cases often fall through the cracks.

When it comes to child abuse (sexual and physical), cultural differences in parenting may impact the way cases are processed and handled. Because Native Americans have a long history of losing children to the Anglo-American culture, there may be extreme distrust of Child Protective Services and other related agencies (Malley-Morrison and Hines 2004:60). In interactions with native families, child welfare workers may perceive native parents' emotional withdrawal and passivity as neglect. In fact, these behaviors may be rooted in fears of the old historical reality—once a child is taken away, "there is no hope for return" (Malley-Morrison and Hines 2004:60).

Child sexual abuse has long-term negative impacts for victims. Survivors suffer from anxiety, sleep disorders and developmental difficulties, running away and school drop out, and later from higher rates of alcoholism, drug use, depression, suicide attempts, and involvement in abusive intimate relationships (Malley-Morrison and Hines 2004:91). Indeed, the incidence of adult domestic violence is higher among Native Americans than among the general population. In a study of 341 Native American women seeking health care at a Navajo health care facility, 52.5% reported at least one episode of spousal abuse in their lifetimes (Fairchild et al. 1998:1515). Children who witness domestic violence may be more likely to enter into abusive relationships. Children who experience abuse may be more likely to become abusers themselves.

III. Data and Methodology

The Statistical Analysis Center obtained a data set detailing reported child sexual abuse cases in Albuquerque and the surrounding area from 1999 to May 2003. It came to us as Safehouse data from All Faiths Receiving Home. Established in 1956, All Faiths is a comprehensive prevention, intervention, and treatment agency serving abused, neglected and traumatized children and their families. The home provides services to 2,700 children and family members each year. The Safehouse operates under the auspices of All Faiths. Trained Safehouse staff members conduct hundreds of forensic interviews with suspected victims of child sexual abuse each year. The Safehouse integrates their work with other official agencies (e.g. Albuquerque Police Department, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Children, Youth, and Families, Federal Bureau of Investigation). Agency members also present pertinent information in court proceedings, where prosecution occurs.

A multi disciplinary response to alleged cases of abuse is employed in Albuquerque to improve case processing and reduce trauma to the victims. The entrance of a case into the system usually begins with a referral to the Human Services Department or police agency by an outside source, such as a teacher or family member. Sometimes a representative of one of these agencies suspects or is made aware of abuse firsthand, and so the agency becomes involved. Once the alleged abuse is brought to the attention of these agencies, an initial interview with the child is conducted. The preliminary interview is completed by either the detective or social worker (both are present). The purpose of this interview is to establish that the child is stating that sexual abuse occurred and to assess the child's safety (APD, et al., 1993). A second, more extensive interview, is conducted at the Safehouse. Representatives from each agency may attend this interview: Children's Protective Services, Albuquerque Police Department or Bernalillo County Sheriff's Office, and the District Attorney's Office. These professionals sit in a separate room and are able to watch the interview via a television monitor. If there are questions that they want asked, they inform the interviewer who has an ear piece.

The Safehouse data is quite detailed, providing information on the nature of the offense and the disclosure, offender and victim demographics, and the relationship of the victim to the offender. The data came to us in a Microsoft Access format. We extracted the tables we needed into an SPSS database to conduct analyses.

This analysis is exploratory and descriptive. Our primary purpose is to determine whether there are any differences between reported child sexual abuse cases that originate on tribal lands as compared to non-tribal areas. We conduct primarily bivariate analyses using chi-square statistics and ANOVA to determine statistical significance.

These results should be interpreted with the understanding that this data is representative only of cases that are reported to officials and are referred to the Safehouse for a forensic interview. Thus, the cases here may not be representative of all child sexual abuse cases either on or off the reservation. These cases may be different from all child sexual abuse

cases in terms of offense severity or difficulty in ascertaining the facts of the case. Further, it does not represent child sexual abuse on all of the reservations since only a handful use the services of the Safehouse.⁵ However, this data is very useful for the purposes of beginning to garner some understanding of differences in reported cases of child sexual abuse that may exist between tribal and non-tribal areas.

IV. Analyses

As our primary task was to determine any differences between “tribal” and “non-tribal” cases reported to the Safehouse, the first step was to differentiate between these two categories. We were able to identify tribal cases by the referral agency and the law agency handling the case. Of 4172 cases, we found that 428 cases were “tribal,” while 3311 were “non-tribal” cases. We were not able to identify tribal or non-tribal affiliation for 433 cases, thus, those cases were excluded from our analysis. Cases are defined as each child who comes into the Safehouse for an interview. Thus, there may be a single incident represented by multiple cases.

Demographics

We examined several demographic variables for both the victims and the accused perpetrators. These variables include age at the time of the interview, gender and ethnicity and residential status of the victim.⁶ Analyses indicate that there are some demographical differences among tribal versus non-tribal cases. The results are presented in detail below.

Victim demographics

- *Victim gender*

As is the case in most studies of child sexual abuse, this analysis reveals that the majority of victims are female, for both the tribal and non-tribal groups (see Table 1). It is interesting to note that fewer tribal cases involve boys. This relationship is statistically significant ($p=.01$).

⁵ Nine of the twenty-two tribes utilized the services of the Safehouse at least once during the period for which we have data.

⁶ The age variable noted above had to be computed; we did not have any official “age at time of incident” data. We did have date of birth information for both the accused and victims as well as the date of the interview. To maintain consistency, we computed an age at time of interview variable for both the victim and offender. Additionally, often children are abused repeatedly, so there is no one age that captures the age at incident. Thus, age at interview is the most standardized age that can be used for this data.

Table 1. Victim gender.

	Tribal Cases	Non-Tribal Cases
Gender		
Male	23.0%	29.3%
Female	77.0%	70.7%
N	374	2970

($\chi^2 = 6.454$, $df = 1$, $p = .01$)

Victim age

We analyzed age in two ways: categorically and average (mean) age. We constructed a categorical age variable for the victims, utilizing the age at interview. Note that there are no cases for victims under two years of age; the Safehouse generally does not handle these cases. Victims this young are unable to participate in the forensic interview process, which is the primary service provided by the Safehouse.⁷

The age of victims is similar for the tribal and non-tribal cases when looking at age both categorically and at average age. According to this data, of the three age groups, children interviewed at the Safehouse are most likely to fall into the 6 to 11 year old category. The mean age of victims is approximately 9 years old for both groups.

Table 2. Victim age at interview

	Tribal	Non-tribal
Age at interview		
Under 6 years old	27.3%	26.8%
6 to 11 years old	45.7%	47.9%
12 to 17 years old	27.0%	25.3%
N	374	2966
Mean Age at Interview		
Mean (standard dev.)	9.2 (3.99)	9.0 (3.81)
N	374	2966

n/s

Victim ethnicity

Table 3 details the ethnicity of the victim. The majority of victims in tribal cases are Native American, while the majority of victims in non-tribal cases are Hispanic, followed by Caucasian. Very few of the victims in tribal cases are Caucasian, Hispanic, or Black.

⁷ This is an important point, when one considers that national data indicates that "children three and younger are the most frequent victims of child fatalities (National Clearinghouse on Child Abuse and Neglect Information 2004:2). Sexual and physical abuse certainly impact these youngest children as well as those over two.

Table 3. Ethnicity of Victim.

	Tribal cases	Non-tribal cases
Ethnicity		
Native American	97.9%	6.3%
Caucasian	.8%	39.0%
Hispanic	.8%	50.0%
Other	.5%	4.7%
N	374	2978

$\chi^2 = 2127.31, df = 3, p < .001$

● *Residential Status*

Though the database does not indicate where the child was living at the time of the abuse, it does indicate where the child is staying at the time of interview at the Safehouse. A smaller percentage of victims in the tribal cases are living at home at the time of the interview; a slightly greater percentage of victims in the tribal cases are living with friends or relatives. These differences are statistically significant. Literature indicates that Native people are more likely to live in extended family arrangements, so these findings are not surprising. It is also interesting to note the high proportion of Native American children living outside of the home (such as in foster care, a shelter, correctional facility, etc.), both in aggregate and as compared to non-tribal cases. Anecdotal information suggests that tribes rarely have facilities on the reservation to house child victims. Since many of the cases in the current analysis come from the Navajo reservation, it could be that more of these placement options are available than with smaller tribes. It is also possible that Native American children are housed in facilities off the reservation, at least on a temporary basis. These data must be viewed with caution, since the child's residence at the time of the interview might constitute an emergency placement, and not a more permanent one selected by child protective services or the court.

Table 4. Residential Status of Child at Interview.

	Tribal	Non-tribal
Residential status		
Living at home	62.4%	75.3%
Living with friend/relative	17.4%	7.3%
Out of home	19.9%	17.3%
On street/homeless	.3%	.3%
N	287	2390

$\chi^2 = 38.45, df = 3, p < .001$

Accused offender's demographics

Gender of accused

As would be expected, the vast majority of accused perpetrators are male. However, there were significantly more female accused offenders among non-tribal cases ($p < .05$).

Table 5. Gender of Accused

	Tribal	Non-tribal
Male	95.0%	91.6%
Female	5.0%	8.4%
N	318	2368

$\chi^2 = 4.33$, $df = 1$, $p < .05$

Age of accused

The age of the accused was examined both categorically and as an average. The categorical age variable included here is not one that we constructed; rather, it is from the original Safehouse data. Though it's limited in terms of detail, this variable has much more complete information than the mean age that we constructed, which was missing dates of birth.

According to the Safehouse, approximately 82% of the accused in the tribal cases are adults over 18 years of age, while 80% of those in the non-tribal cases are over 18. The remaining accused perpetrators are younger than 18. The differences are not statistically significant. The average age of accused offenders among tribal cases is approximately 31, and is about 32 for non-tribal cases. Again, this difference is not statistically significant.

Table 6. Accused Age: Categorical Breakdown.

	Tribal Cases	Non-Tribal Cases
Age of accused		
Adult Over 18	81.9%	80.4%
Teen 13-18	13.9%	13.7%
Child under 13	4.2%	5.9%
N	337	2416
Mean age (standard dev.)	31.3 (14.50)	31.96 (13.95)
N	151	1466

n/s

- *Ethnicity of accused*

As one might expect, the majority of the accused in tribal cases are Native American, while the majority of the accused in non-tribal cases are Hispanic. As with the accused age variable, a substantial amount of data was missing. The percentages below reflect ethnicity only for those cases for which this information was available. In 19% of the tribal cases accused ethnicity was missing, while in 25% of non-tribal cases it was missing.

Table 7. Ethnicity of Accused.

	Tribal cases	Non-tribal cases
Ethnicity		
Native American	94.5%	5.9%
Caucasian	1.6%	37.1%
Hispanic	2.3%	52.6%
Other	1.6%	4.4%
N	308	2237

$\chi^2 = 1538.92, df = 3, p < .001$

Victim and accused demographic relationship

In this section, we look at the relationship between the victim and accused offender in terms of their race and gender to determine whether offenses tend to be committed against victims of the same race and gender as the accused. In terms of race, we looked specifically at cases involving either Native American victims or accused offender.

- *Race dyad in cases involving Native Americans*

When we compared the Native American status of the accused offender and the victim by tribal versus non-tribal status, we found that tribal cases were significantly more likely to be intraracial. That is, child abuse committed by Native Americans off of tribal lands was more likely to include a victim who is not Native American as compared to those offenses committed on tribal lands. This finding is intuitive, as Native Americans living in urban (or other non-tribal areas) might be more likely to be exposed to non-Native victims.

Table 8. Race Dyad.

	Native American accused	
	Tribal	Non-tribal
Native American victim	98.5%	78.4%
Non-Native American victim	1.5%	21.6%
N	261	125

$\chi^2 = 46.08, df=1, p<.001$

Gender dyad

We also compared the gender relationship between accused offender and victim. Most cases involve a male perpetrator and female victim, regardless of tribal affiliation. While there was not a statistically significant difference between tribal and non-tribal cases, when the accused perpetrator is female, non-tribal cases appear to be more likely to include a male victim. However, this apparent relationship should be interpreted with great caution due to the very small number of female perpetrators.

Table 9. Gender Dyad.

	Tribal		Non-Tribal	
	Male accused	Female accused	Male accused	Female accused
Female victim	80.3%	75%	76.5%	56.9%
Male Victim	19.7%	25%	23.5%	43.1%
N	269	16	2034	167

n/s

Relationship to Accused

Relationship between accused and victim

The Safehouse data details the relationship of the victim to the accused. The original data is quite extensive, as it allows for open-ended data entry (not a forced categorization). Thus, we found many narrative descriptions of the offender: everything from "crack-dealer" to "classmate" to "Grandpa Joe." The following table details our initial offender categorization, relative to the child victim, by tribal or non-tribal status of the case.

Table 10. Relationship of Accused to Victim.

Relationship	Tribal	Non-tribal
Parent/Step	22.2%	32.0%
Parents's boy/girlfriend	7.9%	10.4%
Sibling (including step)	2.5%	4.2%
Extended family	43.4%	19.5%
Known, unrelated	22.3%	31.7%
Stranger	1.6%	2.2%
N	378	3049

$\chi^2 = 111.79, df=5, p<.001$

There is a statistically significant difference in the distribution of the tribal and non-tribal cases. As can be seen in table 10, non-tribal cases were more likely to include parents or parents' boy/girlfriends than tribal cases. The tribal cases were much more likely to include extended family members (43.4% compared to 19.5%). We might expect this, as research indicates that white children are more likely to live given that Native American youth are more likely to live in extended family arrangements than white children. Using Census data, Fields (2001) found that 23.8% of Native American children live in extended family households, while 10% of white (non-Hispanic) and 21.9% of Hispanic youth live in extended family arrangements (Fields 2001:11).

- *Relationship by victim age*

We also compared the distribution of cases by relationship, age of victim and tribal affiliation. The reader may recall that the literature reports 49% of victims under age six, 42% of those aged six to eleven, and 24 % of those twelve to seventeen were assaulted by *family members* (Snyder 2000:10). Interestingly, although the percentages show the same pattern (a decrease in the percentage of cases attributed to family members) as victim's age, the percentages for the Safehouse data are substantially higher—for both the tribal and non-tribal cases. Among cases reported to the Albuquerque Safehouse, family members appear to be more likely perpetrators.

According to Table 11, tribal cases are slightly more likely to include family members in each of the three age groups; data indicated that grandparents, aunts/uncles, and cousins were slightly more likely to be perpetrators amongst tribal cases. Consistent with Snyder (2000) in both tribal and non-tribal cases, as the child gets older, the perpetrator is increasingly likely to be a non-family member. This is intuitive, as children's extra-familial relationships grow as they age. Amongst the non-tribal cases, these are statistically significant ($X^2 = 54.79, df=2, p <.001$). This indicates that there is some significant relationship between the age of the child and whether the perpetrator is a family or non-family member, but only for non-tribal cases. As noted, this difference also exists in the tribal cases, but it is not statistically significant, suggesting that they are equally likely to be victims of abuse by family members regardless of age.

Table 11. Age of Child By Relationship to Perpetrator: Family or Non-family.

	Tribal		Non-tribal	
	Family	Non-Family	Family	Non-Family
Age of Child				
Under 6 years old	82.1% (69)	17.9% (15)	77.1% (562)	22.9% (167)
6 to 11 years old	76.8% (119)	23.2% (36)	63.5% (841)	36.5% (483)
12- 17 years old	72.3% (68)	27.7% (26)	60.1% (431)	39.9% (286)
N	256	77	1834	936

Characteristics of abuse episode

In this section, we explore the characteristics of the abuse episode that are available from the Safehouse database to determine whether the cases reported to the Safehouse differ by tribal status. That is, we want to determine whether the type of abuse reported by victims who live in tribal areas differs from those who live off of tribal areas. We begin by describing the type of abuse for which the child was referred. We then look at disclosure; specifically, whether the victim disclosed and what type of abuse was disclosed. We also explore whether gender or victim-offender relationship influences disclosure among tribal and non-tribal cases. Finally, we examine the extent of injury and duration of abuse for tribal and non-tribal cases.

Referral type

We compared the type of abuse for which children were referred. The original Safehouse categories included overlapping offense types, such as witness to crime and physical abuse. In these cases, we chose the "worst" offense listed as the type of abuse. This allowed us to retain meaningful categories that had enough cases to make comparisons possible. We found that tribal cases were significantly more likely to include a referral for sexual abuse relative to the other two categories. This difference was statistically significant when compared to non-tribal cases. This finding is perhaps not too surprising; it would seem that more serious cases would be referred to an outside agency from tribal lands.

Table 12. Referral type.

	Tribal	Non-tribal
Referral type		
Sexual abuse	92.8%	85.3%
Physical abuse	4.4%	8.4%
Witness to crime	2.8%	6.3%
N	428	3311

$\chi^2 = 17.7, df = 2, p < .001$

Disclosure

Next, we explored whether there was a difference in disclosing between the two groups. We found that cases from non-tribal areas were slightly more likely to disclose abuse. When one considers historic distrust of government and social service agencies amongst Native Americans, this finding is not too surprising. It is also possible that forensic interviewing strategies must be sensitive to cultural differences in the child's attribution and interpretation of behaviors, styles of presentation, and comfort in culturally-specific interview environments. In sum, disclosure is as much an artifact of the forensic

interview process as the nature of the abuse episode in question. For whatever the reason, the difference in rates of disclosure between the two groups was statistically significant.

Table 13. Whether abuse was disclosed.

	Tribal	Non-tribal
Disclosure		
Disclosed abuse	60.0%	65.7%
Did not disclose	40.0%	34.3%
N	428	3306

$\chi^2 = 5.38, df=1, p<.05$

Type of disclosure reported

For cases in which disclosure occurred, the majority of incidents involved sexual abuse—in both tribal and non-tribal cases. Eighty-eight percent of tribal cases involved sexual abuse, while 84% of non-tribal cases did. It should be noted that disclosure follows the same pattern as referral reason. That is, slightly more cases of sexual abuse are disclosed among tribal cases as compared to non-tribal cases. However, these differences were not statistically significant.

Table 14. Type of Disclosure Reported.

	Tribal	Non-tribal
Type of disclosure reported		
Sexual abuse	88.7%	83.8%
Physical abuse	7.0%	10.4%
Witness to crime	4.3%	5.9%
N	257	2173

n/s

The disclosure of criminal sexual contact is more common than criminal sexual penetration amongst both groups. Differences between the groups are not statistically significant. However, criminal sexual contact appears to be slightly more common among tribal cases as compared to non-tribal cases, while criminal sexual penetration is more common among non-tribal cases.

Table 15. Disclosure of Criminal Sexual Contact or Criminal Sexual Penetration.

	Tribal	Non-tribal
Criminal Sexual Contact		
Yes	66.7% (164)	62.3% (1223)
No	33.3% (82)	37.7% (741)
Criminal Sexual Penetration		
Yes	43.1% (106)	47.0% (924)
No	56.9% (140)	53.0% (1040)

n/s

Disclosure by family status

We recoded the disclosure variable into "none" versus some sort of disclosure (e.g. witness to domestic violence, sexual abuse) to see whether relationship type impacted a child's disclosure for the two groups. Results are detailed below, in Table 16.

Table 16. Disclosure By Family Status.

	Tribal			Non-Tribal		
	Immediate family	Extended family	Non-family	Immediate family	Extended family	Non-family
Disclosed	62.1%	66.5%	63.3%	63.2%	70.5%	73.9%
Did not disclose	37.9%	33.5%	36.7%	36.8%	29.5%	26.1%
N	124	164	90	1418	594	1033

Amongst the non-tribal cases, as the relationship between the victim and accused becomes less intimate, disclosure increases. This relationship is statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 33.22$, $df=2$, $p<.001$). We might expect these results; children may be less likely to disclose where there is an intimate bond with the perpetrator. Interestingly, there was not a significant difference in disclosure among the tribal cases, although they were most likely to disclose if the accused offender was extended family. When comparing the results between tribal and non-tribal cases, the only statistically significant difference ($\chi^2 = 4.66$, $df=1$, $p<.05$) was found in disclosing when the abuser is not related. Specifically, non-tribal cases were much more likely to involve disclosure when the accused offender was not related to the victim; the tribal versus non-tribal membership did not matter for disclosures involving family members.

Type of disclosure by gender

We also examined the impacts of gender on type of abuse disclosed within the sample. Results are detailed in Table 17.

Table 17. Type of Act Disclosed by Child's Gender.

Type of Act	Tribal		Non-Tribal	
	Female	Male	Female	Male
Sexual abuse	92.4%	63.9%	89.8%	64.7%
Other	7.6%	36.1%	10.2%	35.3%
N	185	36	1468	481

The gender differences are quite clear in the above table. In both tribal and non-tribal cases, the vast majority involving female victims include sexual abuse (close to 90% in

both groups). The majority of cases involving male victims are also more likely to involve sexual abuse, though the differences are not as great (about 65% in both groups). While there is a significant gendered difference, there is not a statistically significant difference between the tribal versus non-tribal status of the groups. In other words, the type of abuse disclosed by male or female victims does not vary by tribal or non-tribal membership.

Degree of injury to child

The table below details any injuries sustained by the child as a result of the abuse. The results were quite similar for both groups. The largest response category for each was "none" (no injuries), followed by the mild category. Injuries in the moderate and severe categories were relatively rare in this sample. While it is not statistically significant, it is interesting to note that severe abuse is more likely to be reported among non-tribal cases.

Table 18. Injury to Child.

	Tribal	Non-tribal
Injury		
None	61.7% (82)	61.2% (737)
Mild	34.6% (46)	31.3% (377)
Moderate	2.3% (3)	3.0% (36)
Severe	1.5% (2)	4.6% (55)

n/s

Duration of abuse

For both groups, most of the abuse cases occurred over the period of one day (46% for tribal, 51% for non-tribal cases). Interestingly, the next largest response category for both of the groups was six months to five years, followed by two days to six months. Least common were cases lasting longer than five years. The differences detailed in Table 19 were not statistically significant.

Table 19. Duration of Abuse.

	Tribal	Non-tribal
Duration		
One Day	46.3% (57)	50.8% (565)
2 days to 6 months	20.3% (25)	20.2% (225)
6 months to 5 years	28.5% (35)	25.3% (281)
Greater than five years	4.9% (6)	3.7% (41)

n/s

V. Conclusion and discussion

The primary purpose of this set of analyses was to determine whether there are any differences between cases originating from tribal areas versus other areas. The data discussed here can only tell us about the cases reported to authorities, and of those, only those referred to the Albuquerque Safehouse. Thus, we cannot speculate on the actual extent of child physical or sexual abuse in New Mexico, and cannot determine whether there are any differences in the amount of abuse that occurs on or off tribal lands. We can, however, discuss the differences in cases reported to the Albuquerque Safehouse.

While cases originating from tribal lands were similar to other cases in many respects, we did find some statistically significant differences. These findings are discussed in more detail below.

The majority of cases that are reported involve female victims and male perpetrators. However, there is a greater proportion of male victims and female perpetrators among non-tribal cases as compared to tribal cases.

As one might expect, the majority of tribal cases involve Native American offenders and victims; relatively few Native Americans appear amongst the non-tribal offenders and victims. When looking only at offenders who are Native American, we found that tribal cases almost exclusively included Native American victims while non-tribal cases involved a greater proportion of non-Native American victims. This finding is perhaps not surprising due to the demographic make-up of tribal versus non-tribal areas.

One interesting discovery was that although most victims were living at home at the time of the interview, cases originating from tribal areas were more likely to include victims who live with friends or relatives as compared to non-tribal cases. These findings speak to the culturally specific and unique living arrangements of Native American youth. The literature supports this conclusion. According to the Native American Cultural Center in Vermillion, South Dakota, the extended family is the basic family unit.⁸ This differs from the Anglo definition of the family unit, which typically includes only immediate family. A recent Census Population Report of the living arrangements of American children revealed that 36% of Native American children lived in traditional nuclear families (two married biological parents; only full-siblings present; no relatives or friends living with the family), compared to 62% of white children, 48% of Hispanic children, and 26% of black children⁹ (Fields 2001:4).

The victim-offender relationship is also of interest. Our analyses yielded results consistent with the above discussion. Amongst non-tribal cases, perpetrators were more

⁸ See <http://www.usd.edu/trio/nac.shtml>

⁹ The percentage of black children (and perpetrators) is extremely small in the Safehouse data; it is too small to warrant a comparison.

likely to be the parent of the victim (32% as opposed to 22%), as well as boy or girlfriend of a biological parent (10.4% as opposed to 7.9%). However, amongst tribal cases, perpetrators were significantly more likely to be extended family members—43% of tribal perpetrators versus 19.5% of non-tribal offenders. The more varied family and living arrangements of Native American youth appear to be associated with this relationship—to who it is that victimizes them.

In analyses of type and severity of abuse, we discovered some differences between the tribal and non-tribal cases. We began this portion of the analysis by looking at the type of cases referred. Most cases involved sexual abuse. The Safehouse specializes in sexual abuse cases, so this finding is not surprising. Tribal cases were significantly more likely to involve reports of sexual abuse (93%) relative to other types of abuse referrals as compared to non-tribal (85%) cases.

We then looked at any differences in tendency to disclose. We found that non-tribal victims were slightly more likely to disclose abuse than tribal victims (65.7% versus 60%). This is not surprising, given the history of distrust between Native Americans and governmental agencies. As to differences between our two groups, tribal were more likely to disclose sexual abuse, while the non-tribal group were slightly more likely to disclose physical abuse, although the differences were not statistically significant. Further analysis of disclosure found that the types of abuse disclosed mirrored the types of abuse referred. We found that tribal referrals were slightly more likely to disclose sexual abuse (89% versus 84%), while non-tribal referrals were slightly more likely to disclose physical abuse (10.4% versus 7%).

Next, we examined the victim-offender relationship and its impact on disclosure. There was only one statistically significant difference found between tribal and non-tribal cases. Where the victim and offender were not related, disclosure was more likely to occur among non-tribal cases.

Finally, we found that among non-tribal cases only, disclosure increased as the intimacy of the relationship decreased. This was not true of tribal cases: disclosure was equally likely regardless of the victim-offender relationship. These differences may again be rooted in the different community structures of Native Americans. Youthful Native Americans (especially rural New Mexican tribes) may have more exposure to extended family members, non-related adults, and other community members than non-Native American children. Thus, within the tribal cases themselves, the type of relationship may have less impact on a child's disclosure of abuse.

Recommendations for further research

The Safehouse data provides an excellent glimpse into the factors surrounding child sexual abuse. We are able to examine differences in cases originating from tribal areas as compared to non-tribal areas. In general, data sharing across tribal and non-tribal lines is quite limited. This data has provided us with a means of examining a very sensitive issue

and bridging that communication gap. Ideally, further research would include data that originates from tribal police and social service agencies.

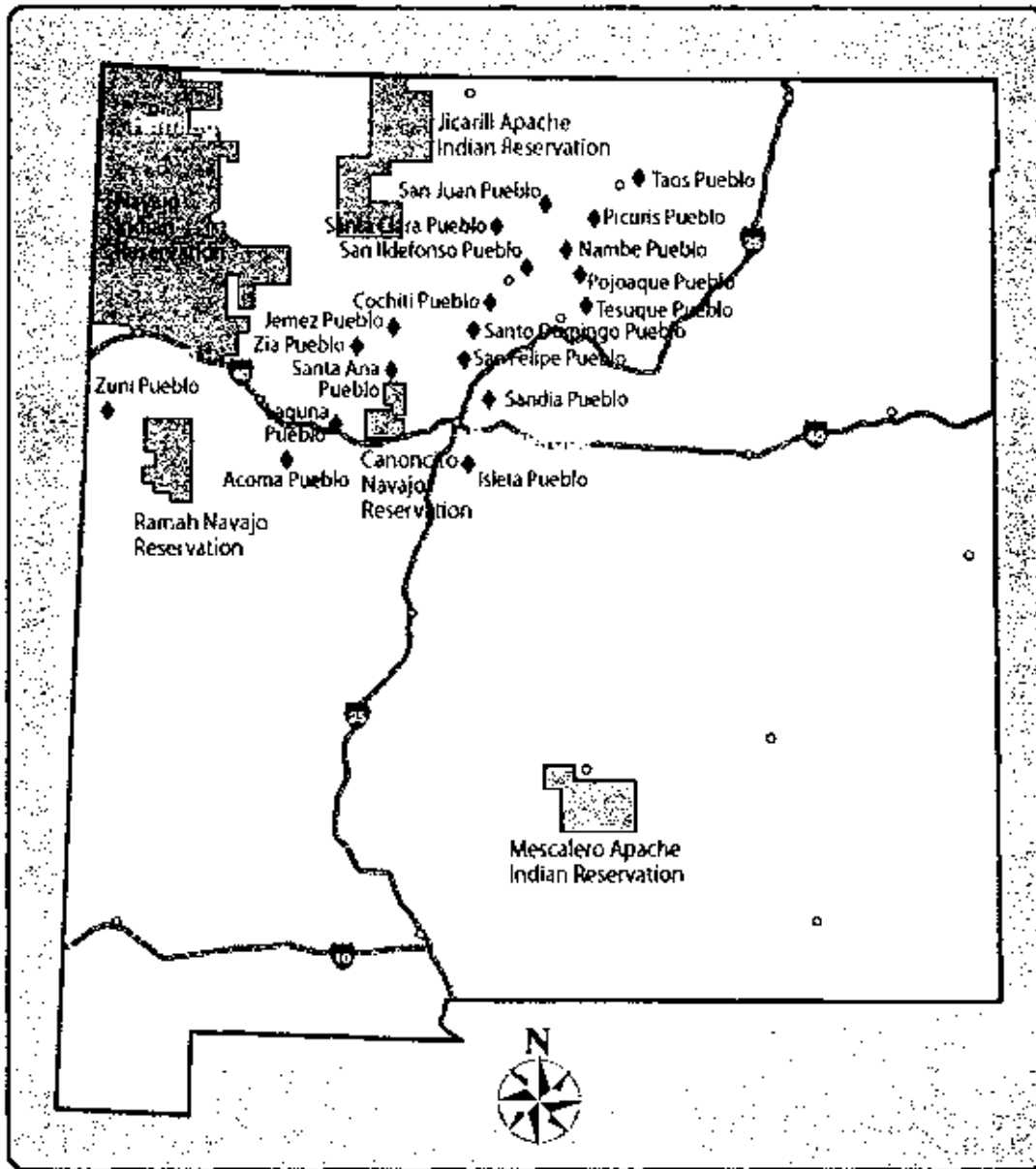
Current literature indicates that Native Americans are victimized at higher rates than members of other ethnic groups. In order to determine whether Native American youth suffer from higher rates of sexual or physical abuse, data collection techniques should be improved. The nation's most commonly cited victimization survey (NCVS) does not include crimes committed against children under 12. Currently, these youngest victims of violence are voiceless and unrepresented in official data. Access to youth presents ethical and methodological dilemmas; however, until this access is gained our knowledge of the true extent of child sexual abuse will be extremely limited.

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APPENDIX ONE
MAP OF NEW MEXICO'S TWENTY-TWO TRIBES



Source: New Mexico Tourism Department <http://www.newmexico.org/go/tao/bymap/page/bymap-pueblomap.html>