

WHAT KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS DO SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS NEED?

When building relationships with Indigenous families and communities, school psychologists should acquire skills and knowledge related to:

- **Sovereignty:** Accept and foster cultural practices. Recognize and honor that land and water are sacred and directly tied to sovereignty.
- **Language:** Appreciate the complexity of second language development and dual languages, and advocate to support language revitalization.
- **Intentionality:** Cultivate full respect in every relationship.
- **Reciprocity:** Model respect and build two-way genuine relationships that facilitate trust.



The Indigenous Conceptual Framework Aligns With the NASP Practice Model

Indigenous school psychologists and allies:

- Have expertise in mental health, behavioral health, and education.
- Support students holistically—academically, behaviorally, culturally, socially, and emotionally.
- Collaborate with families, educators, and tribal leaders in the community to create supportive learning environments for Indigenous students.
- Utilize culturally relevant, evidence-based data to provide appropriate ecological assessments and multitiered (strength-based) interventions to support social, emotional, and behavioral health.
- Understand the historical backgrounds of Indigenous Nations, including Indian Boarding Schools, as this provides ethical grounding and compassion for working with communities that are continuing to process ongoing intergenerational trauma.
- Demonstrate knowledge of legal and ethical issues that are specific to Indigenous communities (e.g., Indian Child Welfare Act), special education, and social justice, with respect for human diversity.



WHAT IS NASP?

The National Association of School Psychologists represents and supports the profession of school psychology by advancing effective practices to improve students' learning, behavior, and mental health and by maintaining essential standards for ethics and practice.

HOW DOES NASP SUPPORT SERVICES FOR ETHNICALLY AND RACIALLY MINORITIZED INDIVIDUALS AND GROUPS?

- Social justice integrated into training and practice
- Indigenous American Subcommittee of the Multicultural Affairs Committee
- NASP Minority Scholarship Program
- Promotion and awareness of culturally responsive practice and active recruitment of Indigenous school psychologists in communities
- Indigenous centered research, presentation, and annual meetings

ABOUT US

Developed by the Indigenous American Subcommittee of the Multicultural Affairs Committee.

CONTACT US

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Supporting Indigenous Youth,
Families, and Communities as

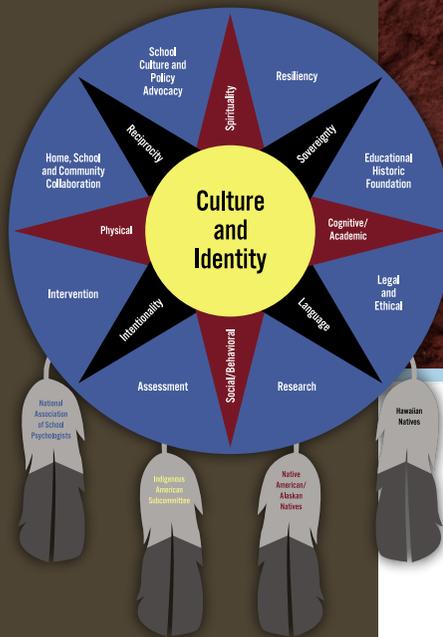
INDIGENOUS SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS



CULTURE AND IDENTITY

BECOMING AN INDIGENOUS SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGIST

The United States of America is home to nearly 600 Indigenous Nations. Across urban, rural, and ancestral Indigenous communities, Indigenous school psychologists work with families and educators to help Indigenous children and youth by affirming their culture and identity to become successful learners. Indigenous school psychologists bring to the school a personal understanding of the cultural strengths and honored traditions that connect with the positive growth of Indigenous children and youth.



“As an Indigenous school psychologist, my purpose is to help sustain Indigenous sovereignty and identity. Our values and belief are that everything is sacred. Our existence is sacred. My journey is sacred.”

—Nora Neztosie, School Psychologist



WHAT IS THE ROLE OF INDIGENOUS SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS?

When collaborating with Indigenous families and communities, school psychologists affirm the Four Aspects of Being:

- **Spirituality:** Validate students’ ways of knowing and understanding the world.
- **Cognitive/Academic:** Consider cultural assets and culturally embedded knowledge, thinking, and problem-solving skills in authentic assessment, intervention planning, and the use of culturally inclusive supports.
- **Social-Behavioral:** Affirm resilience and consider cultural adaptations to evidence-based interventions (e.g., trauma-responsive practices, culturally specific interventions) while collaborating with community members who practice traditional ways of healing.
- **Physical:** Develop understanding of the interconnectedness of balance and harmony seen in land, water, and spiritual well-being when promoting a healthy and sustainable lifestyle.

WHY DO INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES NEED INDIGENOUS SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS AND ALLIES?

School psychologists possess the ability to affirm children’s cultural identity, and thus their potential to learn, contribute to their lifelong achievement, and strengthen our communities.

Specifically, they help:

- Lessen achievement gaps
- Create equity in programs for gifted children
- Identify Indigenous students appropriately when in need of special education services
- Increase the opportunities for Indigenous students to achieve developmental and academic milestones
- Assure Indigenous students’ lifelong learning

WHAT EDUCATION IS REQUIRED?

To enroll in graduate studies, you will need to have your bachelor’s degree and fulfill any undergraduate prerequisites required by the program(s) of your choice. It would be beneficial if potential candidates have a background in working with youth and have completed courses in one or two of the following areas:

- Child development
- General and child psychology
- Statistics, measurement, and research methods
- Philosophy and theories of education
- Instruction and curriculum
- Special education

WHAT DEGREES ARE OFFERED?

To become a school psychologist, you will need to complete a graduate school program that awards a degree (specialist-level and/or doctorate) specifically in school psychology.

SELECTING A GRADUATE PROGRAM

Most school psychology graduate programs include academic courses, supervised fieldwork, and an internship to prepare you in both professional knowledge and skills.

To work as a school psychologist, you must be certified or licensed by the state in which you work. Employment in a public school setting generally requires certification by the state’s Department of Education.

Although individual states may have different requirements for certification, the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) requires a minimum of specialist-level training. A list of NASP-approved programs is available at nasponline.org/approvedprograms.

NASP requires that school psychology training include:

- A minimum of 3 years of full-time graduate study (or the equivalent) beyond the bachelor’s degree, involving at least 60 graduate semester or 90 graduate quarter hours (the specialist level) and inclusive of a 1200 hour internship
- The internship is 1 academic year in length, typically during the 3rd year of graduate study, consisting of at least 1,200 clock hours of supervised practice, 600 of which must be in a school setting
- Coursework and experiences as prescribed by NASP