

The background of the slide features a vibrant green aurora borealis (Northern Lights) dancing across a dark, starry night sky. Below the lights, a range of dark, snow-covered mountains stretches across the horizon. The overall scene is serene and evokes a sense of the natural beauty of Alaska.

A One Health Approach to Sexual and Domestic Violence in Alaska

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Holistic view of historical and current conditions / forces contributing to Alaska's social pathologies



Cyclical and Intractability

- Multi-generational trauma and rapid socio-economic change have *disrupted* traditional lifeways and *normalized* violence in many rural and Indigenous communities.
- Rurality, close family ties, and non-intervention norms discourage victims/survivors from “making trouble.”
- Shortage and inadequate training of law enforcement and health professionals inhibit reporting, seeking help

Cyclical and Intractability (cont.)

- Child and adult survivors suffer in silence and shame.
 - Low self-esteem
 - Re-victimization
 - Self-medication w/ alcohol, drugs
 - Perpetuation of violence
 - Suicide

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE)

- Affects of stress in children's lives, inc. physical, emotional, and sexual abuse; domestic violence; and alcohol abuse in the home, have been well documented.
 - Vincent Felitti et al. (1998) The Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study
- Children with one ACE are more likely to experience others.
- Greater number of ACEs → poorer mental and physical health outcomes in adults.

Frontier Attitudes and Alcohol Culture



By Denali National Park and Preserve - Every Road- Denali Uploaded by AlbertHerring, Public Domain,
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Alaska's Frontier Attitudes and Alcohol Culture

- Foster public indifference to **alcohol abuse and violence** – rural and urban.
 - Wariness of government interventions and aversion to taxes
 - Acceptance of high risk behaviors, including excessive drinking
- We ignore evidence of these problems / this suffering *in our midst*.
- We resist considering the crushing, lifelong and inter-generational effects *that impact all Alaskans*.
 - Alcohol (and drug) abuse costs Alaskans \$3 billion per year.

Alcohol Abuse, Sexual & Domestic Violence, and FASD

Collaboration with graduate students Brenda Dow and Katie Hayden

- Alcohol abuse correlates strongly with sexual and domestic violence.
 - Use of alcohol complicates prosecution of such violence.
 - Often both the perpetrator and the victim have been drinking.
- Individuals with FASD more likely to be both victims and perpetrators.

Climate Change:

Another exogenous assault on traditional lifeways

- Impacts animal migrations and populations,
 - interferes with subsistence practices,
 - poses increased hazards to travel on river and sea ice,
 - endangers housing, fresh water sources, and sanitation in coastal areas
 - threatens destruction of whole communities.
- Males likely to be impacted disproportionately, which may contribute to increased mental stress and unhealthy responses.

Moving Forward

- **Breaking the silence** and focusing on **primary prevention** is essential.
- Changing norms and reducing these pathologies will require
 - local initiative,
 - holistic approaches to community well-being,
 - coordinated community responses,
 - national and subnational support,
 - health policies that permit holistic approaches to health and well-being,
 - persistence!

A wide-angle landscape photograph of a mountain valley. In the foreground, a winding river flows through a lush green valley. The middle ground shows rolling hills and mountains with varying shades of green and brown. The background features a range of rugged mountains under a blue sky with scattered white clouds. The text "Thank you" is centered in the upper half of the image.

Thank you

Selected Literature

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