

Focus Group End of Year Report for 2023

American Indian/Native American/Indigenous Peoples Focus Group

Chair: Stephen M Gavazzi

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1. What were your focus groups major activities or accomplishments this year?

This is our third year of existence. Primary activities included contributions to the NCFR 2023 conference. Ashley Landers helped organize a symposium that focuses on issues of importance to the focus group. The symposium is titled: "Experienced of Adoption and Foster Care in Indigenous Communities." Janeal White is serving as Discussant and there are four papers featuring community-engaged scholarship with First Nations Repatriation Institute, under the guidance of Sicangu Lakota Elder, Sandy White Hawk. These presentations include:

Simpson, J. E., Landers, A. L. & White Hawk, S. (2023, November). *Longing to belong: The ambiguous loss of fostered and adopted Indigenous relatives*. Paper at the 2023 National Council on Family Relations (NCFR) Annual Conference, Orlando, Florida.

Simpson, J. E. & Landers, A. L. (2023, November). *Indigenous adults who were adopted as children: A critical review of the literature*. Paper at the 2023 National Council on Family Relations (NCFR) Annual Conference, Orlando, Florida.

Landers, A. L., Simpson, J. E., & White Hawk, S. (2023, November). *Identifying risk factors for clinically significant behavioral problems among American Indian children in child welfare*. Paper at the 2023 National Council on Family Relations (NCFR) Annual Conference, Orlando, Florida.

Hamilton, M. J., Landers, A. L., & White Hawk, S. (2023, November). *Now I understand who I am and where I came from: The tribal reunification of Indigenous fostered and adopted relatives*. Paper at the 2023 National Council on Family Relations (NCFR) Annual Conference, Orlando, Florida.

There is also a poster session of interest under Mental and Physical Health Among Families by Tai Mendenhall and colleagues focused on The Family Education Diabetes Series (FEDS): Improving Health in American Indian Communities through Innovative Research and Care-Partnerships.

Steve Gavazzi also helped to host the Land-Grant Partners Summit in Denver on 10/12-10/13 of this year, which supports ongoing dialogue between 1862 and 1994 Tribal College land-grant institutions.

Finally, Debra Berke opened up the 2022 conference with a land acknowledgement.

2. What has your focus group done during the past year to further NCFR's inclusion and diversity initiatives?

We continue to discuss the relative invisibility of American Indian/Native American/Indigenous Peoples in mainstream literature, including the NCFR flagship journals (JMF, FR, and JFTR)

3. Please list any concerns, questions, or suggestions.

As we stated for the past 2 years, our primary hope is that NCFR will pay more attention to issues and concerns of importance to American Indian/Native American/Indigenous Peoples. We continue to aspire to have at least one special issue in at least one of our flagship journals devoted specifically to Native American families and communities. We also want NCFR to continue promoting the use of a land acknowledgement at the beginning of each NCFR conference/event/meeting. As noted above, Debra Berke began the 2022 conference with a land acknowledgement. Last year we also suggested that we would wish to see a land acknowledgement on the NCFR website, which at the time of this report's writing does not seem to have happened yet. At the same time, we wish to emphasize that the construction and use of land acknowledgements not simply be done as a "box to be checked" or otherwise employed with only a performative objective in mind. Focus group members are meeting with NCFR on this subject in hopes of creating ongoing dialogue on this subject.

Return to the membership manager, Maddie Hansen – maddiehansen@ncfr.org.