

The Partners for Advancing Health Equity Collaborative hosted the 2022 Summit, *On the Front Lines of Equity & Justice*, December 4-6, 2022. The Summit brought together leaders in health equity and justice to foster collaboration across sectors and to promote action in advancing health equity in research, practice, and policy. This report provides a synthesis of key takeaways from the session, *Addressing Historical and Intergenerational Trauma for Health Equity*.

Session Voices



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Key Takeaways

Frame addressing historical trauma as power, not disempowerment. For Indigenous communities, taking action for health in the present creates opportunities to care for their bodies and the health of their communities. This process also heals the historical traumas of their ancestors and positively impacts future generations. Healing historical trauma requires compassion and care. Indigenous ancestors who survived traumatic events, such as the [Trail of Tears](#), persevered with a vision of a thriving life for their descendants in mind. Connecting to that vision of thriving can be a powerful tool in addressing historical trauma. It is essential to contextualize efforts to address historical trauma through this perspective of power, not disempowerment.

Address health issues and historical trauma in Indigenous communities by linking narratives to traditional teachings and ways of life. Historically, traumatic events uphold [settler colonialism](#) – a process where settlers displace Indigenous populations and establish new societies – by disrupting the ability of Indigenous peoples to follow their traditional ways and maintain cultural connections. Achieving health equity requires rebuilding these connections to traditional teachings, cultural practices, and relational ways of being. Indigenous-led health interventions focus on reframing health issues using Indigenous perspectives, transforming narratives from victimhood to resilience, incorporating [traditional healing methods](#), and integrating physical, mental, spiritual, and environmental health. By doing so, Indigenous communities can heal from historical trauma and improve health outcomes.

Address environments that lead to unhealthy behaviors. Context is key when working to address health inequities. Behaviors that arise due to unhealthy environments are often accepted as inevitable. Instead of focusing health interventions solely on behaviors, assist communities in developing strategies and interventions that foster healthy, sustainable practices and environments. For Indigenous communities, this means [practicing decolonization by reconnecting people to the land as a mode of education and healing](#).

Share your thoughts!

What did you think of this topic? Would you like to hear more from these speakers? Do you have any resources you would like to share with us? [Email us!](#)