Presenters: Female Narrator; Tom Oates, Child Welfare Information Gateway; Kimee Wind-Hummingbird; National Native Children's Trauma Center; Alan Rabideau, National Native Children's Trauma Center

[00:00:00]: Music Introduction

FEMALE NARRATOR [00:00:02]: This is the Child Welfare Information Gateway Podcast, a place for those who care about strengthening families and protecting children. You'll hear about the innovations, emerging trends and success stories across child welfare direct from those striving to make a difference. This is your place for new ideas and information to support your work to improve the lives of children, youth, and families.

TOM OATES [00:00:32]: Have you ever spent time in another country, especially time away from the tourist areas? You'll notice things are just done differently. The way people interact or express themselves, what they may value, their family and community structures. And of course, they're all shaped by a different history. Now, things like that may be different from what we're used to, but that clearly doesn't mean they're wrong. And most of the time when we're traveling, we accept that. Okay. With that in mind, I'd like you to think now about the indigenous communities here at home. The native tribes and nations we share this continent with. They have a history different from most of us, different family structures and how communities interact. Yet over time, the approach that child welfare agencies have typically taken when working with native communities did not take those differences into account, and many times viewed those differences as harmful and things to be corrected or even eliminated. And those actions themselves caused harm that's impacted generations of indigenous families.

[00:01:05]: Welcome into the Child Welfare Information Gateway podcast everyone, Tom Oates here. We're talking about engaging indigenous families and communities in this episode. And we're joined by two members of the National Native Children's Trauma Center. Kimee Wind-Hummingbird, a Training and Technical Assistance Specialist, and Alan Rabideau, the center's youth and family engagement specialist. Now together, Kimee and Alan have nearly 50 years of experience working with children, youth, and families. They're both intimately familiar with ICWA, the Indian Child Welfare Act, and both bring their own lived experience to increasing service provider's ability to respond to the trauma related needs of American Indian and Alaskan Native children and youth in culturally appropriate ways. Now, you can visit the National Native Children's Trauma Center at nnctc.org. And if you visit this episode's webpage over a childwelfare.gov, we've posted links to nnctc.org along with some of the trainings that we discuss and other relevant and timely resources for state and local child welfare professionals in engaging indigenous families and communities. And that includes the Children's Bureau's Capacity Building Center for states and Capacity Building Center for tribes.

[00:03:23]: So this conversation really opened up some insight into child welfare history with native communities, but more importantly, provides great guidance from Kimee and Alan for state and local caseworkers and agencies on working best with tribal nations. And that primarily revolves around being humble and respecting and accepting the differences to work with indigenous communities. Okay, let's get to it. Our conversation with Kimee Wind-Hummingbird, and Alan Rabideau from the National Native Children's Trauma Center, here on the Child Welfare Information Gateway podcast.

[00:04:05]: Kimee and Alan, welcome into the Child Welfare Information Gateway podcast and, and Kimee, I'll start with you. A lot of times when child welfare agencies are interacting or consider interacting with indigenous populations, ICWA comes to mind first. I'd like to back up a little bit and ask

you to give me a sense of why ICWA itself isn't exactly one size fits all when it comes to Native American communities and nations.

KIMEE WIND-HUMMINGBIRD [00:04:38]: Sure, yes. And thank you for asking that. There are 574 federally recognized tribes and many other state recognized tribes across the United States. It's important to remember that they're all sovereign nations with different cultures and traditions. These tribes have the distinction of being nations within a nation, each government has services and programs geared toward their communities to meet their needs. I've had the honor of working with many different Indians child welfare programs and each of them are vastly different. Not better, not worse, just different. It's not uncommon for tribal employees to wear many different hats, engaging with many families to assist them in their journey. So, each program is different, each tribe is different, each setup is different. The, the way that they respond to their children in care will be different as well. And of course, they're, they're their own government. So, they have the ability to do that and to dictate how they operate.

TOM OATES [00:05:37]: And of course, that also means, you mentioned traditions and cultures and how families interact. So, then what does this mean for, I guess the phrase that we always talk about - cultural competency - for cultural competency guidance and training when it comes to indigenous populations. If ICWA isn't one size fits all, can we say the same thing about, about diving into what folks would considered a cultural competency approach?

KIMEE WIND-HUMMINGBIRD [00:06:07]: Absolutely. There is no one size fits all approach to collaborating with tribes. But, if I could offer some tips to walk alongside them, some would be, do your homework first. Keep in mind that it's not their responsibility to educate you on their culture or how their government functions. A start might be learning about their services through a government, governmental website. If there's none, call the nation itself and connect with the cultural preservation program. It's important to know that there are many different possibilities to their make, to the makeup of their leadership. Some common titles include having a chief, a president, or a governor. Or they may be led by a council. And all of these leaders may be elected in a formal election process or named by the community. So, there are so many different possibilities. That's why it's important to learn about them.

[00:07:02]: Also, be honest and transparent in your relationship with our communities. Do what you say you're going to do when you say you're going to do it. Understand that a relationship won't develop overnight. You have to put in the work. There's a long history of outside influences coming into our communities, telling us they don't, they know what's best for us and for our children. When in actuality, they didn't. Many tribes have some amazing programs already in place within the community that can surround the family with culturally appropriate services. Tap into them to assist the family.

TOM OATES [00:07:36]: Yeah, there's a point I definitely want in our conversation to dive into kind of the historical actions taken against, shall we say, nations. And also I want to make sure agencies and those folks working within child welfare agencies can understand how to work with all of those various partners within a nation, not only tribal child welfare, but courts, law enforcement, and other agencies. But first, I think you mentioned it before - do your research, do some homework, right? And so, child welfare professionals may have some idea of what they think they're getting into, or at least their idea of what a stable family looks like or what a situation of, of danger or change may look like to them. But when they walk into a different nation with a different set of cultural identities and traditions, there can be some misunderstandings and it's - I'd love for you to be able to get a sense, if you can, on some of the, maybe some of the main misunderstandings child welfare professionals may have about, about

some of the customs within tribal communities and nations. You know, especially when we start talking about child rearing and prevention and where strengths are actually being applied that may be misunderstood by somebody coming in with a different lens?

KIMEE WIND-HUMMINGBIRD [00:09:11]: Yes, sir. Absolutely. And again, there are many different aspects to child rearing depending on the tribe. One thing to keep in mind is that tribes can be matrilineal or patrilineal. For instance, my tribe, the Muskogee Nation - we're matrilineal. Therefore, our children get our clans from their mothers and traditionally, if a son were born into the family, the maternal uncles played a large role in guiding the young men into adulthood. So, a non-tribal child welfare worker may think that a father deferring to the maternal family in matters involving his son, may be a red flag to his parenting skills, when in actuality, it's a cultural bias. Child rearing has always had a communal approach in tribal populations. Today it's not uncommon to have multi-generation, multi-generational households. If there is a need for childcare, someone within the household can meet that need. Most tribal peoples feel a connection to community, to family. We have a sense that our lives are part of something larger than just us, that we have responsibilities to our tribe, our ancestors, future generations, our culture, and for the preservation of our families and traditions.

[00:10:25]: The attachment we feel to each other and for the community as a whole is something that sometimes we have trouble putting into words to explain to others outside of our communities. The respect that we have for our children, our elders, and everyone in-between is imprinted on who we are as peoples. Our tribal communities continue to thrive today because we value each other and we understand and recognize that our continuation as sovereign nations is dependent on each of us. We're very interconnected and intertwined. And again, sometimes it's hard for us to put that into words, but they're, again, child rearing practices vary and it's important for - if you're working with a specific nation - to check in with that nation to see what's common within their tribe.

TOM OATES [00:11:11]: There's been a lot of harm done from those misunderstandings. And, and I'm using the term misunderstanding as maybe a softer term than what it deserves. But over history, Child Welfare and native populations have not had a great history at all. There's been tremendous trauma. And Alan, I'd ask you this, to kind of go back in time for me and maybe highlight some of those major historical trauma actions and the impacts that they've had that may be shared across indigenous communities that child welfare professionals of today may not be aware of.

ALAN RABIDEAU [00:11:57]: Yeah, thank you, Tom. I don't know if it's so much people are not aware - because I think you'll hear a lot of professionals say, oh, we've heard, we've already heard this. We've heard about historical trauma in the tribes, you know, like, that's old news when, a matter of fact, that's, that's still not on the old news, like we still have to continue as tribal people to bring that to the forefront because it still has impacts today. And that's why we refer to it as, you know, not only historical but intergenerational trauma because it still impacts us today. So, it's not all new. So, things like forced, our children being removed from our land, being forced into boarding schools, to no longer speak their language, to no longer practice their culture. I mean, just, you know, my mother was a product of a boarding school situation, so, that impacted me as a young man growing up. And going, like say, going to college and stuff like that. Like, I remember my grandpa telling me one time, like, you don't need to go to college, you don't, you don't need to go become that white man kind of thing, right? They're going to just take stuff away from you rather than give you anything good - because that's, you know, his beliefs.

[00:13:09]: So for a while there, I actually had to hide from family that I was attending college when I was younger. So, then, you know, so then of course that is going to have an impact on me and how I parent, you know, my values and attitudes towards things like higher education and stuff like that. So, it does, I mean it still has this impact, this effect. So, you know, it's really about, it's just the difficulty is building trust. You know, it's really, you really have to go above and beyond, you know, what can I do or say so that these people understand that you're there for, you know, you really want to help. Like, it's not, you're not there to change them or take anything away from them, like their language or their culture, but you really want to see them do better. So, you know, make that concerted effort in the beginning to let them know that you're really there helping them and that's your main goal. It's not about changing them, it's not about telling them that they're wrong in any way, that they do things, but it's that, you know, you're there to help support them to meet whatever needs they may have.

[00:14:15]: And that's the other thing I think that's important too, the thing about needs. When you work with families, you know, it's focused on what the family needs, not what's the problems. You know, our cultures, our languages, for most tribes I've worked with over the years, they're strength-based, our languages are what they call strength-based. So, like there's no way to say anything bad about somebody, right? So, you can say, the worst you can call them, I think, and I was taught in our culture the worst you can call them is a do. There's no way to say anything bad because we don't have that language to say that. So, you know, coming in, it's really focusing on the strengths first and really looking at the needs and just not dwelling on the problems, you know, the problems - you have alcoholism, the problem here - not the focus. The focus is housing, food, employment, you know, people feeling secure and being able to meet their needs.

TOM OATES [00:15:17]: So, when it comes to those professionals that are engaging with families and you talked about not only trust, but providing the family with what they need - where is, at least where's the bridge or maybe where's the disconnect to what maybe the average child welfare professional perceives as a need versus what the tribal community itself actually needs. Is there, is there still a gap there and what would you advise for those professionals to kind of maybe, maybe clean from their own lens and start to realize what the tribe needs from the tribe's perspective.

ALAN RABIDEAU [00:15:59]: Yeah, right. And Kimee shared a lot of this, but I think about another thing like in our culture we talk about this, like what is our child rearing practices, you know? It's typical for, it was typical for, like, me growing up for my mother not to really dwell on, again, what I was doing wrong, but was very much focused on praising me for things I did correctly. Also, the focus was also on telling us stories, that prevention technique of letting us know what is appropriate and, I guess inappropriate in the sense of here's a story that you need to learn from. So, there's something that we used to say - you go to a pow wow in a tribal community and see dogs and children running wild everywhere, like there's no structure, there's no supervision. No, that's not necessarily the situation because, you know, at a pow wow, you know, as a family you feel safe that your child can run free everywhere because there's a whole community watching over them. So, you don't have to so much worry about them as an individual. But, you know, other people to their eyes may see there is a lack of structure or lack of supervision and that's not necessarily, again, the case.

[00:17:10]: Again, just because they don't want to deliver, you know, negative consequences in the sense of grounding their child, doesn't mean that they don't know how to parent it's just they have a different perspective of what works, you know? What works for, what works for our children according to our culture, is to again, prevent problems through stories, and then really give them the opportunity to just kind of learn by themselves, right? Growing up, I felt lucky as a child because my friends and, you

know, I'd hang out with my friends, like we couldn't cross, they couldn't cross the highway, but I could, it wasn't that my mother was wasn't concerned about my safety, but it was just more of, you know, she gave me plenty of opportunities to just kind of experience things on my own, right. And that's, you know - but at the same time, I didn't feel like I had to hide anything from her then, right. I could ask her for permission to sneak out of the house one night because, you know, that's just the relationship we had, I never felt like I had to hide anything from her because she never, you know, like I said got I guess in a way got angry. I mean, there was times I'm sure, I was a kid, so I pushed their limits, I'm sure, but, you know, she never really got angry with me. So, the relationship there was that I could tell her just about anything. And ask her, you know, or she gave me opportunities to just go out and learn for myself. So, that's like, good examples of child rearing in our communities.

TOM OATES [00:18:38]: Yeah, those are, those are great examples. One, about open communication. Where, you know, teenagers and parents may not always have that kind of open communication. But also, kind of a family or a, kind of, community raising a child, like you mentioned at a Pow Wow. It's not like no one's looking after the children when everybody is. And you've got the entire group there. And everyone's taking a level of responsibility where somebody coming from the outside may perceive that as there's no supervision when there's actually group supervision. So, along those lines and Kimee, you mentioned some off the top, Alan, you did the same. And I'll open this up for the both of you of starting, what are those kind of key takeaways or key pieces of guidance that you find yourself giving to child welfare caseworkers and agencies in how they not only approach, but also how they view engaging with indigenous families and communities?

KIMEE WIND-HUMMINGBIRD [00:19:51]: Right, I always tell them, first and foremost, be humble, be humble in your approach. Acknowledge that you have a lot to learn from their community. Take your cues from them and make sure that your approach is genuine and sincere. You should always provide them with a safe space to work in. But also recognize that you are not the one who determines whether that space is safe or not, they determine the safety. It's not by your standards, that's by theirs. Make every effort to operate with transparency and maintain trust with everyone. Families know what works with them, right? Service providers can support that by listening to their voice and following their lead. Clients who are supported in shared decision-making and goal-setting will have a more positive response to the service. Ensure that the individual strengths and experiences are recognized and built upon. It's important, also, to understand that trauma-informed care or culture humility is not about a curriculum that you can incorporate from A to Z. It's about your mindset, right? It's about your approach. It's about your ability to recognize that there, you need to approach in a different way or there's a different need to the family and how can I best meet that family's needs, meet them where they are and get the family what they need? Some of the protective factors - I know Alan talks about those some - that tribes highlight when working with their families is their connection to culture. It can provide a strong sense of belonging empowerment. A definitely use their resources. And I just want to kind of piggyback on what Alan said earlier. Our trauma histories absolutely have an effect on the way we parent our children today. Because I know he mentioned the boarding school era, but thinking, looking back on that big picture is that our children, some as young as 3 and 4 years old, were forcibly removed from their families and taken away, some of them in handcuffs to facilities that where they lost all sense of who they were, what their identity was.

[00:21:59]: And that was, you know, Colonel Pratt's - that was his motto, right? Let everything that is Indian within you die, kill the Indian and save the man. That was the intent of boarding schools, right? To, to make every effort to squash that out of us. And, you know, it's unfortunate that our relatives faced that severe abuse. But in turn, bigger picture is that those children, whenever they aged out of

school or were able to return - some returned to their communities, some did not - they were then potentially became parents, right? But how could they as children who have never seen a positive parent-child relationship or had positive adult role models or seen those relationships, how could then they be expected to parent, right? Taking them away from that communal love that they always grew up with, that was always a sense of who they were and then stripping that from them and then just expecting them to be perfectly fine. I mean, that's, that's unbelievable to think today that that was happening, but that absolutely happened to our relatives. And if we're looking at even bigger picture is that Alan and I are here today because our relatives endured, they survived. I can't even imagine the unspeakable abuse that they survived. But yeah, we, we owe it to our ancestors and their ability to be resilient.

ALAN RABIDEAU [00:23:31]: If I could jump in, another thing, well key takeaways, I think another thing that is becoming of great value, especially, particularly in the behavioral health world, we talked about this idea of peer supports, utilizing people with that lived experience. So, I think too, as a worker entering a home, if you have the resources to hire families that's been through the system to kinda walk along with you. Particularly in that first contact, you know, that's going to make the family, you know, that you walk into feel a little more comfortable seeing that you have somebody from their, from their community at your side, you know, that already trusts you that, you know, benefited from your help who can go in the home for first time and let them be there to help you. Because, you know that, again - and we're calling it peer supports - but this idea that people lived experience, they've been through it so they know, kinda like what worked and what didn't work and, you know, but at the same time, there's something therapeutic about a person that's been through it being able to eventually give back to their community. Like, why did I have to have a child with behavioral health issues, kind of thing like, well, here's an opportunity to kind of say, well, you know, this was an opportunity for you now as a parent to go out and teach other parents what it's like to raise children with, you know, emotional and behavioral issues like that. So, you know, utilizing peer support, I think is an important thing to add to that.

TOM OATES [00:24:57]: There's a, there's a place of walking in, recognizing that you're not the expert on everything. And, and you know, Kimee, you've actually said it twice about being humble and asking questions out of curiosity and learning and then apply what you've learned based on what you've gathered and how this community operates. And yeah, Alan, you're exactly right about, there is a greater focus right now on not only engaging those with lived experience, at maybe the tactical level or for our review, but really throughout your process. And potentially not only can those folks work with the child welfare case workers in their engagement with a family, but also throughout the nation itself. And so, this leads to, to something, Kimee you had highlighted earlier that I wanted to touch base on because it's not just tribal child welfare interaction. So, I'm curious to what you think about when it comes to those state and local child welfare agencies and how they work with their partners across tribal child welfare, tribal courts, tribal law enforcement, and other agencies? Do those approaches change or are there key highlights you'd want to make sure that folks understand?

KIMEE WIND-HUMMINGBIRD [00:26:28]: Yeah, I think it's important for, like we mentioned earlier that it's that, you know, that they're not the experts here, right? We have for many years - and I want to go back, I think I misspoke, I think I may have called him Colonel Pratt, I think it was actually General Pratt who made those statements. But it's, it's important that we recognize that - and we were talking about this earlier this week, that it's my understanding and, Alan, you might, you might have some more input on this as well too that, honestly, there's not, in most tribal languages, there's not really a word for justice. That, you know, there, because we, there wasn't really necessarily a need to have one. Tt was all about supporting each other. And, you know, of course, I understand at times there were a need to

potentially remove a person from a community for some of their actions. But there wasn't necessarily a word for justice. So, that's always interesting that whenever you look back at our, our language and it being so self-promoting and positive and the fact that we don't really necessarily have a word for goodbye either, you know, it's basically like until I see you again or until next time, those types of things. But, just working together across, across systems it reminds me of a story that my friend told me a while back. And he talked about a conjoint investigation between a state child welfare agency, tribal child welfare agency, and then local law enforcement.

[00:28:05]: There had been a referral on, the caller made the referral that the children were in an unsafe environment. They were concerned about their safety because there were dead animals and sharp objects within close proximity to the child. So, all three of those entities went out to the home together and were there at the same time, they witnessed the same thing. And he spoke of the reports, though, that's what is so, just interesting, just different perceptions. The state child welfare worker, her report talked about, you know, she was concerned for the safety of the children. There were dead animal carcasses and blood everywhere and knives within close proximity to children, and she was really concerned about their safety. The local non-tribal law enforcement, he said, well, you know, they just tell that they'd been on a hunt and they were harvesting a deer and that wasn't uncommon in the area. And then the tribal child welfare worker, his report, his perception was there was food everywhere. And be reminded, he gently reminded them of the fact that, you know, it's common for us to, to kill and harvest our meat. And not only just our meat, but to show respect for our four-legged relatives and to not waste anything. So that's and for, for them to think that that might be anything other than what it was, a teaching of a family, is another cultural bias.

ALAN RABIDEAU [00:29:36]: So now Kimee's gonna get me going now, you know, we're storytellers as they say. So, again, kind of build on the point of our language - I remember the Ojibwe Nishnawbe community had built a detention center and they wanted to give it a tribal name. So, when the elder or the medicine man named it, they asked what does that mean? And the elder told him that, well, it's a place where your children get no attention. So, you know, it sounds so negative, right. So, you can't name it that. Again, there was no name for detention or no word for detention, again, in our culture, you know. So yeah, those, I think of all these agencies and, you know, we have tribal police and tribal courts and child welfare - they're all trying to operate in their little silos, right? I think it's a great challenge for tribal communities to figure out a way to really bring those, you know, bring those agencies together. Look at what our traditional values in a way that we, you know, describe things or do things or how we value stuff and bringing that into - like in our community we have, in our community, we have the seven teachings, right, love, respect, humility, honesty, that kind of thing. You can hang those pictures in your courtroom or in your police department or in your, you know. But all that is decoration, you know, I guess what I'm saying is that you're going to hang those pictures, then you might want to take a look at is our agency really all about love, all about respect, all about humility? Are we really, you know, putting into practice those seven teachings? Are we just hanging pictures to say we're culturally competent, you know, if you want to use that word. But yeah, so really looking at, you know, are you kind of, now you have to like walk the talk as they say, right?

TOM OATES [00:31:30]: Yeah and it actually lends a question for, for me as I pull back and think. And so, Kimee, you mentioned there's, there was no real word for justice. And which lends me to think, of course, now we have tribal child welfare, we have tribal courts, we have tribal law enforcement. But if you go back to the traditions and the history of these nations, these are all new entities. And so, trying to, now if you are a tribe, align yourself to the, you know, law enforcement structures or a legal structure like a court and different offices - that's completely new. And so trying to A, build them to align

to, you know, the, the American system, A, you're going to try to build these to where your, your community can still understand and apply your own traditions and cultures. So, the courts or law enforcement won't operate like their state or American counterparts. Because A, it's, it's new to them. And B, they're going to apply their history and their lens to it.

[00:32:51]: So, that being said, you know, when a child welfare professional engages, let's say with tribal courts, it's not the same thing. It's, you know, it's going to be operated under a different lens based on the history and culture that the nation brings to it. So, I mean, I'm just, I'm just going to put this out there and go back to your question about curiosity and humility and learning. But learning those agencies or those entities, is gotta be just as important about learning, you know, tribal child welfare or child rearing within an indigenous nation.

KIMEE WIND-HUMMINGBIRD [00:33:32]: Absolutely. In my former life before I joined the NNCTC Staff, I worked in Indian child welfare for 22 years. I most recently left a directorship and we, whenever I became the director of that program, the policy and procedure that we had was very minimal. And that was some of the conversation that my leadership had said, you know, we need policy and procedure, we need policy and procedure. But my thought was well, I don't think, our, you know, my vision at that time whenever I was there was that I didn't want to be policy driven. Right, I wanted to be family focused, community focus. Is there a need for certain policy and procedure? Absolutely. Does it need to be 600 pages worth? No, no. I think there need to be some very, some guiding principles that help your team there at Indian Child Welfare Programs relay the vision of the community as a whole and the leadership. Whether it's, you know, some of the things we've talked about, cultural preservation programs. It's so important, too, whenever you're thinking about policies and procedures to ensure that we're meeting all of the standards across the board. Not, because you're right, these systems are new to us. So, for instance, you know, I, living in Oklahoma, could look to the state of Oklahoma and could have potentially modeled some of my policies and procedures after them.

[00:35:10]: That wasn't the role that I wanted to take back in whenever I was there, so we went a different way. But with that being said, there are some requirements to receive federal dollars, right? Because some of the support that we get to support those programs comes from the Fed. So, there are some requirements we have to meet and specific to if we're a IV-B tribe or a IV-E tribe. So, there are some things that we had to have within policies and procedures, but it's very important that, that people outside of tribal nations know and acknowledge that fact that we are our own sovereign entity. We have the right to govern our citizens the way we choose to, the community members. We can develop a policy and procedure specific to whatever we feel is important at that time. We also we're decision-makers at the table too, right, like if we're like that's not going to work with our community, then we can modify it and remove it. It's not this big, huge long process. But it's important that those leaders of Indian child welfare programs - and I know they do, that's always at the heart of their work, they're the families serving families. So, they always keep that in perspective and want to make sure that they are not - it's been my experience in the ones that I've worked with - that they're not driven by some policy in some book somewhere. They are boots on the ground in the trenches with these families side-by-side, most of the time at community events or cultural gatherings, you know, or in ceremony. Because, you know, how hard would that, our communities are small, they're really small. And so that's another challenge that we see too, is working with families that could be our neighbors. I've had that that opportunity as well.

[00:36:58]: You know, I have three children and one time I got, was working a case and of course, instantly I recognized the name of the child. And so, I had my first visit with him and I said, do you

recognize me? And he said no. And I said, okay. I said, well, I just want you to know you've been in my home before and I want you to know the relationship that you and I have is going to be very different. And I'm not going to come up to you and make you uncomfortable in any way. I wanted you to know who I am. And if you would like for me to ask for someone else to be working with you, I'd be happy to do that. Because you know, this young man - close to a young man, he was like 16, 17 years old, he was an older child - and he looked at me and he goes you're Hunter's mom. And I said I'm Hunter's mom. He's like, I've eaten dinner at your house. I said you have, you've played basketball in my driveway, too. So, just knowing that we have those connections with those children. And he, the first thing he did was walk up and gave me a hug. He's like no, if anybody's going to treat me right, it's going to be you, I know you, you're gonna take care of me. So, we have those connections sometimes. The other side to that is, you know, if he wasn't going to be comfortable with me, that's absolutely fine too. There's absolutely Somebody else in our program that could have worked with him. So yeah, a lot of different things to keep in mind whenever we're looking at our tribal programs.

TOM OATES [00:38:18]: Which of course impacts how you engage, not only environment you walk into. And this can be challenging for child welfare professionals that, like you mentioned, let's say the State of Oklahoma, where they approach certain families a certain way, whether right or wrong, it's an approach that many young folks are applying across the board that they've gotta make a switch when they're walking into a tribal child welfare scenario. And so, understanding what folks may be getting into or those misunderstandings, or what to learn or maybe do differently is crucial. And so, one of the things I'm going to ask you guys is about helping these professionals kind of make that adjustment. So, what trainings maybe do you find yourself either recommending or maybe even performing yourself to, to child welfare professionals on engaging those nations next door, on engaging indigenous families and communities?

KIMEE WIND-HUMMINGBIRD [00:39:30]: I can go, sure. I know Alan does some amazing work in his, some of the things that he does. But I definitely find myself training on historical trauma, on family engagement, on cultural humility, on the federal Indian Child Welfare Act itself. Whenever I was in my old life and the state of Oklahoma, the Indian Child Welfare Act, as well. But I think, too, along with that goes not just in formal trainings either, but just, you know, in a courtroom somewhere in a state court room, if I get asked questions, I think there's a lot of education that goes on behind the scenes, too, not necessarily just in a training setting or a presentation. But, I definitely want to give Alan an opportunity to speak on some of the great work that he does.

ALAN RABIDEAU [00:40:16]: Thank you, Kimee. Sorry about that, yeah, I was giving a thought, so, I think that's a cultural thing, Tom. So, before we speak, we have to give it a lot of thought, because once you say it, it's out there and you can't pull it back in. So, I think I've learned from very young age think carefully before you speak up. I don't know the National Native Children's trauma Center has a large amount, a plethora of trainings that we do and like Kimee says, a good start is always, you know, first of all, understanding kind of that trauma one-on-one, particularly from an indigenous lens. But it's not even so much focused on trauma, our training is trauma and resiliency. Again, it's that strength-based. So, getting back to what's the strengths. One, not to highlight any specific training, but a training that I do a lot is what we call Walk in the Four Directions: A traditional view of discipline. And really what it does is it sets the framework through a medicine wheel, like what was discipline? How was it described? How was it defined through our cultural teachings, through our medicine wheel teachings. Laying that foundation first and then finding practices out there that fit into that.

[00:41:34]: See, we have all these, you know, people are developing what they call evidence-based programs, right. So, tribes are taking them and trying to figure out, well, how do we use this evidence-based program in our community? I kinda like this approach I'm talking about is first laid a cultural foundation and then look at those evidence-based programs and say, do they, are they congruent with our teachings, you know? If they're congruent, use them, if they're not congruent or not similar then you kind of throw them away, right? So, I know there's a bunch of people saying, well yeah, what about, you know, aren't you messing with the effectiveness or the - what do they call that, I'm losing my words or thought here - the effectiveness of the training if he starts throwing things out of it, or the program or the model, if you start taking things and throwing away, aren't you messing with the effectiveness of it? Not necessarily. I guess it's based on our cultural framework and I think it's, it has evidence. It has what we call practice-based evidence, right? Because it's, you know, it's based on our culture, our cultural ways of doing things. So, we have ways of doing these that we know we've been doing for generations. We know it works. So, yeah, so finding programs that are congruent, I think with our cultural teaching. So, it's, another thing, I think the National Trauma Center, National Native Children's Trauma Center is good at is helping you figure out, you know, so where do we start and is our program, our trainings, our things that we're offering - are they trauma informed? You know, are they going to do things in the best way to basically say do no more harm.

TOM OATES [00:43:18]: Thank you for going into that. I appreciate that and for folks listening, if you go to this episode's webpage, we'll make sure we have links to the National Native Children's Trauma Center. And so you can access, at least a deeper understanding and more of what Kimee and Alan have been talking about. Let me just kind of put this up as we wrap up this episode with maybe some, some, I don't know, thinking ahead to where we are. Especially as we come out of 2020 in and come out of 2021, where at least we are shedding a bit more light and understanding on things like historical trauma and inequities across all of our systems. I'll ask you both Alan and Kimee to give me a sense of where do you think we are and what are the key steps in helping, helping us move forward here, because we're nowhere near perfect. And frankly, we've done a lot of talking, but I'm curious to see if you've seen the actions toward improvement.

KIMEE WIND-HUMMINGBIRD [00:44:29]: I would say I think there's definitely some movement happening. And I know we've mentioned the boarding school era earlier, and I know that Secretary Holland has recently made the statement that they're going to start an investigation of the US boarding schools now, because of course, we all know we, we've heard those stories for so long and our communities about the children who never came home. And unfortunately, that didn't really get a lot of kind of outside of our tribal communities, there weren't a lot of people that even listened, or were interested in hearing about it until the summer, whenever in Canada, whenever that movement started up there and the investigations that were going up there. And I've heard, I think the last number I heard that there were more than 6,000 children that had been returned home. And so, I know that that's, that's huge for tribal nations right now. And whenever the investigation starts in the United States, it's going to be, I think it's going to be really bittersweet because again, we'll have the opportunity to know that our voices are being heard. And we've known that those children were missing and that they didn't come home. But it's also going to be traumatic because, you know, our children will be finally returning to us. And even though, like we talked a little bit earlier about historical trauma and the effects today, even though those, those babies, those children are just being unearthed, their unmarked graves are being unearthed now, that wound is fresh.

[00:45:57]: We still, you know, we recently on the 30th, we honored the boarding school survivors. We celebrated the ones that came home and we mourned the ones who didn't. So, this is, and of course

with all of the COVID-19 and the restrictions in place, it's, it's been a challenge for us to even have our regular ceremonies as they pertain to either if it's our annual ceremonies or if we have a loved one who journeys on, we have different ways that we interact with each other. And it's been a challenge for us with COVID because we're so communal, right? We've talked about that the whole time, about us being able to come together and provide support for each other. But, I do think that there is a movement now happening that's shedding some light on it. I hope that it continues. I hope that it takes on an even bigger light. And I hope that there is an extended hand to sovereigns across the country to be able to, to openly share their stories and be given that platform. And you today, honestly giving us one is, is very helpful. So, thank you for allowing us to have this platform and amplify our voices. So, yeah, I mean, I think there's a movement. Does there need to be more? There does. But I understand that baby steps, right. So, that's what I think. Alan?

ALAN RABIDEAU [00:47:25]: Yeah, for me where we're going, I'm thinking I have to say just because of the work I've been doing for the last 20 some years and for the last three years with the National Native Children's Trauma Center - I'm all about that, again, that peer support, that getting the voice of people with that lived experience. In other words, if you want to know what's going to work, ask them, you know, what works, what works for you, what works for your family? We have some young people that would love to be able to share their stories and, you know, have opportunity to take on some leadership roles to help develop and deliver effective programming for our community. So, again, pull those people, pull the people with the lived experience because they're the ones that'll tell you, you know, they don't care about bureaucracies, or funding, or any other thing. They'll tell you the way it is and this is what, this was what will work and, you just have to figure out then how to do it.

TOM OATES [00:48:27]: You guys, thank you for, for, for telling us the way it is and for sharing your time and your expertise with us and with those listening and those current and future professionals. Kimee Wind-Hummingbird and Alan Rabideau, I thank you guys so much for spending the time here with us on the Child Welfare Information Gateway podcast and sharing your expertise and your insight with us on such an important topic.

KIMEE WIND-HUMMINGBIRD [00:48:57]: Thank you for having us.

ALAN RABIDEAU [00:48:59]: Yeah, thank you so much, Tom, for having us here.

TOM OATES [00:49:03]: So, a reminder, for more on the specific trainings that Alan and Kimee mentioned, just head on over to this episode's webpage on childwelfare.gov and just search podcasts. We'll have links to the National Native Children's Trauma Center, or you can visit their site at nnctc.org and see for yourself. We'll also have links to the Capacity Building Center for Tribes. Now, if you have not heard of the Center for Tribes, it collaborates with American Indian and Alaskan Native nations to help strengthen tribal child and family systems and services to nurture the safety, permanency, and well-being of children, youth, and families. Now, The Center for Tribes tribal information exchange is a really deep resource for tools and resources. And while they're developed for tribal child welfare professionals, it is a great resource for state and local professionals to learn more about their neighbors and deepen their understanding of their culture and needs. Plus, we'll have links for resources from Information Gateway and the Capacity Building Center for States on things like the Indian Child Welfare Act and other training supporting state and tribal partnerships.

[00:50:22]: So hey, if you like what you're hearing here on the Child Welfare Information Gateway podcast, you can subscribe and get new episodes each month. The Information Gateway podcast is

available on Apple podcasts, Spotify, Google Podcasts, Stitcher and SoundCloud. We're really thankful for the growing number of you taking the time to listen to the lessons, experiences, and takeaways that we get to share with you from across the child welfare field. So, many thanks again to Kimee Wind-Hummingbird and Alan Rabideau from the National Native Children's Trauma Center for their time and their willingness to share those lessons and experiences with us and with you here, the Child Welfare Information Gateway podcast. For now, we'll talk to you next month. I'm Tom Oates. Have a great day.

FEMALE NARRATOR [00:51:20]: Thanks for joining us for this edition of the Child Welfare Information Gateway podcast. Child Welfare Information Gateway is available at childwelfare.gov and is a service of the Children's Bureau, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Children and Families. The views and opinions expressed on this podcast do not necessarily reflect on those of Information Gateway, or the Children's Bureau.