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Wounding the Spirit: Discrimination and Traditional American Indian Belief Systems

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When educators debate the effects of cultural differences on educational practice, they are normally concerned with issues of language, learning patterns, and preferred communication styles. Seldom do they consider how differences in belief systems might affect educational practice. Carol Locust argues that fundamental differences exist between the belief systems of American Indians and those of non-Indians, and that the lack of knowledge about these belief systems on the part of the U.S. educational system has led to discriminatory treatment of American Indian students. Locust concludes that educators must understand and respect American Indian belief systems before they can begin to improve the educational experiences of American Indian children.

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Native American Culture - The Great Spirit The Great Spirit is believed by many Native Indians to be a supreme being or creator of life. A divine power that created the world. Native American Culture - The Shaman or Medicine Man The religion, traditions and beliefs of the American Indians were also dominated by the culture of shamanism in which a religious leader, called a Shaman or Medicine Man, acted as a medium between the visible world and the spirit world. The Shamans or Medicine Men had special powers, medicine and magic to heal the sick, control the hunt, and predict the future. Native American Restoration Act, and American Indian Religious Freedom Act. Cultural Values and Beliefs a. Native American core cultural values a. centered around family structure and religious beliefs i. Relation ii. Harmony and balance iii. Wellness iv. Cultural identity b. Beliefs and Psychology a. Incorporating Spirituality with Individual Psychology b. Pet therapy c. Nature therapy d. Group counseling techniques Main Point: The cultural styles and beliefs of the Native Americans are centered a great deal on their family structure and religious beliefs. The family structure varies amongst each tribe, ther... Wounding the spirit: Discrimination and traditional American Indian belief systems. Harvard Educational Review, 58 , 315-330. TERM Summer '19.