

Traditional Values - Whitney Rencountre - OSEU #2

Through this process of change that our people have endured over the last hundreds of years, there is a kind of redefining of our identity. And a lot of that...through the process...a lot of the traditional values...whether its language...whether it's carrying on our ancestors...the way our society used to live in terms of...long time ago, the chief of our tribe was the person that gave everything he had. His most valuable belongings were always given to his people. He took care of people. But with the change in that IRA form of government, really has changed our whole society because now very few...like the tribal chairmen, the individuals of the council...they are taken care of in terms of financially and their basic needs. But at the same time, the individuals in the community rely on that. When in reality, the form of government is way different than it used to be. Whereas it was set up to...we took care of one another. There was never an orphan because the aunts in traditional Lakota, Dakota way, the aunts are considered mothers to that child...the fathers, the father's brothers were also fathers to that child. So the way the society was set up, everybody was taken care of. But nowadays, it's kind of turned more to a society where it's more individualistic. And so that really has created cross-boundary in terms of...we are redefining our identity. A lot of times it is really hard to redefine that when its not something apart of our history. And so our students struggle with that...our family's struggle with that. And so on the reservation, there's a lot of those challenges. We almost have to redefine that for ourselves and take the good and leave the bad in order to give ourselves a chance. But I think we are doing that with a lot of our youth today.