

Hita La'mon: Hasso Independence

Maga'taotao - Antonio "Tony" M. Palomo



"Are we content with our present political status of that of a territory (with a small 't') of the United States?"

-Antonio "Tony" M. Palmo, inaugural issue of Pacific Profile, 1963

"If I had the chance to speak to the American people, and tell them one thing on behalf of the Chamorro people, I would take a long pause to think about that. Not about what I would say, but if I would want to tell them anything at all. Guam History shows us that the more the U.S. knows about us, the more they act to take what they feel is valuable, we lose things and Chamorros don't always get treated with respect. Sometimes, the less Uncle Sam knows about us the better. Like I said, we don't need them to tell us who we are anyway."

-Antonio "Tony" M. Palmo in War for Guam, 2015

How Colonization has Impacted our Health and Wellbeing

"Chamorros (28% of the cases) and Micronesians (28% of the cases) are still among the most affected by gonorrhea. The same pattern is seen when looking at chlamydia rates, Chamorros make up 36% of cases while Micronesians make up 28% of the cases."

-Guam Department of Public Health and Social Services, 2012

"Suicide remains a major mental and public health problem on Guåhan. Of the leading causes of death on Guåhan, suicide is the fifth highest. From 2000-2010, trends indicate an increase in suicide, with an average of 26.4 suicide deaths per year, amounting to one suicide death every two weeks."

-Drs. LisaLinda Natividad and Tim de La Cruz, 2017

"From 2000-2010, when separated into ethnicity, Chamorros accounted for the most suicides in Guåhan. It was reported that Chamorros made up 38.2% of all suicides."

-Office of the Chief Medical Examiner and DPHSS Vital Statistics

"In 2013, GPD reported 106 cases of reported rape which comes out to a rate of 64.2 reported rapes per 100,000, as compared to the US' rate of 25.2 per 100,000. Given these statistics, Guam has the second highest rape rate when compared to other states and territories."

-Guam Pacific Daily News, 2015

"In 2015, it was reported that 45% of all homeless were under the age of 21. It was also found that approximately 42% identified as Chamorro. These numbers are inclusive of persons who are either unsheltered or who utilize Guåhan's shelters."

-2015 Guam Homeless Point-in-Time Count (GHURA)

Cultural Knowledge and Pride will Make A Difference

"In order to build a better health evidence base and catalyse better policy-making, a more nuanced understanding of cultural drivers is necessary."

-World Health Organization Europe, 2016

"Efforts to eliminate health disparities must be informed by the influence of culture on the attitudes, beliefs, and practices... There is credible evidence suggesting that cultural norms within Western societies contribute to lifestyles and behaviors associated with risk factors for chronic diseases."

-Thomas, Fine, and Ibrahim, 2004

"Health benefits of arts involvement, include reductions in stress and anxiety and improved quality-of-life for people suffering from pain and depression. These benefits are particularly important in public safety sector, where stress, trauma, and mental health issues are pervasive in high-risk and incarcerated populations."

-McCarthy et al., 2004

"Inafa'maolek is a core value deeply rooted in a sense of interconnectedness or harmony. Translated, inafa'maolek means, 'to make things good.'"

-Dr. Anne Perez Hattori, 2004

Learning from an Independent Model Nation: Canada



“Communities should be able to take control of the healing process with the experience of elders and aboriginal traditions, [expressed] Sen. Murray Sinclair [pictured left]... But Sinclair offers a warning: some elders are themselves likely former abusers. Part of the solution might lie in restorative justice, an approach based on the traditional practices of indigenous cultures, he said. Prison offers only temporary relief; offenders get released and come home, and victims are traumatized all over again.”

-Kristy Kirkup & Sheryl Ubelacker, The Canadian Press

The Community Holistic Circle Healing (CHCH) process was developed by the community of Hollow Water First Nation in Manitoba Canada in the 1980s. CHCH works to revitalize and restore the traditional family unit and to foster healthy communities based upon the idea of reconciliation between offenders and victims of violence and abuse. The program is based on the regional Anishanaabeg cultural value systems and “ways of knowing”. It offers counseling services and provides support groups.

- Canada Department of Justice

“CHCH discovered that intergenerational sexual abuse was the root of the problems youth and other community members experienced. Everyone, including CHCH team members and Tribal Elders, had been affected by acute, secondary and generational violence caused by colonialism. CHCH is composed of tribal elders, policymakers, social workers and volunteer community members dedicated to healing themselves, as well as the harms of abuse suffered by the community. CHCH viewed these harms as issues which could no longer be silenced and discarded as taboo subjects. Instead they organized and confronted their problems. Community participants signed on to healing contracts, which are documents declaring the dedication and commitment to resolving the conflict at hand, caring for victims and healing relationships with the accused. The final phase of the healing circle is a cleansing ceremony celebrating restored relationships between the victim, victimizer, families, and community.”

- “COMMUNITY HOLISTIC CIRCLE HEALING: RESTORATIVE JUSTICE IN INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES”
by Laura Murphy, November 2016

“Signs of health and wellness include improved holistic health of children, more people completing their education, better parenting skills, the empowerment of community individuals, broadening of community resources, an increase in community responsibility to issues, an increased sense of safety, a return to traditional ceremony and a decrease in overall violence. From these indicators of wellness underlie the community perceptions that “things are getting better”. They also clearly indicate that through prevention, community training and intervention, the CHCH program has caused a decrease in the amount and type of services the community has required from outside sources.”

-A Cost-Benefit Analysis of Hollow Water’s Community Holistic Circle Healing Process (2001)

Nihi ta Hassuyi Este (Questions to Consider)

1. What types of public health programs and policies could an Independent Guåhan implement?
2. How can practicing cultural beliefs and traditions help to heal our community?



Independent Guåhan empowers the Chamoru people to reclaim our sovereignty as a nation. Inspired by the strength of our ancestors and with love for future generations, we educate and unify all who call our island home to build a sustainable and prosperous independent future. Contact us at independentguahan@gmail.com.