

Max Sherwin

Topic I:
Indigenous peoples, healthcare, mental health and wellness

Background Info:

Last year was the 100th anniversary of the armenian genocide. This was an attempt by the Ottoman Empire to wipe out all existing Armenians during WWI. In 1915 nearly 1.5 million of the 2 million Armenians living in and around Armenia and surrounding areas either were killed, or vanished. Prior to the genocide, the primarily christian Armenians had inhabited the area for around 2,500 years. The earliest mention of the Armenians was made by king Darius of the persian empire in 250 b.c.. The genocide, which was more of an ethnic cleansing, was carried out by the Ottoman government in order to attempt to create a more homogeneous population, since, due to it's location had widespread ethnic diversity. Following the genocide, there was a large scale disbursement of Armenians from the region, many fleeing to western European countries and the US. Currently only 3 million out of the 9 million armenians live within the countries border, 85% of which was lost after the war. The effect of the massacres can still be seen a century after it occurred, especially in the mental health of Indigenous survivors.

Mental health:

The genocide left scars they would never heal in many survivors. The horrific events that occurred in the early 1900's would cause PTSD in many survivors and leave them with images that would haunt them forever. In an interview with a survivor of the massacre, she describes the night when her family was killed. She saw her father get beheaded, her 2 year old nephew and 7 months pregnant mother stabbed. Scenes like these would haunt people for the rest of their lives, and in some cases cause severe mental illness. These effect however, did not stop at this generation. The unrelenting feeling of hopelessness and despair would plague many Armenians and the generations to follow them. This resulted in disorder such as depression anxiety and caused substance abuse among Armenian communities. The anger and confusion following the traumatic events would eventually turn to anger. Anger that was not expressed internally was expressed toward other Armenians.

Topic 2:

Indigenous Land Rights, Climate Change impacts and Environmental Protection of Resources

Land Rights:

Under the control of the Ottoman Empire, the Armenians had lost nearly 85% of the traditional homeland, and on top of this, their culture was nearly eradicated. Also, its involvement with soviet russia alter its borders.

Natural resources and environment:

Armenia is primarily a factory and manufacturing based economy. It was fairly unimportant whilst under soviet communist control. Its economy was ranked 132nd in the world and has not yet found stable financial ground in centuries. During its time in the SU Armenia was heavily industrial, manufacturing electronic parts, rubber and chemicals. During this time it also had a 10% employment rate.

Environment:

Armenia is a fairly arid country, lack many valuable natural resources. One positive feature about it, however, is that is is sandwiched in between the Caspian and Black Seas, allowing access to sea based shipping of goods. In 1988 Armenia experiences a fairly severe earthquake, leaving 500,000 homeless and killing 25,000, even further damaging its already struggling economy.