

for some tribes such as the Sioux, Navajo, and Apache. Factors related to historical trauma have been associated with a range of social pathologies and negative health/mental health outcomes among American Indians and Alaska Natives (see Struthers and Lowe 2003), such as:

- A high prevalence of cardiovascular disease risk factors such as cigarette smoking and hypertension among American Indians and Alaska Natives, for example, has been related to perceived discrimination and its effects (Krieger, 2000; Johansson, Jacobsen, & Buchwald, 2006).
- Studies have reported strong associations between perceived discrimination and increased depressive symptoms in adult American Indians in the upper Midwest (Whitbeck et al. 2002).
- Loss of self-esteem, depression, poverty, and loss of traditional male roles have been cited as additional factors related to cardiovascular disease (Rhoades 2003).
- Health risk behavior among male American Indians and Alaska Natives may be due to a loss of traditional male roles (Oetting et al. 1998), unresolved grief from historical trauma (Brave Heart & DeBruyn, 1998), and particularly among younger men, anomie and a loss of cultural identity (O'Neill & Mitchell, 1996).

Studies suggest that there is a range of phenomena that may form part of an overall historical trauma syndrome that in turn is associated with numerous health conditions. How does that happen? Whitbeck et al. (2004) made an important contribution by attempting to disentangle the mechanisms through which historical trauma affects American Indians and Alaska Natives. Because the experience was often voiced in terms of *loss*, this important research sought to identify the kinds of losses and resulting emotions associated with historical trauma. Identified losses were converted to items on an historical loss scale and included:

- Loss of land, language, culture, and traditional spiritual ways
- Loss of family ties because of boarding schools; loss of families due to government relocation
- Loss of self-respect due to poor treatment by government officials
- Loss of trust in whites from broken treaties
- Losses from the effects of alcohol
- Loss of respect for elders

FIGURE 7-9 Historical Trauma Model



