01. **Examples of Flawed Stereotypes**

- "**Native Populations are Dwindling**"  
  ○ An estimated 78% of Americans believe Native populations are dwindling because they rarely see, hear, or read about these communities (Stereotypes - Dennison 2020)  
  ○ Historical representations/media view Natives and modernity as mutually exclusive, thus perpetuating the idea that Indigenous peoples are a thing of the past (Thrush 2006)

- **Flawed Portrayals in Popular Media**  
  ○ Film and television often characterize Indigenous peoples as "noble savages"—uncorrupted by civilization with a strong spiritual connection to nature and cultural practices  
  ○ Natives are also portrayed as "ignoble savages"—uncivilized, brutal, and bloody-minded

- "**Natives are Fundamentally Primitive**"
  ○ Belief that Indigenous peoples lack the ability to take care of themselves or their family due to their biology, character, and intellect (Justice 2018)  
  ○ Positions harmful federal practices such as forced adoptions, land allotments, and boarding schools as "helpful" toward Native populations

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02. **Implications of Native Stereotyping**

- **Fuels Invisibility and Erasure of Natives**  
  ○ Misrepresentation of Natives freezes cultures: makes it feel as though the only authentic Native culture is from the past  
  ○ As such, very little information is taught about contemporary Native peoples in K-12 education

- **Justifies and Hides Colonialism**  
  ○ Violent policies are regarded as helping Indigenous communities
    - **Forced Adoption**: Native children were forcefully taken from their communities and given to white families based off the stereotype that they needed to be "saved from being Indian" (Mazo 2018)  
  ○ Ignores the existence of complex societies

- **Fuels Bias and Racism Toward Indigenous Communities**

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[1] Cara Romero’s “TV Indians” challenges stereotypes by framing four Natives against the backdrop of a pile of old televisions displaying films that remain “somewhat beloved”, despite their stereotyping, racist fixations, and use of the white savior trope.
03. Challenging False Narratives

- **Reclaiming Stories**
  - **Through photography:**
    - Cara Romero⁴, a photographer and member of the Chemehuevi Tribe, uses complex and nuanced images¹ to rewrite stories of Native identity, battle cultural misappropriation, and confront stereotypes—all while combining traditional motifs and symbols with a modern perspective
  - **Through music:**
    - Indigenous musicians today push against the stereotype that Native cultures are stagnant
    - In *A Tribe Called Red*³, Indigenous artists combine modern music and narratives with First Nations rhythms to emphasize how Native peoples/cultures continue to persevere (*A Tribe Called Red, 2018*)
  - **Through Native-led Initiatives:**
    - IllumiNative challenges the negative narrative that surrounds Native communities and promotes an accurate and authentic portrayal of Natives in pop culture and media.

04. How to Support the Dismantling of Stereotypes

- **Amplify Native Voices, Stories, and Issues**
  - Supporting contemporary Native voices creates a more authentic portrayal of Native peoples as they are able to shape their own stories

- **Education**
  - Curriculum about Native Cultures can bring awareness to the existence and ramifications of stereotypes. Students will then have the tools to correct misinformation and expose their own biases

- **Natives in Mainstream Media**
  - A poll of 450 Indigenous opinion leaders found that ~45% laid the blame of anti-Indian sentiment on media stereotypes (Schmidt 2007)
  - Native people should have the most input in creating accurate and realistic Native characters, allowing for a more positive portrayal of Natives in media
  - Mainstream media must be held accountable for sidelining authentic Native stories and voices and for not hiring more writers, editors, and producers of color