What is Internalized Oppression?

“Internalized oppression is the turning upon ourselves, upon our families, and upon our own people, the distress patterns that result from the racism and oppression of the majority society.

When people are targeted, discriminated against, or oppressed over a period of time, they often internalized the myths and misinformation that society communicates to them about their group.

When people from targeted groups internalize myths and misinformation, it can cause them to feel (often unconsciously) that in some way they are inherently not as worthy, capable, intelligent, beautiful, good, etc. as people outside their group.

They turn the experience of oppression inward. They begin to feel that the myths and misinformation that society communicates are true and they act as if they were true. This is called internalized oppression.

Internalized oppression is a result of historical trauma passed across generations that continues to actively wound Native American people.