



Mental Health - Trauma as a Chronic Untreated Condition

Power in Partnerships

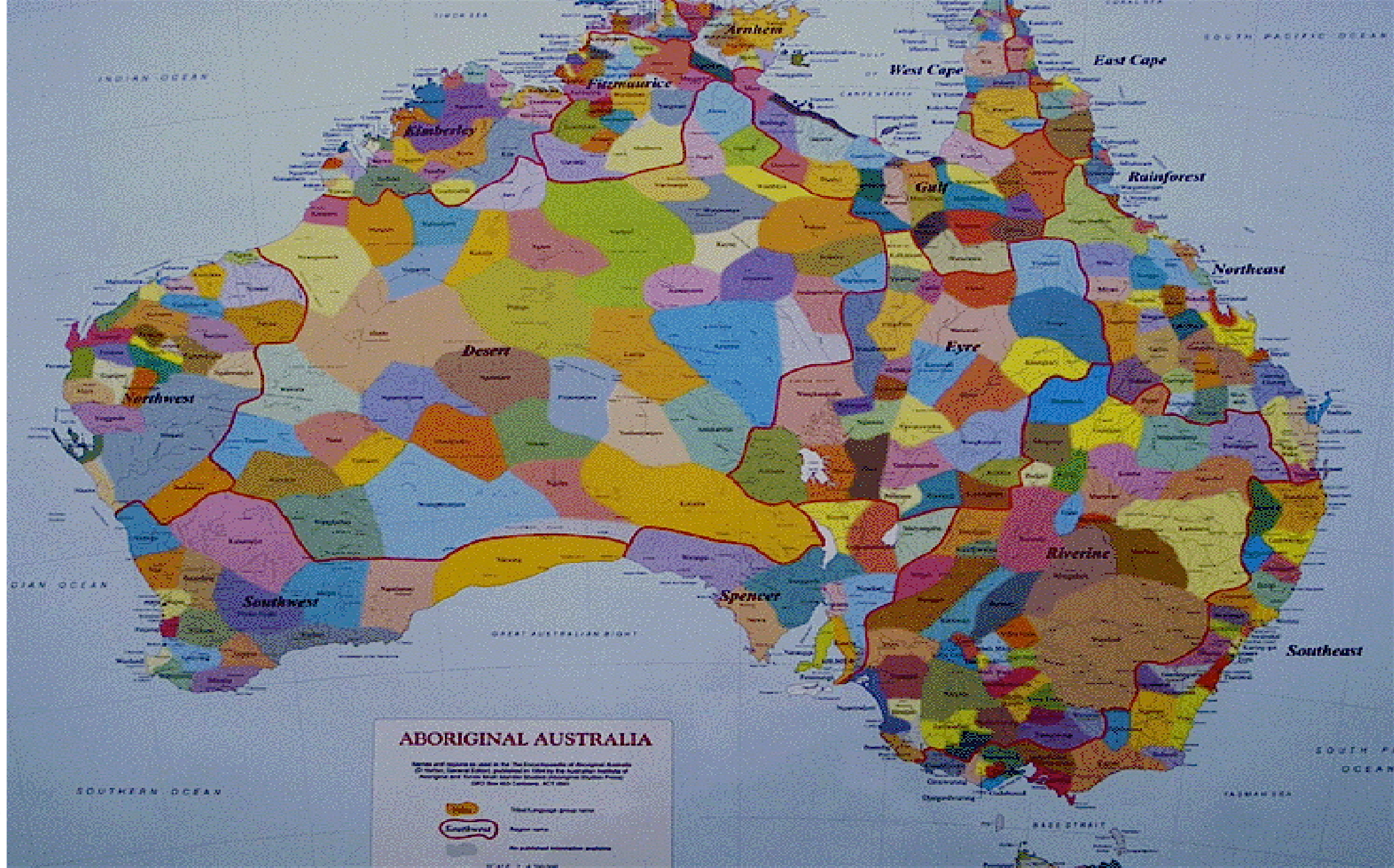
Aboriginal Chronic Conditions Network
27th to 28th August 2019 ... Judy Atkinson



Healing People
Sharing Culture
Regenerating Community



**Acknowledging the Traditional Owners, Custodians, Elders, Peoples, Children of the
Gadigal of the great Eora Nation - lands and heart place.
Greetings from Bundjalung Peoples and Country.**





I will tell you something about stories.
They aren't just entertainment, don't be fooled.
They are all - we have fight of illness and death.
You don't have anything if you don't have stories.
Their evil is mighty, but it can't stand up to our stories.

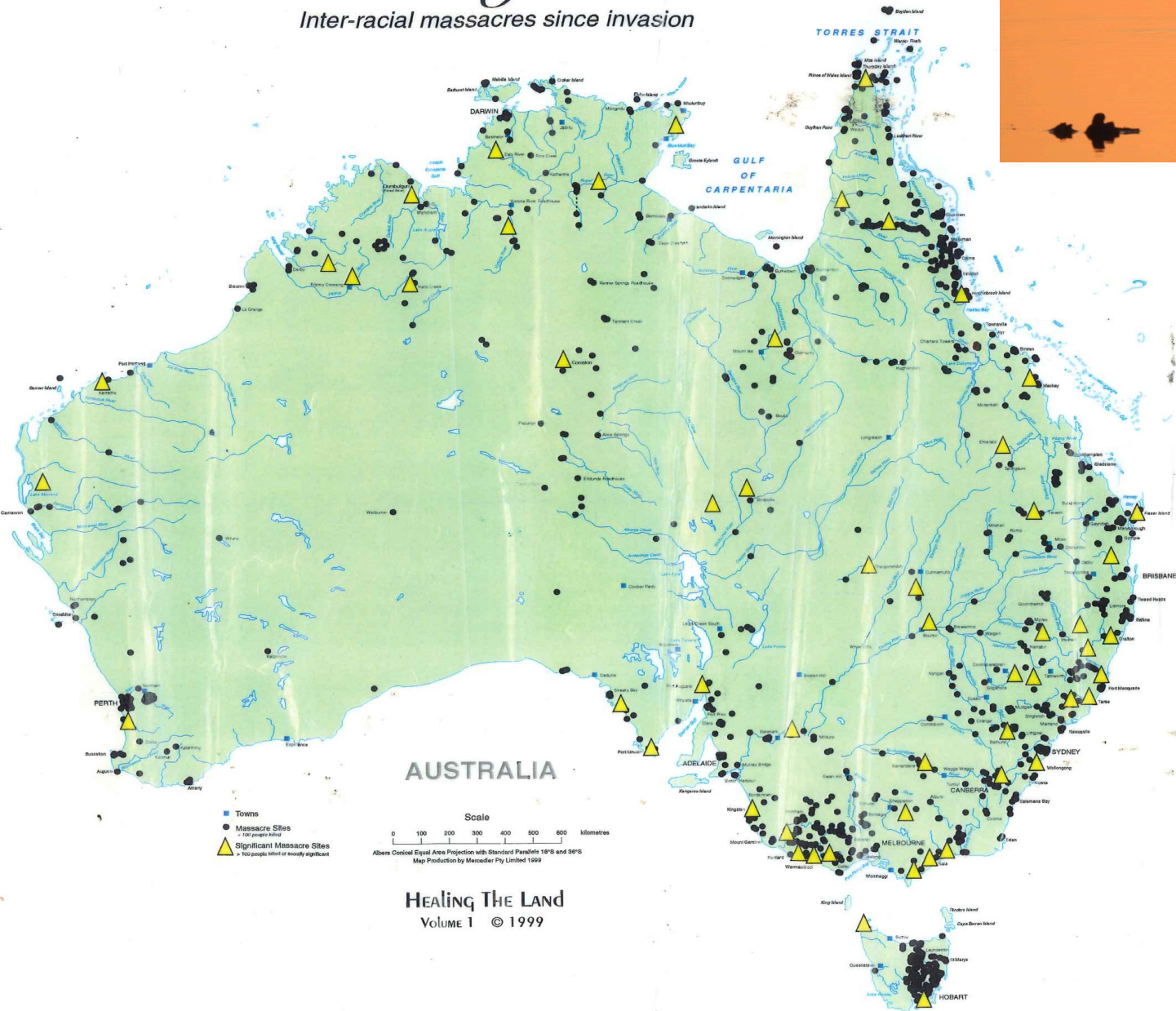


So they try to destroy the stories.
Let the stories be confused or forgotten.
They would like that.
They would be happy,
because we would be defenceless then.

Leslie Silko in Ceremony

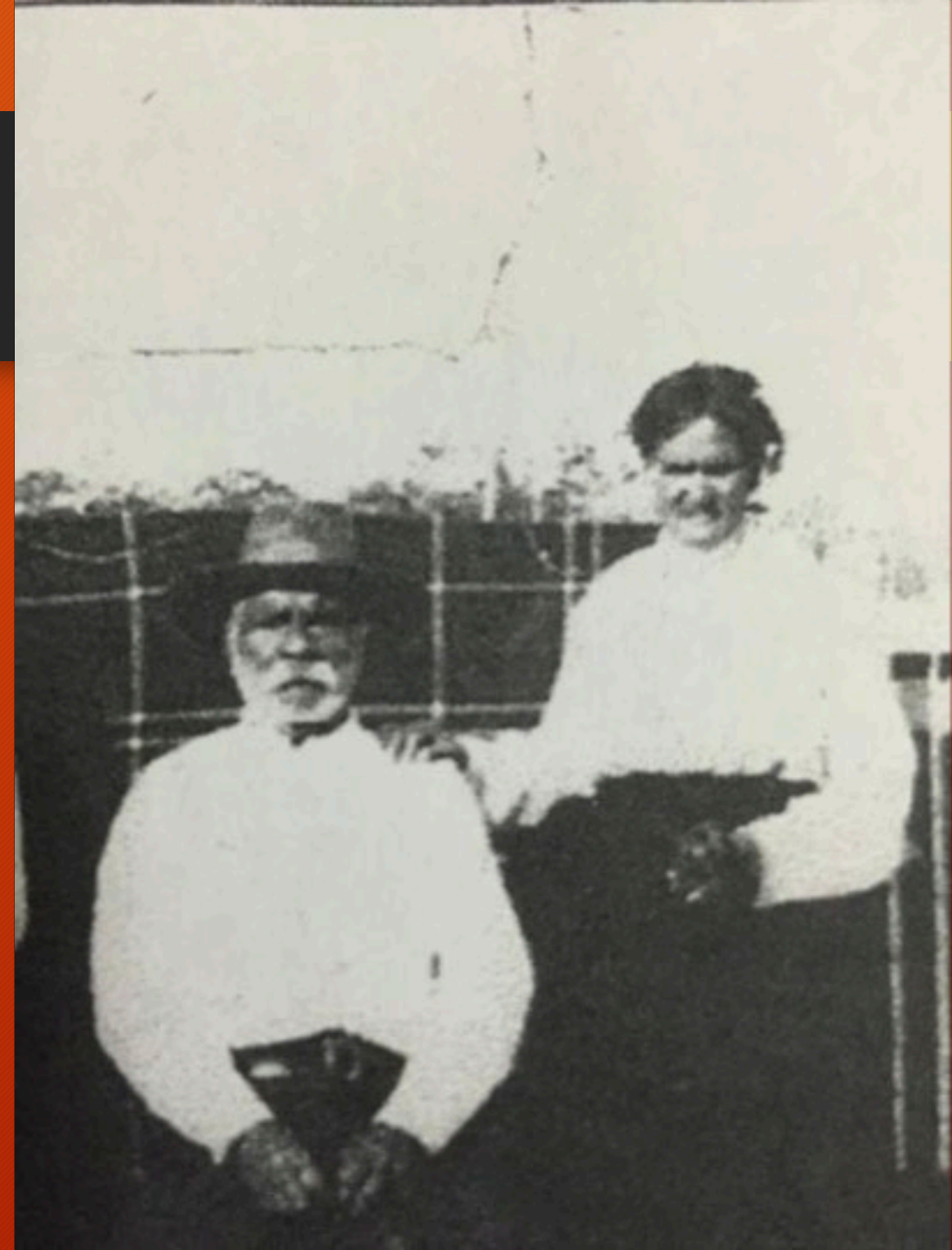
Where is thy brother ?

Inter-racial massacres since invasion



Who am I? Own who we are Growing their legacy

- Jiman. ... Hornet Bank
 - Eliza Shields
- Bundjalung
 - Henry Williams
- I am formed by who they were and are.
- Also mother of 4
- Barbing - Grandmother of 7
- Great-grandmother of 2



World Wide Colonisations

"Symptom as History"



- Subjugation of Indigenous peoples:
- Physical Violence - Structural Violence - Psycho-Social dominance
- The creation of culturally unsafe learning and living environments.
- Understanding the trauma story:
- Historic, Social, Cultural, Collective, Complex, Developmental Trauma.

TRAUMA RUPTURES OUR vital CONNECTIONS

© Reinhard Donath: Englischunterricht in der Informationsgesellschaft 1997 ff. - Stand: 09-03-2001

- to ourselves
 - *physically*
 - *emotionally*
 - *Mentally*
 - *Vitally (spiritually)*



- to others
 - *family*
 - *social group*
 - *generation*
 - *culture*



- to nature
 - instinctually*
 - environmentally*





When We Ignore Generational Trauma

(Merida Blanco, in Peter Levine, Waking the Tiger)

- 1st generation. colonised – males killed – imprisoned – females sexually misused
- 2nd generation. Men turn to alcohol or drugs as their cultural and spiritual identity is damaged – self worth eroded.
- 3rd generation. Spousal Assault -- Societal trauma
- 4th generation. Abuse moves from spousal assault to child abuse or both.
- 5th generation. Cycle repeats as trauma begets violence begets trauma.
- The grown children of the conquerors will begin to live in fear of the grown children of the conquered.




Creation of Violent Individuals - Communities - Societies

1. Living in culturally unsafe environments
2. Being hurt as a child, as a people (eg generational trauma)
3. Being hurt but being prevented from experiencing the pain of that hurt
4. Having no one in whom we can confide our true feeling, not being heard nor acknowledged in our pain.
5. Having a lack of education or knowledge, therefore being unable to intellectualise the abuse.
6. Having no way we can transform our pain without repeating the cycle of abuse on ourselves or others. (Miller, Alice, 1984 For their own good)



Unpacking pathology - pathos

- “Pathology: the study of diseases and of the changes that they cause in a person - a society.”
- “Pathos: suffering - the quality or power in an actual life experience evoking a feeling of sympathetic and kindly sorrow or compassion.”
- “Behaviour is Language” Brad’s story



BRAD ... (not his real name) Pathology and Pathos ...



Diagnosis - pathology:

- Emerging psychosis with mood depressive content - some paranoia (he thinks the world is unsafe)
- Suicidal ideation
- Chronic compound grief
- Complex Post Traumatic Stress

Trauma Story ... Pathos ...

- Seeing his mother killed at three, and his Aunty at 11.
- His world was unsafe
- In the two suicide attempts, records said he was 'attention seeking'.
- He was prescribed Ritalan.
- No grief counselling ...no trauma response

Billy: “Oh I am always scared Aunty”



Wersula Duktiewicz

On the 23rd August 1972 NSW Director-General of Education approved



- ... the removal of the section of the teachers' handbook that allowed school principals the right to refuse enrolment to Aboriginal children because of 'home conditions' or 'substantial opposition from the community.'
- 6 youth were admitted to high school (on a trial basis), however when other students went to the swimming pool for school activities, they had to clean up the school yard.
- Excessive punishment - Aboriginal boys - youth were given the cane on a daily basis. **'We can smell racism Miss'**.

This is racist torture trauma in the experiences of those still living

Shelly - “Quick! there’s the Rapist” lessons from the past



URSULA DUBROWIEC

Success and Failures can Teach us about the need for change



The Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) study: when kids grow up in a stressful environment, or go through exceptionally traumatic life events this has a significant biological impact on their developing brain and stress-response system. They are always in flight fight freeze mode. (Fellitti, VJ et al 1998)



1. Emotional Abuse
2. Physical Abuse
3. Sexual Abuse
4. Emotional Neglect
5. Physical Neglect
6. Family Violence
7. Household Substance Abuse
8. Household Mental Illness
9. Parental Separation
10. Household Member incarcerated

- In one prison all the women had scores of between 5 to 6 - some with scores between 7 - 8 - one who had a score of 10.
- In one school for children expelled or suspended from all other schools one child has a documented score of 10, most in the 7 to 9

What if a School is the place of extreme abuse and punishment?

The ACE Study ... outcomes



- Childhood trauma including abuse and neglect, is probably the single most important public health challenge we face ... a challenge that has the potential to be largely resolved by appropriate prevention and intervention.
- (children) - violation of a child's sense of safety and trust, of self worth, with a loss of a coherent sense of self, emotional distress, shame, grief, self and other destructive behaviors;
- (Adolescents) - Unmodulated aggression, difficulty negotiating relationships, clear link between suicide, alcoholism and other drug misuse, sexual promiscuity, physical inactivity, smoking, obesity, mental distress, depression;
- People with childhood histories of trauma make up almost our entire juvenile detention - criminal justice population.

• (van der Kolk, B. 2007)



Building more prisons / juvenile Detention Centres / removing more kids. Filling up motels.

- “The NSW prison population hit a record high of 13,651 in May last year, compared with fewer than 10,000 five years ago, while the rates of serious crime such as murder, break and enter and motor vehicle theft have declined over the past 20 years.
- Mr Debus, who was NSW attorney-general from 2000 to 2007, said “the over-imprisonment of Indigenous men, women and children [who make up 2 per cent of the national population but 27 per cent of the prison population] is a continuing national tragedy” and “rates of recidivism ... remain persistently over 50 per cent and up to 75 per cent for Indigenous prisoners”.



Listening and Learning Together hearing through different ears

Ngangikurungkurr - *dadirri* - listening in
contemplative - reciprocal relationships

Bundjalung - *gan'na* hearing, listening, learning,
feeling, thinking, understanding, knowing from
the heart.

Pitjantjatjara - *kulini* (listening),
Kulila (an old woman's growl - you listen now!)
And pulgkara kulin tjugku (really - deep -
listening, and wanting to listen).

Our brain tells us how to behave in response to our experiences.



Reason

Neo-cortex

Prefrontal Cortex

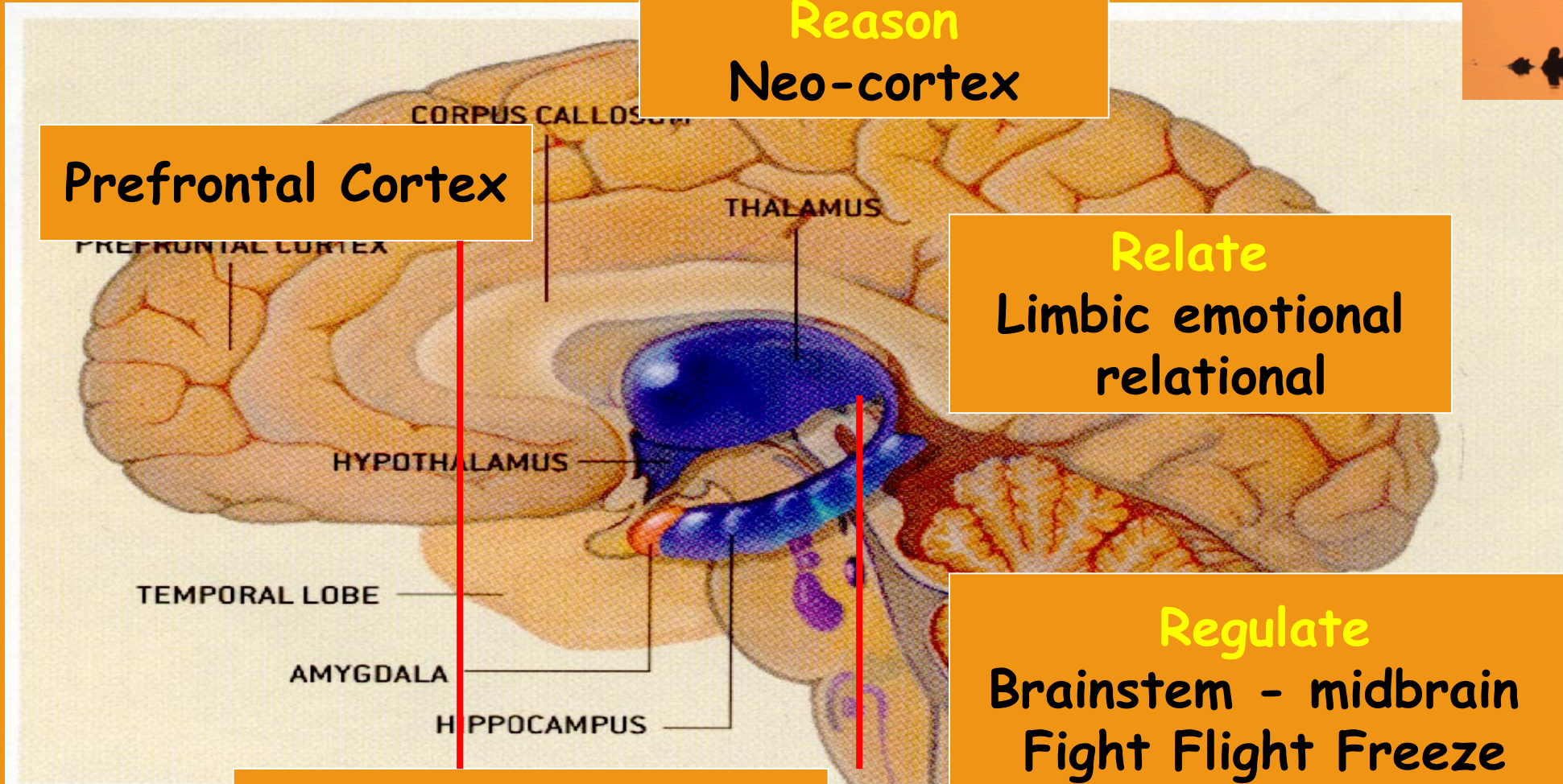
Relate

**Limbic emotional
relational**

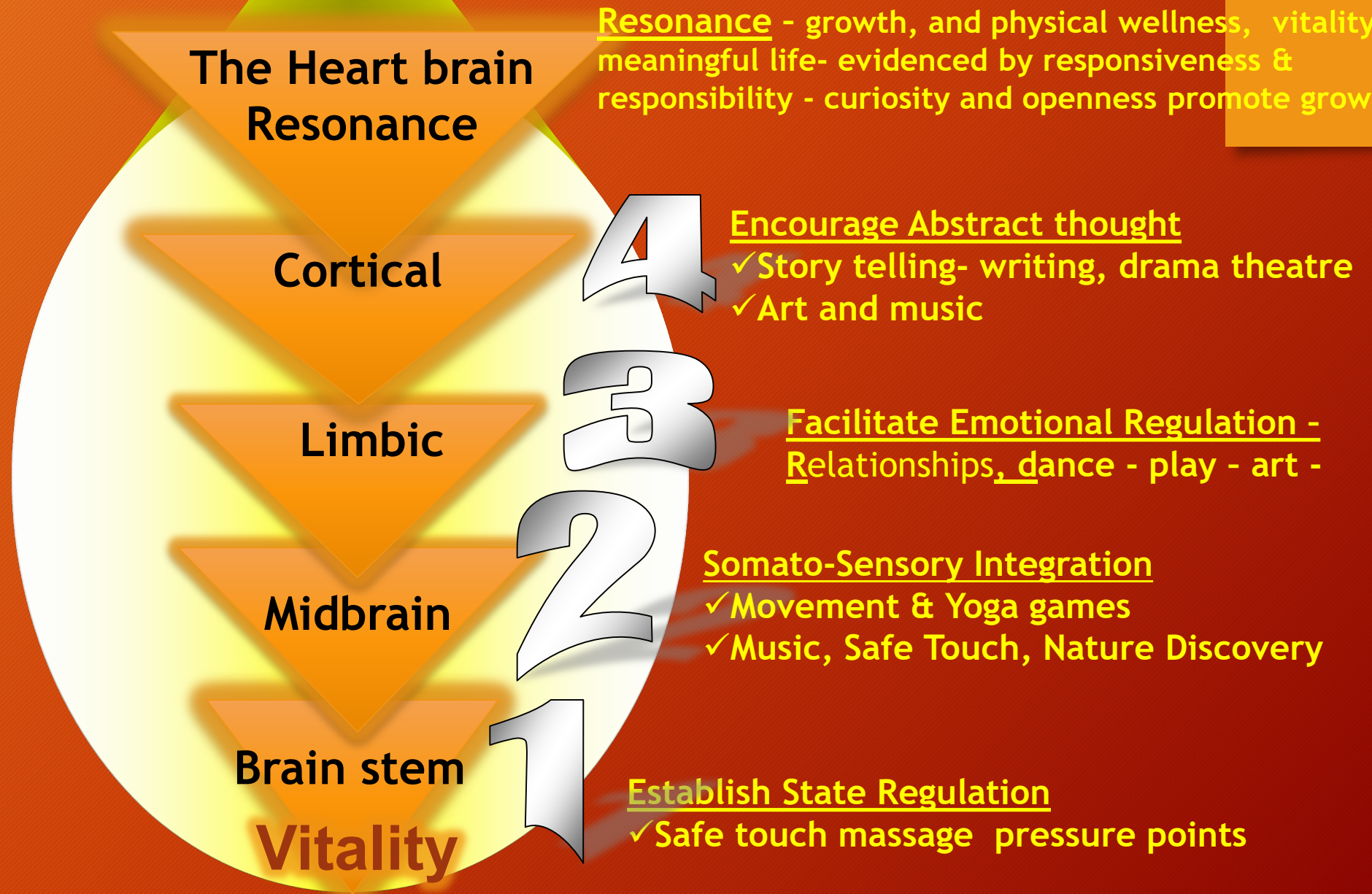
Regulate

**Brainstem - midbrain
Fight Flight Freeze**

Heart Brain



Neuro-developmental rationale for healing trauma



A School for Specific Purposes Behaviour that Teaches Leadership

- “Reflective, deep insight, and unconditional care and advocacy for children.
- You are challenging the System ... challenging them to see the importance of reparative, therapeutic approaches versus punishment.
- Using of the following analogy. 'If I got sick and was admitted to this town's hospital, I would get a certain level of diagnosis and treatment....if however, I got sicker, I wouldn't be sent home for a specified period of time.. (like a suspension). I would be given a more specialised, individual level of care. This is what we must do.'
- "You truly CARE FOR KIDS with unconditional love, and wise insight into why they behave why they do."



Moving through an Educaring Process in Healing Trauma

1. Creating Culturally Safe Places (massage safe touch)
2. Finding and telling our stories (play dance theatre)
3. Making Sense of our Stories (music theatre writing art)
4. Feeling Feelings (play theatre mindfulness nature discovery)
5. Moving through Layers of Loss and Grief to acceptance (Loss Story Maps)
6. Strengthening Cultural and Spiritual Identities (Education in Country)

Healthy Country Healthy People

body mind heart spirit





Principles of whole of community healing to protect children from harm

- Work together
- Begin earlier
- Think Developmentally
- Work from a sound knowledge base
- Make adequate resources available
- Implement the principles & practice of Child Rights, Human Rights, Indigenous Rights
- Support parents, schools, health services etc, to 'Educare'.

Healing childhood trauma within the framework of Whole of Community Healing.





“AUNTY MARGIE - I LOVE YOU - I MISSED YOU”

“All you
can do is
Love them

1. Children and Youth: need Trauma Specific Services
2. Women: Safety and Support
3. Men are taking responsibility
4. Aboriginal Organisations must become trauma informed
5. NGO's have to start to deliver to the most vulnerable
6. Government Agencies - Federal State and Local
 - Early Childhood, Health, Child Protection, Education, Police, Courts, alternatives to - JJ Prison
 - Communities of Care

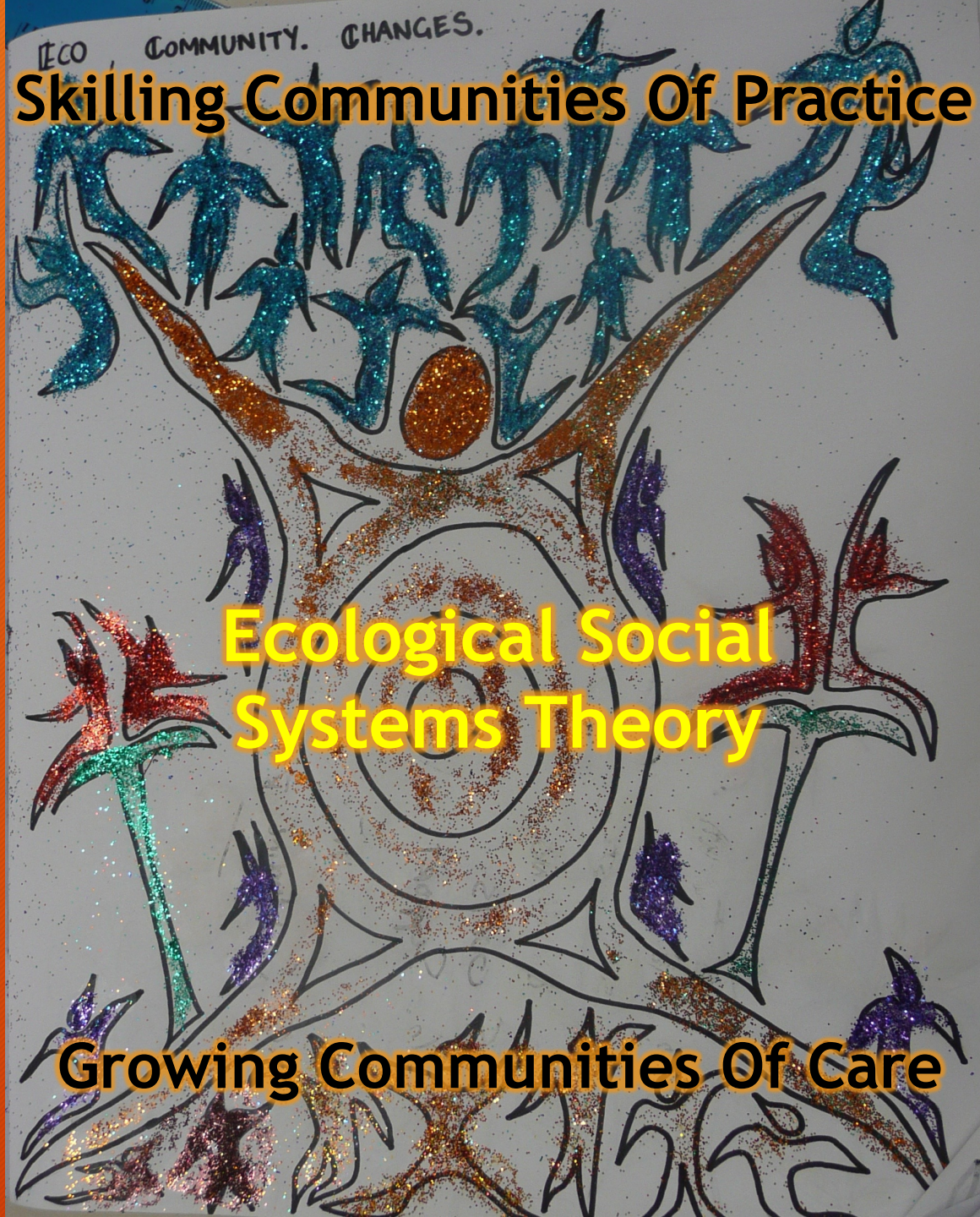


Defining Community Safety Hope Resolution

- *A group in which free conversation can take place. Community is where I can share my innermost thoughts, bring out the depths of my own feelings, and know they will be understood. ... Communication makes community and is the possibility of human beings living together for their mutual psychological, physical and spiritual nourishment (May 1976: 246-7).*

Skilling Communities Of Practice

Community of Care is the name given to groups of people who live together in small communities, and who care for each other. More particularly those people who live in small communities know who is struggling and who is feeling pain, and decide to do something to support them.



Two conditions of a community of practice are crucial in the construction of meaning: shared experience over time, and a commitment to shared understanding and service.

A suggested activity for the school



phn
NORTHERN TERRITORY
An Australian Government Initiative

LARRAKIA WORLDVIEW CARING FOR COUNTRY, CARING FOR EACH OTHER



THE LARRAKIA HEALING GROUP

The Larrakia Healing group is a group of all Larrakia people committed to working together on country towards healing and recovery from intergenerational trauma for our families and our community. Our members practice a range of alternative and traditional healing techniques within the community. We are also interested in creating relevant and effective support for local indigenous people across the range of health and social services available to them.

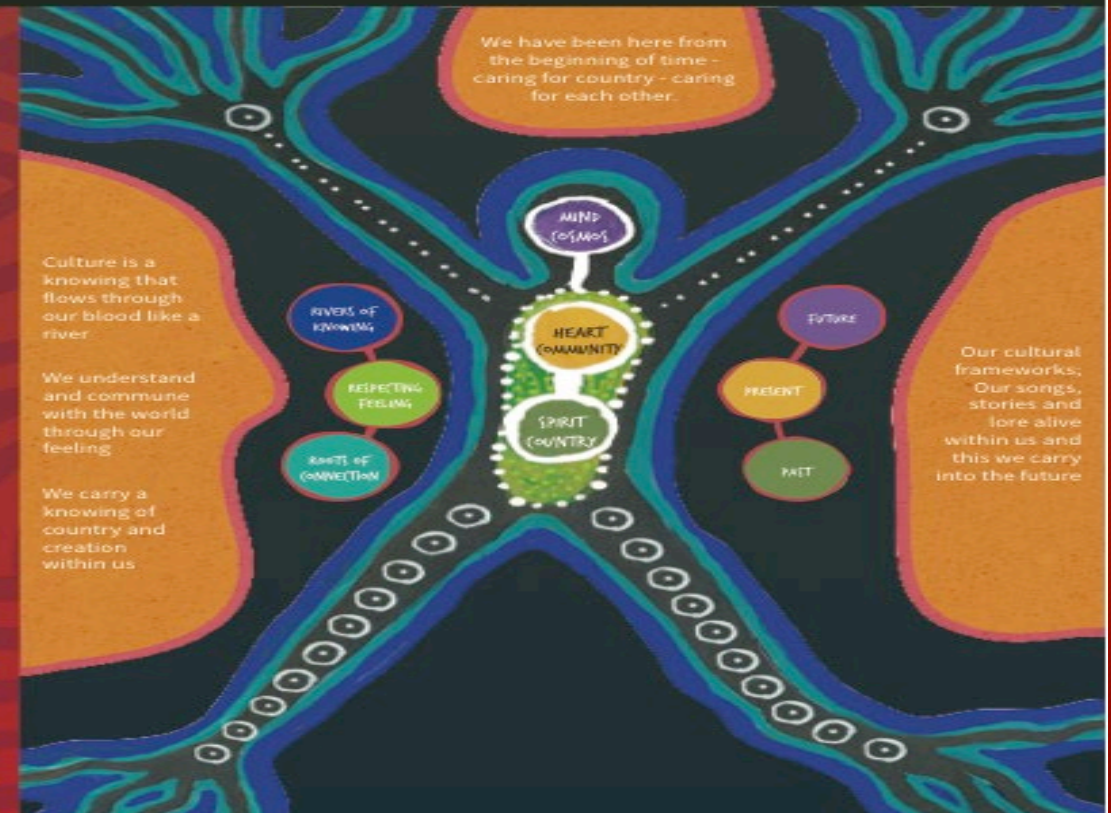
We offer these resources to aid services in considering the holistic nature of our social and emotional wellbeing and how historical impacts have affected our families and communities within a localised context. We also suggest ways of working and learning together in responsive and reciprocal ways across all the areas of our social and emotional wellbeing. We hope these resources continue to stimulate engaging conversations around providing effective and respectful services to all Indigenous people on Larrakia country.

LARRAKIA WORLD VIEW

This figure represents our connection and holistic relationship to culture, country and cosmos. We experience the world through the language of feeling accessed and interpreted through the mind (cosmos), heart (community) and spirit (country). The rivers and streams emanating from the hands and feet represent the flow of connection to the spiritual force within our country and our Dreaming.

All content and design across these resources was created and sourced by the Larrakia Healing Group; June Mills, Tony Lee, Nadine Lee and Ash Dargan

Health Network Northern Territory is the lead agency for Northern Territory Partners in Recovery. Partners in Recovery is an initiative of the Australian Government.





INTERGENERATIONAL TRAUMA MAPPING

WHAT MAKES OUR SPIRIT SICK



SUGGESTED ACTIONS

1869-1894

Arrival of British surveying ships (colonisers).
Forced dispersal of Larrakia from traditional land.
British colonisers create Larrakia Kings and Queens to make treaties and agreements easier.
Access to sacred sites restricted.
Introduction of flour, sugar and alcohol.

1894-1919

Chief Protector NT given legal guardianship over Aboriginal children.
Mixed Blood children removed from mothers.
Darwin declared off limits to Aboriginal people.
Kahlin Compound setup 1912.
Permits needed to be outside of Kahlin.

1919-1944

'Half Cast Policy' of assimilation.
Segregation by skin colour and tone.
Mission's utilised to aid in overcoming the 'half cast problem'.
Legal status and rights given to lighter coloured people.

1944-1969

Larrakia of mixed descent start to publicly denounce their heritage to bypass laws against them.
Removal of Larrakia during War.
Larrakia servicemen not paid for service.

1969-1994

Division within Larrakia community due to historical impacts of removals, assimilation policies and colour separations.
No decision on Kenbi Land Claim for over a generation.

1994-2019

Decision to hand back land in native title remains unsigned.
Aboriginal incarceration rates in NT justice system 3 times the national average.
Mandatory Alcohol Treatment Program bill passed with over 95% Indigenous representation.
Paternalism within organisations and governance.

EFFECTS ON COMMUNITY

1869-1894

Dispossession, loss of land and the right to walk freely upon the land. Loss of language and cultural continuity.
Nutrition affected as traditional diet supplemented by processed foods.

1894-1919

Loss of trust, sense of belonging and safety.
The beginning of intergenerational trauma from forced removals and separation. Drinking to ease the pain leading to alcoholism.

1919-1944

Subjugation, inequality, disadvantage and poverty. Ongoing and multi layered grief and loss from continued removals.

1944-1969

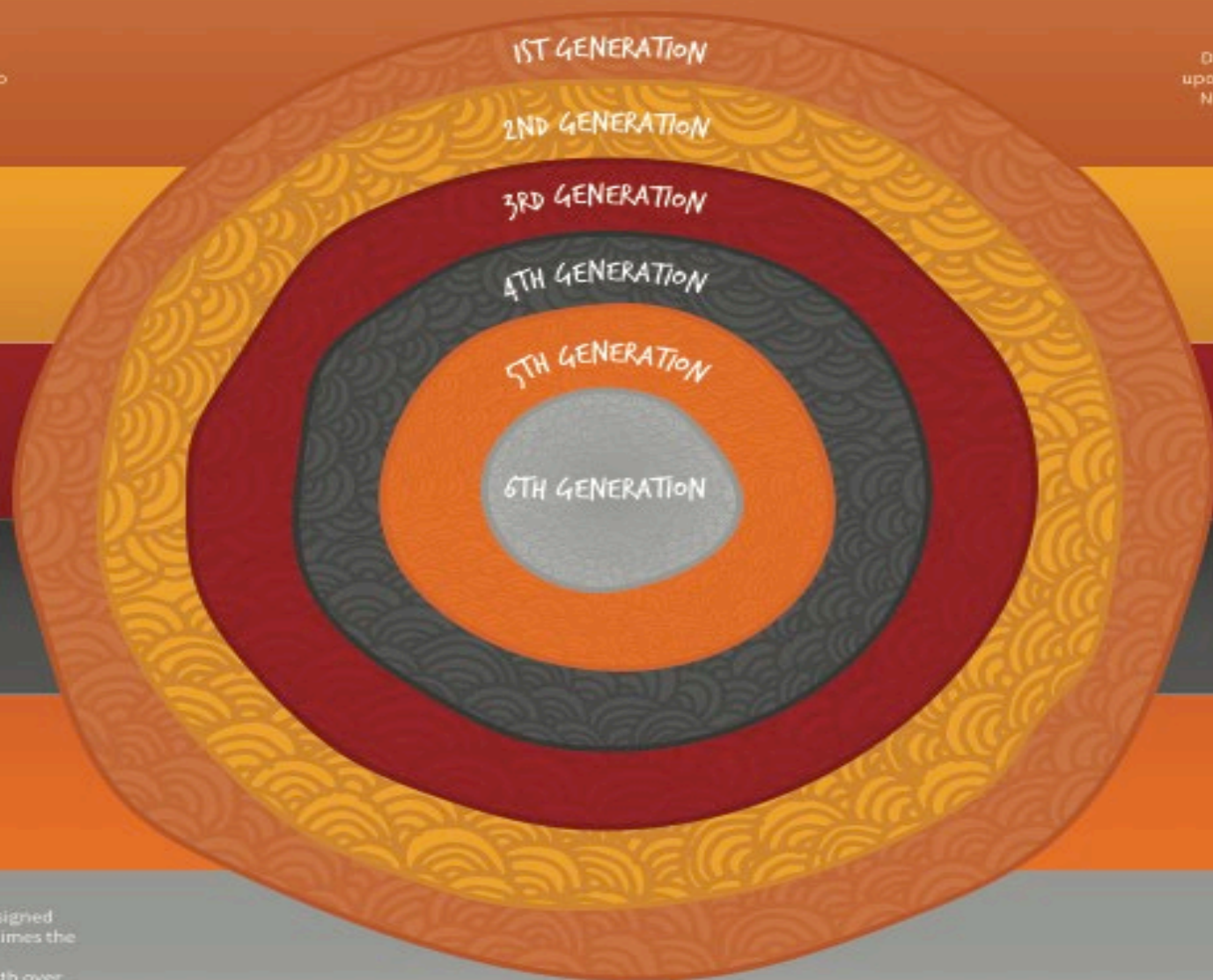
Lateral violence. Disunity, anger and mistrust. Community and domestic violence. Depression and other mental health issues affecting whole communities.

1969-1994

Drug use becoming accepted as part of growing up. Moving through the justice system becomes an accepted right of passage for young people.
Community suicides increase. PTSD.

1994-2019

Self harming behaviour increases. self-medication, Suicide, Substance abuse.
Paternalism within organisations and governance.
Sense of ongoing oppression, lack of opportunity and sense of hopelessness.





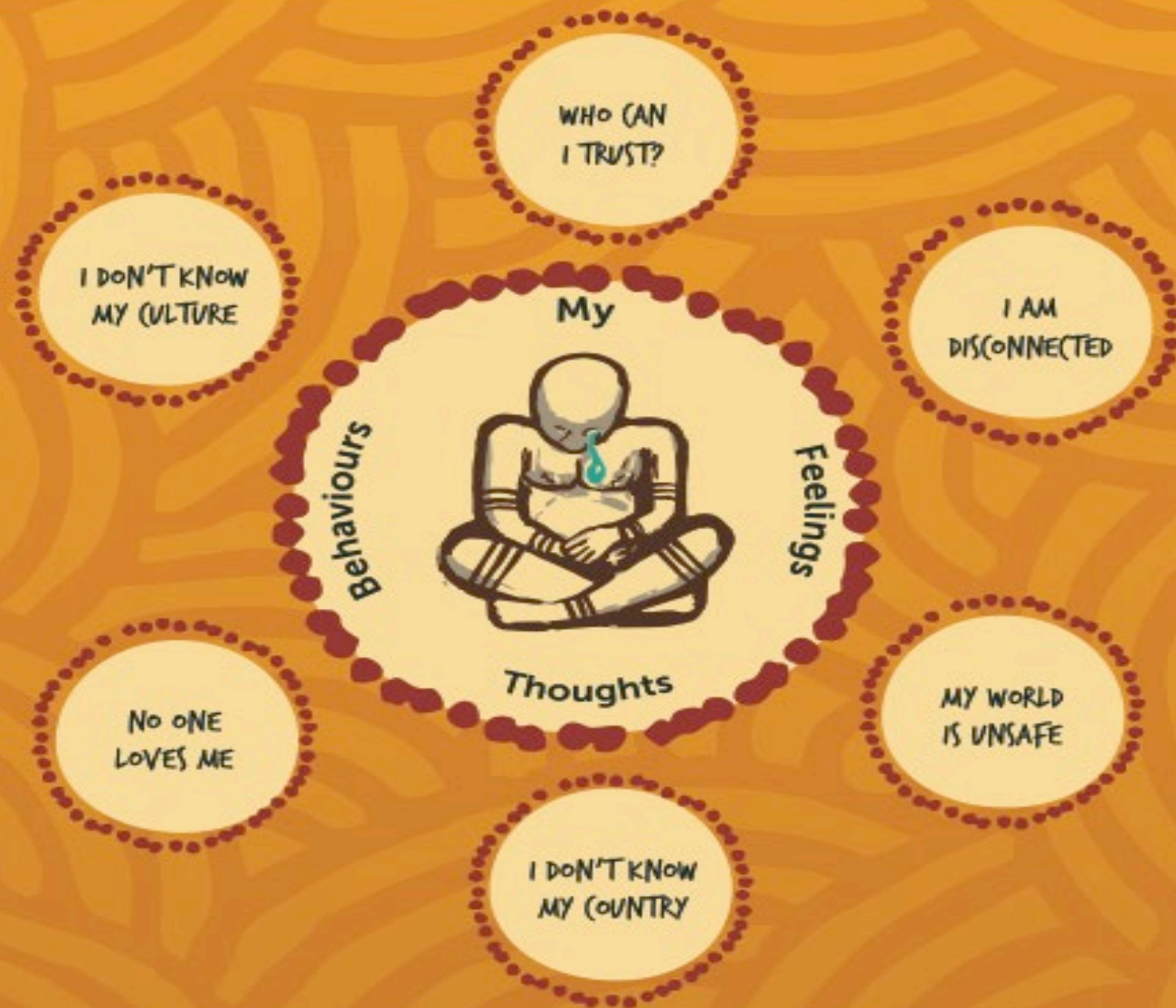
INTERGENERATIONAL TRAUMA

WHAT MAKES OUR SPIRIT SICK



Larrakia people have experienced six generations of trauma that continues to impact us negatively. We can no longer allow our trauma story to remain unacknowledged.

Science is now able to show people what we have always known - that our lived experience is passed on generationally. In this way our trauma story is inherited by each successive generation.



Trauma impacts our physical, emotional and spiritual well-being. It changes who we are and how connect with the world.

The nature of our trauma is not a single event. It has a cumulative effect that builds over each generation - our trauma story is multi-layered since the time of colonisation.



SUGGESTED ACTIONS

CONNECTION TO COMMUNITY

Network across Indigenous services and programs.
Employ and train local Aboriginal people with genuine support into long term employment.
Choose holistic models of working that consider both family and community connections.
Take responsibility for developing culturally competent staff.

CONNECTION TO FAMILY/KINSHIP

Gain an awareness of local family groups & history.
Practise professional critical reflexivity.
Employ local community engagement officers.
Allowing flexibility within professional family, elders and community effectively.

CONNECTION TO COUNTRY

Collaborate with local Elders to design and run cultural connection camps and programs.
Sponsor a Larrakia public art project.
Support welcome to country by local Indigenous people.

CONNECTION TO CULTURE

Enrol staff in cross cultural training.
Involve the whole workplace celebration of Indigenous recognition days.
Take an interest in your clients culture.
Encourage connection to activities that promote clients connection to culture.

CONNECTION TO BODY/MIND

Use of familiar vocabulary when explaining test results or western concepts of health.
Recognising and understanding the cultural implications of behaviours.
Be self aware and care for your own body/mind.
Consider language/images used in health resources.

CONNECTION TO SPIRIT, SPIRITUALITY

Critically reflect on your own cultural influences and biases.
Support two way interaction between traditional and western approaches to healing.
Develop your capacity to understand and interact with cultural spiritual frameworks and world views.

HOLISTIC MODEL OF HEALING

WHAT KEEPS OUR SPIRIT STRONG



EFFECTS ON COMMUNITY

CONNECTION TO COMMUNITY

Increased trust and openness towards services.
Willingness for community individuals to self refer.
Genuine community participation when invited into two way sharing.
Stronger community support for services.
Longer lasting therapeutic relationships.

CONNECTION TO FAMILY/KINSHIP

Healthy relationship building between services and families.
Clients will feel seen, heard, acknowledged and understood.
Clients and families will experience genuine support.

CONNECTION TO COUNTRY

Growing sense of empowerment and cultural pride.
Clients experience increased sense of belonging and connection to land and and culture.
Employment and recognition of local Aboriginal expertise.

CONNECTION TO CULTURE

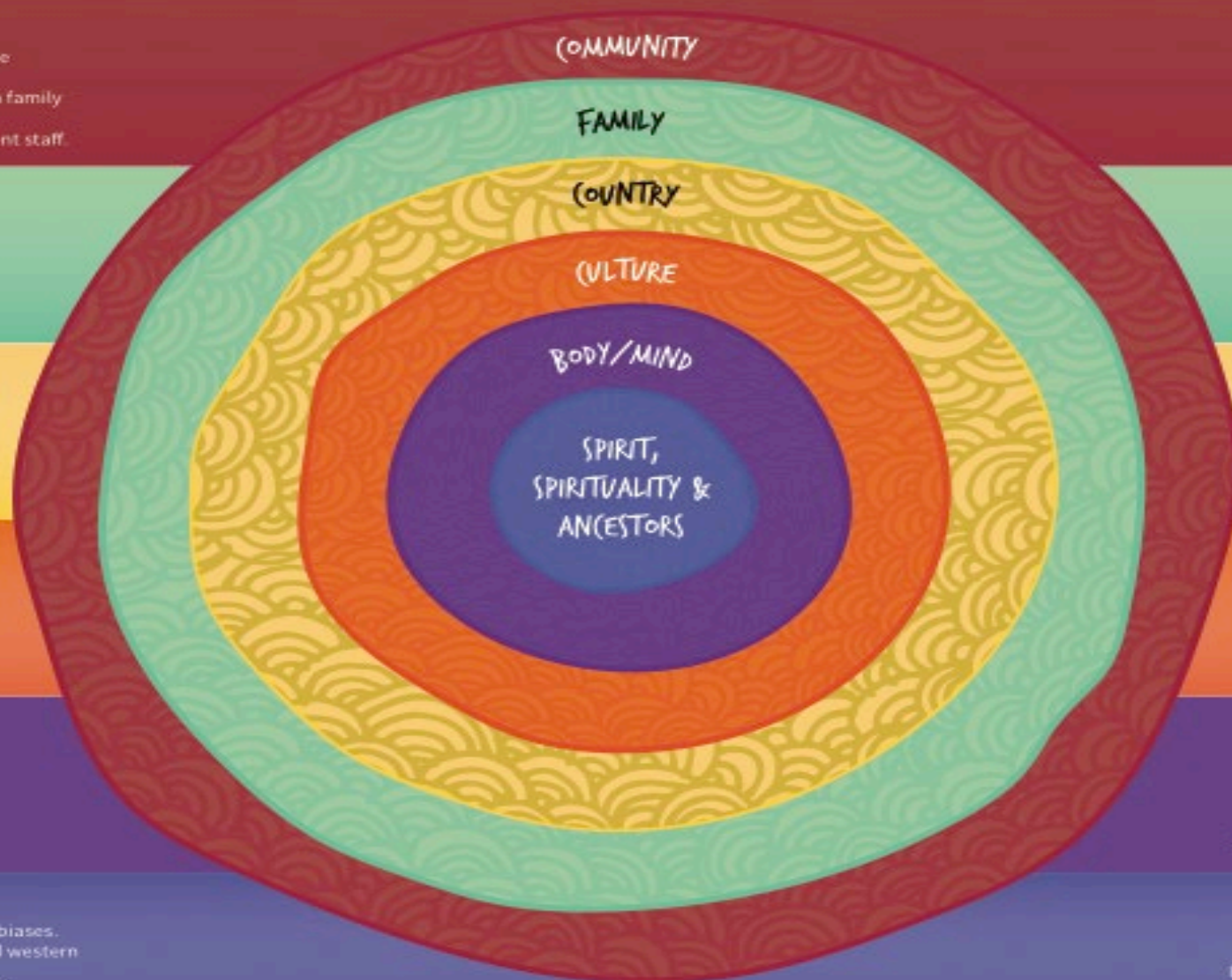
Clients feel validated and valued in relation to their cultural identity.
Increased understanding of and connection with local Indigenous culture.
Clients experience increased positive cultural identity.

CONNECTION TO BODY/MIND

Increased likelihood that clients will experience cultural safety.
Increased cross cultural understanding leading to increased relevance and effectiveness of therapies and other services.
Reduction in over pathologising Indigenous clients.

CONNECTION TO SPIRIT, SPIRITUALITY

Indigenous clients feel safer to share what is being experienced.
Increase in participation in longitudinal therapeutic strategies.
Feeling understood and acknowledged.





HEALING AND RECOVERY FOR LARRAKIA PEOPLE

WHAT KEEPS OUR SPIRIT STRONG



Health for us is a holistic map inclusive of social, physical, mental, spiritual and emotional harmony.

Our parents, aunties, uncles, grandparents and Elders play a vital role in connecting us to our cultural self.



Through our healing journeys, we connect back to our spirit which connects us to everything that matters.

We have many stories of trauma and we are now building stories of strength, healing and recovery to pass on to future generations.



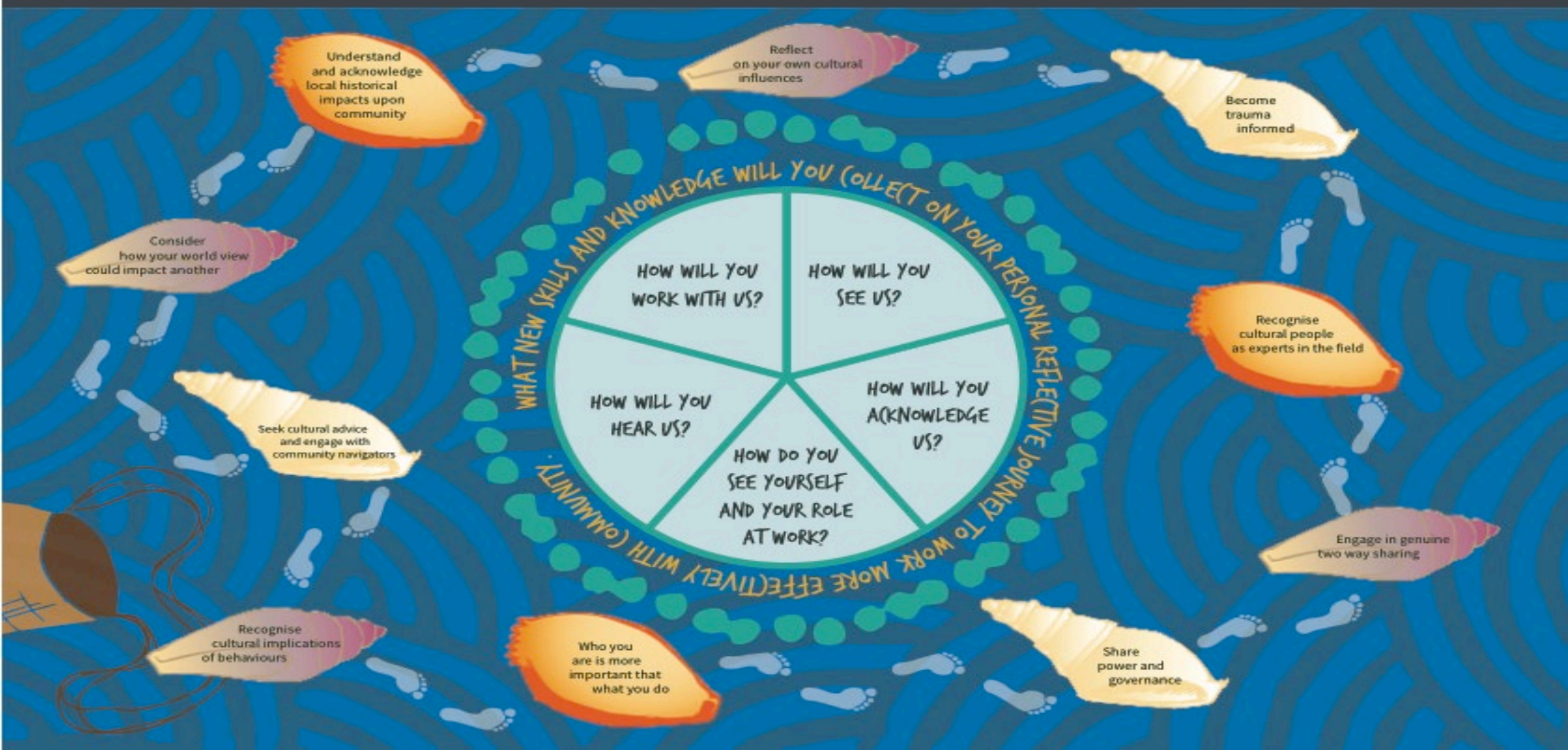
WAYS OF HEALING WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP





BUILDING CULTURAL COMPETENCE

A JOURNEY OF PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL REFLECTIVE PRACTICE





Place based Community learning for Sustainability

- Community learning - sharing stories in reflective discussion and practice,
- Learning through dialogue (yarning)
- Discussing 'what we know' from our lived experiences, against what others know - protective behaviours skill sets come from making it safe for mothers and fathers, grandmothers and grandfathers to feel safe to acknowledge their own pain, while working to hear and protect - their children.
- Art - individual and collective,
- Music - Dance, Theatre,
- Ceremonies - emotional release - emotional first aid,
- Traditional - healing - body work - massage - movement - mindfulness.

Culturally Informed, Trauma Integrated Healing Approaches



Healing People
Sharing Culture
Regenerating Community



“You said, 'They're harmless dreamers
and they're loved by the people.'
'What,' I ask you, 'is harmless about a dreamer, and what,'
I ask you, 'is harmless about the love of the people?’

Revolution only needs good dreamers who remember their dreams
Tennessee Williams

There is always a dream dreaming us

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