Healing Generational Trauma
Creating Trauma Informed Service Systems and Approaches

Emeritus Professor Judy Atkinson
Patron: We Al-li
In recognition of ancestors, elders and country of Darug, and with thanks from the country of the Bundjalung.
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<th>Time</th>
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| 9.00 to 10.30am | **Introduction:** Welcome and Recognition of country Dadirri – Introductions  
Who am I - who are we  
What do I – We - want from this workshop  
**Activity:** past present future.                                                                 |
|              | Morning tea                                                                                                                                |
| 11.00 to 12.30 | **Past - Healing Generational trauma and its impact on Aboriginal children, young people, families and communities today. Discussion - Symptom as History.**  
**Activity:** what trauma stories in Aboriginal families and communities need healing? |
|              | Lunch                                                                                                                                       |
| 1.30 to 3.00 pm | **Present:** a Model for healing  
**Activity:** Story mapping - name some culturally specific approaches to help healing happen ... what practical strategies for developing a trauma informed service system could you help establish in your work place: what new ideas do you have for new ways of working together. What partnerships could you consider to integrate care across your system |
|              | Afternoon tea                                                                                                                              |
| 3.15 to 4.00 pm | **Future:**  
Self Care - the Coolaman holds the stories. You hold the space.  
**Activity:** Elders Circle  
What have we learnt? How will we use what we have learnt?  
What is missing – what more do we need to know?  
Closure                                                                 |
Dadirri – Listening to one Another

- Ngangikurungkurr - *dadirri* - listening to one another in contemplative - reciprocal relationships.

- Pitjantjatjara - *kulini* (listening), or pulgkara *kulin tjugku* (really (deep) listening, and wanting to listen).

- Bundjalung - *gan’na* hearing, listening, feeling, thinking, understanding.

- Gunmbayngirr - *junga-ngarraanga miinggi* - hearing, learning, understanding, knowing from the heart.

Artwork: Christopher Edwards Haines 2004
Who am I? are We?
Figure 1. The process toward achieving cultural safety in an educational environment. (Ramsden, 1992.)
Cultural competency

The capacity to work across cultures, with awareness, sensitivity, and the valuing of all humans as cultural bearers to a competency of service delivery, that honours diversity of cultures in the interface of all humans as cultural and spiritual beings.
Cultural Safety refers to:

- "an environment that is spirituality, socially and emotionally safe, as well as physically safe for people; … It is about shared respect, shared meaning, shared knowledge and experience of learning together" (Robyn Williams 1999, p 213).
Past Present Future

- Think back to PAST ... BC. How trauma informed was our family and social welfare systems, when you first started work.

- Now think PRESENT ... How trauma informed is your workplace now?

- Take the time to think FUTURE. How would you like to make your workplace become more trauma informed in the future

End of Session one
Understanding the Trauma Story
Stories are our law. ...

- Stories give identity as they connect us and fulfill our sense of belonging. Stories are grounding, defining, comforting and embracing. Stories vary in their purpose and content and so Stories can be political and equally, healing. Stories can be shared verbally, physically or visually. Their meanings and messages teach, admonish, tease, celebrate, entertain, provoke and challenge. .... To know your Story is to know who you are related to and the depth of this relatedness. Without your Stories you don’t know who you are. (Martin K. 2002)
Worldwide colonisations
my story – the beginning 18th September 1987

- Understanding the trauma story
- Historic, Social, Cultural, Collective, Complex Trauma.

The Story of Dolly
Salzman and Halloran (2004), describe the destruction of cultural worldviews which have sustained Indigenous peoples for millennia; a collective experience across diverse cultures and peoples: ... the Yup’ik of Alaska; Navajos and Athabaskan Indians; Hawaiian Natives; Maori in New Zealand, and Aboriginal Australians, all having experienced similar physical, social, behavioural and psychological symptoms (e.g. high rates of suicide, alcoholism, accidental deaths, and layers of loss, grief and trauma (p. 233).
Colonisation as Traumatisation

Figure 1
A six-generation genogram

History
1860-1930
Epidemics
Starvations
Massacres
Removals

1880-1960
Removals to reserves
Child removals
Government surveillance

1940-1980
Continuing removals
Government interventions

Legend
(a/d) alcohol/drug misuse
(mi) mental illness
(sa) sexual assault
(su/a) suicide attempts
(ppv) perpetrator of physical violence
(vpv) victim or witness of physical violence

Colonisation as Traumatisation

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When we ignore generational trauma
5 generations - South America

- 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.

- 3rd generation. Spousal Assault -- Societal trauma

- 4th generation. Abuse moves from spousal assault to child abuse or both.

- 5th generation. Cycle repeats as trauma begats violence begats trauma.

- 6th The grown children of the conquerors begin to live fear of the grown children of the conquered. (Merida Blanco In Levine)
Violence - Trauma can become generational, unless healed

- Collective trauma is the “psychological blow to the basic tissues of social life that damage the bonds attaching people together and impairing the prevailing sense of community” (p. 233), “a gradual realization that the community no longer exists as a source of nurturance and that part of the self has disappeared” (Erikson, 1976).

- Historical trauma is ‘the collective emotional and psychological injury, in the life of an individual or of a community, both over the life span and across generations’, (Muid, 2006, p. 36).
TRAUMA RUPTURES OUR CONNECTIONS

to ourselves
✓ physically
✓ emotionally
✓ mentally
✓ vitality

to others
✓ family
✓ social group
✓ generation
✓ culture

to nature
✓ instinctually
✓ environmentally
Complex Trauma

(Herman 1992 1997 van de Kolk 2005)

- Is the pervasive effects that exposure to repeated or chronic trauma sometimes has on an individual’s physical, emotional, intellectual, and psychological functioning.

- Such trauma exposure includes child removals, child abuse and neglect, living in poverty, and witnessing – experiencing violence.
Repeated instances of developmental trauma such as abandonment, abuse, and neglect during a child’s early life can cause negative effects on cognitive development, neurological development, and psychological development as well as attachment development.
Childhood trauma including abuse and neglect, is probably the single most important public health challenge ... a challenge that has the potential to be largely resolved by appropriate prevention and (healing).

Trauma across the lifespan:

- Violation of 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 behaviours.

- Un-modulated aggression, difficulty negotiating relationships with caregivers, peers and partners, a clear link between suicide, alcoholism and other drug misuse, sexual promiscuity, physical inactivity, smoking, obesity,

- More likely to develop heart disease, cancer, stroke, diabetes, skeletal fractures, and liver disease, and people with childhood histories of trauma make up almost our entire criminal justice population. (van de Kolk 2007)
Signs and symptoms of trauma in populations

- deep mistrust of self, others, even within family;
- self-directed violence-suicide, risk-taking behaviour;
- substance misuse; unremitting grief;
- shame and humiliation; intergenerational conflict;
- violence against women; role diffusion, including sexual abuse and other boundary violations;
- cultural genocide, losing traditional values, desecrating land and institutions;
- A leadership crisis;
- a conspiracy of silence - an overall attitude of secrecy.

((Ratnavale, 2007) cited (Krieg, 2009).)
Triggering .. Conflicting .. Memories

Chronic Shame Humiliation Mortification
- Because they are highly visible therefore stigmatised
- Perception of themselves as failing compared with the others with their culture and within the dominant culture
- Or because there are benefits gained by other members of the group conferred by the individual's shame.
- Of shame avoidance strategies being less available to individuals in particular social roles.
- Because cultural discourses regarding shame are experienced as shameful.

Depression – suicide
Let’s talk:
what do we mean by “Symptom as History”

Mind Mapping
What trauma stories in Aboriginal families and communities need healing? For whom? By whom?

End of session two
A Model for Healing
Trauma specific response to Aboriginal needs
Educaring - in Healing Trauma

1. Creating culturally safe places
2. Finding and telling our stories
3. Making sense of our stories
4. Feeling the feelings
5. Moving through layers of loss and grief.. ownership...choices.
6. Reclaiming our sacred selves

A return to wholeness
Judy Atkinson 2002
Safe Places
The ... Stories ...

- The people’s violence - trauma stor(ies) becomes and remains the centre piece of the healing process

- These stories are historical because the storyteller(s) believe that the stories are not just about her/him self, but also her / his culture and society

- The healer has to place him/herself as close as possible to the pain and suffering of the traumatized person/people in order to take in the revealed truth. This process becomes the foundation of all healing actions

Making Sense of the Stories
Feeling feelings, layered trauma
Loss and grief

- Under anger
- is
- always grief
Principles for whole-of-community healing to protect children from harm

1. Work together
2. Begin earlier
3. Think Developmentally
4. Support parents and schools to ‘educare’
5. Implement the principles & practice of Child Rights
6. Make adequate resources available
7. Work from a sound knowledge base
8. Create a culture of non violence
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<th>Five Essential (Hobfall)</th>
<th>Brooks / Atkinson</th>
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<td>Attachment</td>
<td>Calming</td>
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<td>Justice</td>
<td>Self and collective efficacy</td>
<td>Attachment and Belonging</td>
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<td>Role/Identity</td>
<td>Connectedness</td>
<td>Justice, Fairness and Dignity</td>
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<td>Existential Meaning</td>
<td>Hope</td>
<td>Valuing Self – Valuing others</td>
<td>Meaning and Coherence</td>
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## The We Al-li approach to community healing

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<td><strong>Safety and Security</strong></td>
<td>Locate, develop and support safe places and safe caring people, within communities. Help promote a sense of individual and collective safety and security, through community programs of mutual care and trust. Build on these capacities and commitments and begin to grow hope and courage.</td>
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<td><strong>Calming, re-bonding from crisis</strong></td>
<td>Calming is required as traumatic events increase emotionally, including heightened and hyper-arousal. Numbing as a defence against the heightened emotionality is also common. Thus, calming will assist both those who are showing overt arousal signs and those that have withdrawn from an emotionally changing and charged world.</td>
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<td><strong>Attachment, and belonging</strong></td>
<td>Introduce an educaring program in communities, working with local people to deliver these packages, with educational modalities, to provide a calming approach through the structure of talking together to build community connections, communal attachment, community awareness of issues, without judgement, but with the desire to work together to support change and healing. The educational model of reflective discussions and practice, helps draw out what people already know and builds on a felt sense of competency and control.</td>
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## The We Al-li approach to community healing cont.

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<tr>
<td>Justice, Fairness and Dignity</td>
<td>Provide support and resources for people to build their community recovery. Such activities will include justice programs, promoting a sense of self and collective efficacy, fairness and dignity. In this, support must be given for the development of partnerships between communities and professional workers from outside organisations.</td>
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<td>Valuing Self and Valuing Others</td>
<td>Provide support for professional workers. Encourage inter-connectedness and social support in their roles and identities. Give value to the workers who are already doing the hard work, whether living within the community or those invited in to help in the recovery process. Value their contribution so that they can begin to value themselves. Ensure that in all of this the strengths and capacities of individuals, families, communities and workers are highlighted as all are vital to the whole.</td>
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<td>Meaning and Coherence</td>
<td>Provide trauma healing in early childhood programs and in schools for children and their parents; for young people, in youth focused creative activities; for men and for women, and for Elders, based on growing a felt sense of hope, coherence, and consistency, for capacity building in making meaning of life, while enriching cultural and spiritual identities.</td>
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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 - the practice of living and learning together against the text book theory,
Art – individual and collective,
Music – dance, theatre,
Ceremonies - emotional release,
Traditional - healing - body work - massage yoga – movement.
Vitality

Brain stem

Midbrain

Limbic

Cortical

The Heart brain Resonance

Establish State Regulation
- Safe touch massage pressure points

Somato-Sensory Integration
- Movement & Yoga games
- Music
- Touch
- Nature Discover

Facilitate Emotional Regulation - relationships
- Dance - play – art -

Encourage Abstract thought
- Story telling - writing
- Drama theatre
- Art and music

Resonance – growth, and physical wellness, vitality, meaningful life-evidenced by responsiveness & responsibility - curiosity and openness promote growth.

Neuro-developmental rationale for healing trauma

The Heart brain Resonance

Resonance – growth, and physical wellness, vitality, meaningful life-evidenced by responsiveness & responsibility - curiosity and openness promote growth.
What happened when we applied these principles in a school?

Grandparents cried

Children never missed a day

Literacy and Numeracy

Improved 150% - 300%

Parents regularly visited the school
What the Teachers said

- “We have the freedom to teach in the way that the children need”.
- “They are so excited about learning”.
- “They are not angry any more”
Theatre Dance Music Art
What the children said

- I like music because I can feel the beat through my body.
- I like dance because I can tell different stories.
- I like body work because I feel calm and relaxed.
- I like theatre because I can be growly different characters.
- I like art because I can’t make mistakes.
- I like the nature discovery because I can learn things when I am outside.
“Examination of the known beliefs, rituals, and healing practices for loss and trauma [by Indigenous peoples]... reveal some remarkable principles. Healing rituals converge into a set of core elements related to adaption and healing following trauma. ... These core elements include an overarching belief system – a rationale, a reason for the pain, injury, loss; a retelling or re-enactment of the trauma in words, dance, or song – all provided in intensely relational experience(s) with family and clan participating in the ritual. ... retell the story, hold each other, massage, dance, sing, creating images of the battle in literature, sculpture and drama, reconnecting to loved one and to community, celebrate, eat and share together
Perry is clear that these Indigenous healing practices work because they are:

- ‘repetitive, rhythmic, relevant, relational, respectful and rewarding’ (ibid.)
- “While these therapeutic practices may not at first seem “biological”: be assured that they are not only likely to change the brain, but they will assuredly provide the patterned, repetitive stimuli required to specifically influence and modify the impact of trauma, neglect, and maltreatment on key neural systems” (ibid).
Story mapping: some examples

- Understanding Trauma and Its Impact
- Safe physical and emotional spaces and services
- Ensuring Cultural Competence
- Supporting the workforce – supporting children families communities through providing culturally specific healing from trauma services
- Sharing Power and Governance through strategies that will strengthen your workplace service delivery
- Integrating Care – a holistic approach to service needs.
- Healing or Recovery Happens in Relationships
- Healing or Recovery is Possible.
“The person’s trauma story becomes and remains the centre piece of the healing process” (Mollica R 2006)

“Healing Invisible Wounds – Paths to Hope and Recovery in a Violent World”
“These stories are historical because the storyteller believes that the stories is not just about her/him self, but also her / his culture and society.” (Mollica 2006)
A group story map exploring family support needs.

End session three
Relationships
Who is the teacher ... who is the learner?
The Coolaman holds the stories
We create the space for healing.

- The healer has to place him/herself as close as possible to the pain and suffering of the traumatized person/people in order to take in the revealed truth. This process becomes the foundation of all healing actions

There is an inner healing mechanism ...

- This force, which lies within all of us, is the biological, psychological, and social power of self-healing, that innate capacity possessed by all human beings to restore their physical and mental self to a state of full productivity and quality of life, no matter how severe the initial damage.

- Richard Mollica 2006
Elders Circle: What have we learnt?
How will we use what we have learnt?
What is missing – what more do we need to know?
Bibliography:


Hobfoll S. et al, Five Essential Elements of Immediate and Mid-Term Mass Trauma Intervention Psychiatry 70(4) winter 2007,


Silove, D. 2007 From Trauma to Survival and Adaption for guiding mental health initiatives in post-conflict societies
