HOW TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

The Journey to Cultural Ease

Poche Centre for Indigenous Health and Well-Being, Adelaide
HOW TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

• Strengthen resilience – personal and cultural
• Keep a de-Othering perspective
• Cultural safety – make it a service priority
• Cultural ease - use Aboriginal protocols/ways
• Build environments for change – develop real engagement with local community
• Extended advocacy – Political is the Clinical
STRENGTHEN RESILIENCE

*Personal Resilience*
• Reduce the burden of stressful life events*

*Cultural Resilience*
• Connection to culture, language, land ‘protective’ of well-being**

* Western Australian Aboriginal Child Health Survey (WAACHS)
** WAACHS / Jane McKendrick / Iris HeavyRunner and Kathy Marshall / Tracy Westerman
Being other
A CURIOSITY IN HER OWN COUNTRY.
De-Othering or Reification?
CULTURAL SAFETY AND CULTURAL EASE

• Cultural safety *foundation* of effective practice
• Cultural ease is the *goal*
• It’s a *journey* - may begin with *discomfort*:
  - Challenge of Indigenous health statistics / personal narratives
  - Challenge to one’s own cultural framework / certainties / beliefs about Australia
CULTURAL EASE

• Happens when Aboriginal protocols become an everyday part of your work
• Happens when, over time, Aboriginal ‘ways’ become seamlessly incorporated into your work
CULTURAL EASE

A ‘right’ relationship, an *imbrication*, between Non-Indigenous and Indigenous Australia – an Australia where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people felt *at home* … again
CULTURAL EASE

Indigenising Praxis

• Moving beyond the bio-medical model → holistic Aboriginal perspectives
• Being comfortable with / incorporating Aboriginal protocols (Who’s your mob?)
• Being at home with / incorporating Aboriginal ways (Deep Listening)
INDIGENOUS AUSTRALIAN APPROACHES TO LISTENING

Dadirri

“Inner, deep listening and quiet, still awareness ... something like what you call contemplation.” (Miriam-Rose Ungunmerr-Baumann)
INDIGENOUS AUSTRALIAN APPROACHES TO LISTENING

Dadirri

*Listening with your ears and heart*

* Judy Atkinson, after Miriam-Rose Ungunmerr-Baumann*
INDIGENOUS AUSTRALIAN APPROACHES TO LISTENING

Ngara

“Listen, hear, think …
(Eora, the Sydney language)
to listen is simultaneously to reflect and become self-aware.”*

* Paul Carter
INDIGENOUS AUSTRALIAN APPROACHES TO LISTENING

Ngara

Listening requires something of you
... you need to complete the circle.
Hearing should lead to action.*

* VACCHO Board Member
INDIGENOUS AUSTRALIAN APPROACHES TO LISTENING

Binang Goonj

“They hear, but they don’t listen.”
(Bidjara language, south-west Queensland)
Kulini
~ Listen to, heed ~
Pitjantjatjara/Yankunytjatjara

Dadirri
~ Deep listening ~
Ngangikurungkurr

Kungun
~ Respectfully listen ~
Ngarrindjeri

Ngara
~ Listen is simultaneously to reflect ~
Eora

Binang Goonj
~ They hear but they don't listen ~
Bidjara

Yurringarnendi
~ Inquiring with the Ears ~
Kaurna
The Role of Silence

"If you cannot understand an Aboriginal person's silence, then you will never understand their words" (Uncle George Tongerie, Elder from South Australia)
BEYOND WORDS

For us, listening involves:

- More than ‘hearing’- includes self-reflection /contemplation

- ‘Listening’ to the silence … to what’s not being said … to what’s being said non-verbally
DEEP LISTENING - CANADA
DEEP LISTENING - CANADA
DEEP LISTENING - CANADA
Echoes cultural safety – helps it happen

Both notions built on front-line worker self-reflection – “thinking as I go”* - and examination of own cultural system

* Schön, 1983
BUILDING ENVIRONMENTS FOR CHANGE

Improving Koori health / well-being means

• Building environments for change, cooperatively, with communities
• Consultation beyond lip service – that involves full community participation in planning
• Ready-made / one-size-fits-all solutions fail - flexibility offers more chance of success … have your ‘cloth’ at hand, but cut it to fit
REAL COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

*Little ‘r’ respect*

- What do I know about the people I am working with?
- How can I find out more?
- Meeting people *in their own reality* builds trust and confidence
ABORIGINAL WAY - COMMIT

- Take time to build real relationships – the ‘slow road’ may be the fastest way to get there
- So … get involved for the long haul
- Aboriginal people/ communities want a partner who’s ‘clued-in’ and committed
The Political /s The Clinical

Australian Govt. denial of contemporary consequences of past practices leads to:

• inequitable, ineffective policy
• under-funding of services
• mainstreaming of services / lack of culturally-safe services
The Political Is The Clinical

• Helpful to re-conceive role of health professional as *public professional*
• Proactive intervention/lobbying on behalf of client need becomes part of duty of care
  - importance of *extended advocacy*
The Political Is The Clinical

Extended Advocacy – be informed and bold

• Insist government policy founded-on contemporary effects of loss and TGT
• Insist initiatives be funded according to need, are sustainable
• Insist anything else violates professional duty of care