



# Indigenous Connectedness: Cultural Considerations in AI/AN Health

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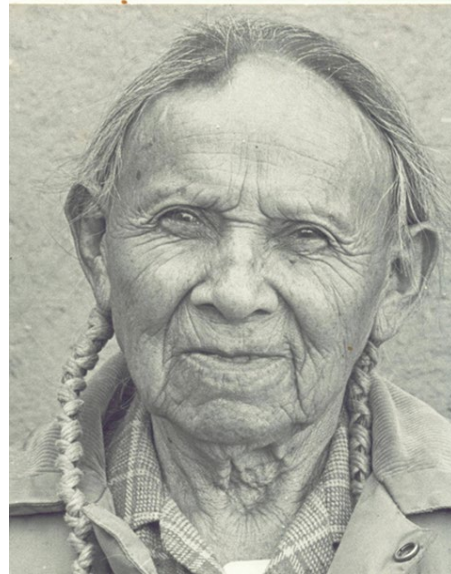
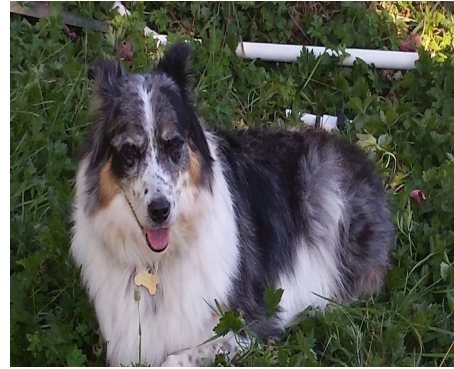
# Introductions – Jessica Sanigaq Ullrich

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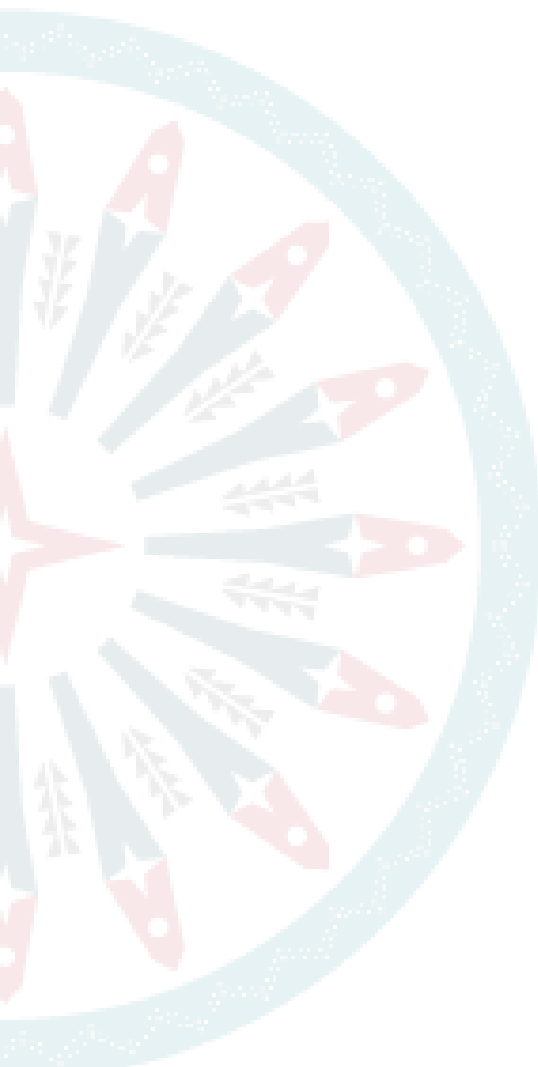




# Introductions – Danica Love Brown



# Objectives

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- I. Participants will learn about aspects of Indigenous and Cultural Connectedness**
  - II. Participants will learn about a culturally based health promotion intervention that included cultural connectedness.**





We Do This Work From a Place  
of Love and a Call for Justice

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# Historical Trauma

*Cumulative emotional and psychological wounding from massive group trauma across generations, including lifespan.*

(Brave Heart, 2004)



# Epigenetics: Our Bodies Remember

**“The memories of our ancestors are passed down on our blood”**  
**Little Joe Gomez**

# "Indigenist" Stress-Coping Paradigm

Karina L. Walters, Jane M. Simoni, & Teresa Evans-Campbell. (2002). Substance Use Among American Indians and Alaska Natives: Incorporating Culture in an "Indigenist" Stress-Coping Paradigm. *Public Health Reports* (1974), 117(Suppl 1), S104–S117.

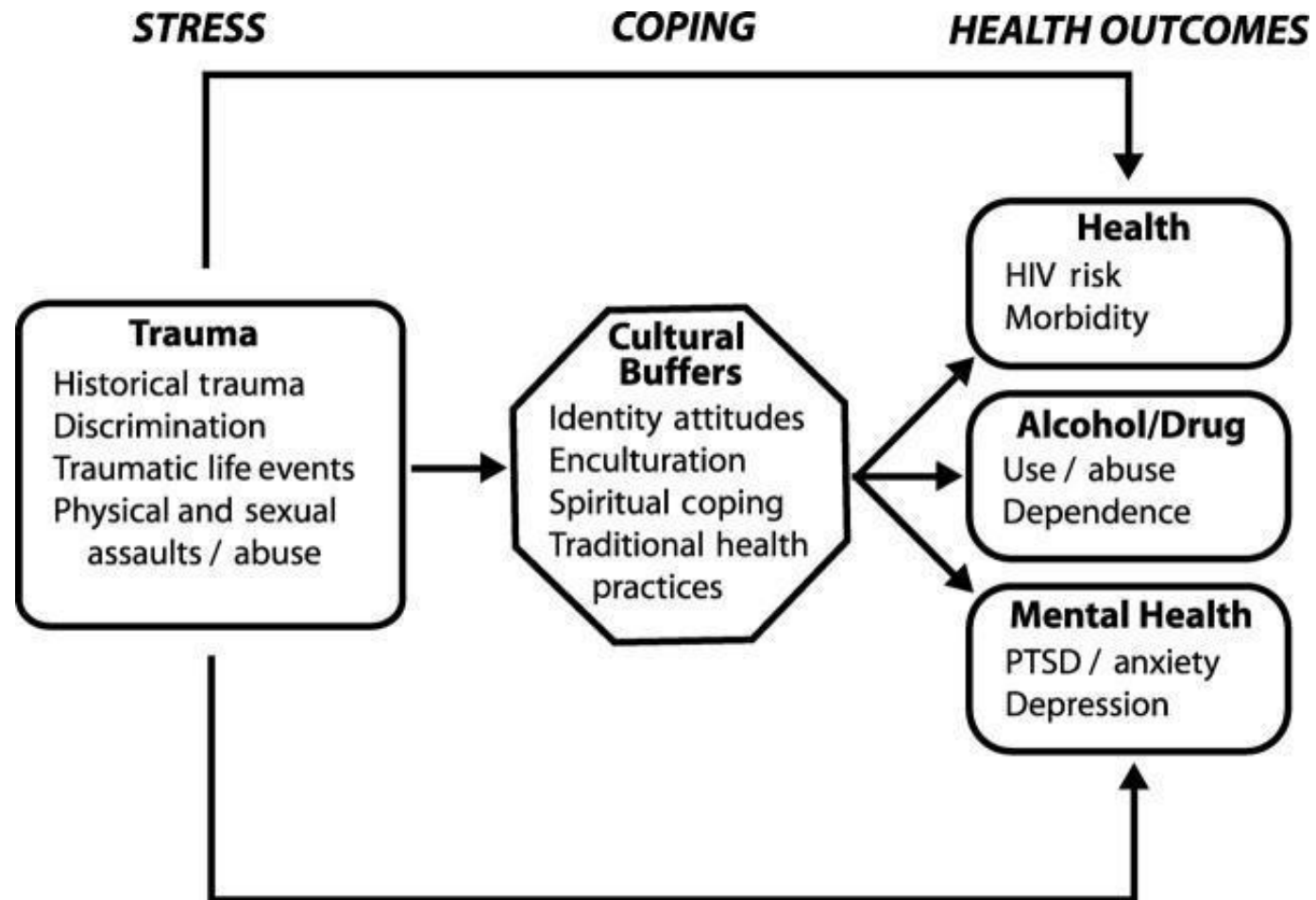




Figure 1. Relational Worldview Model Applied to an Individual

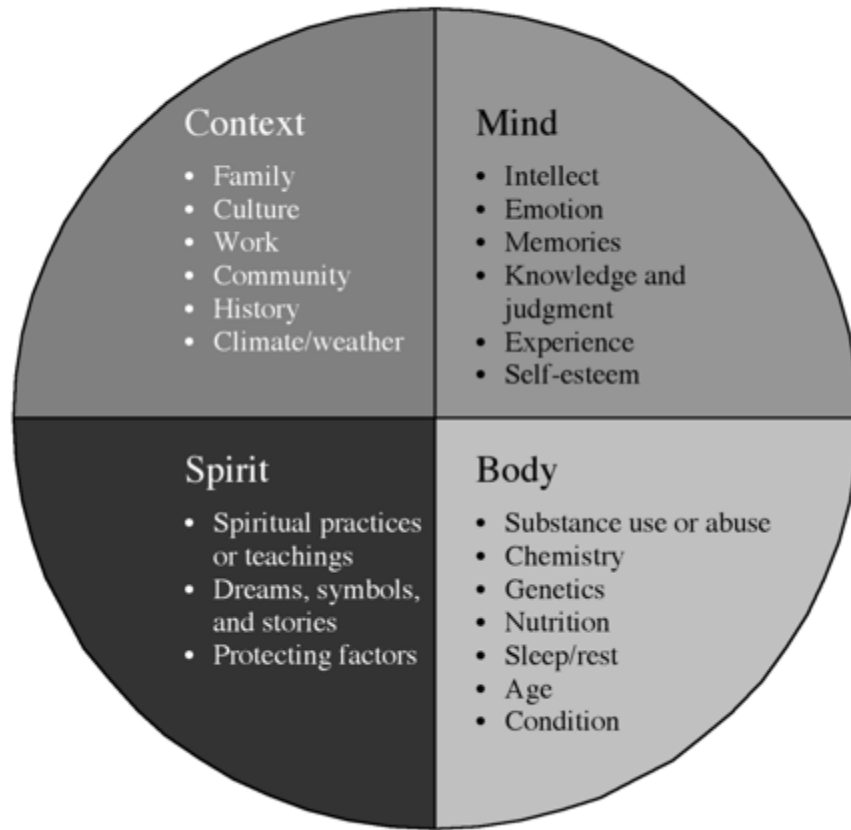
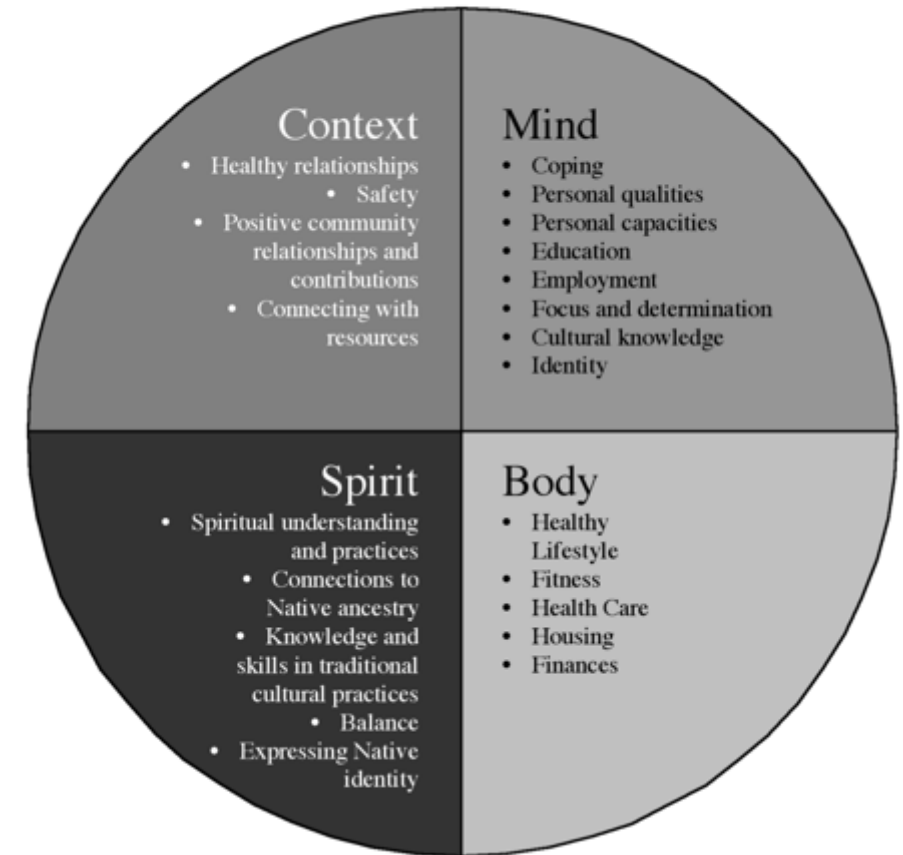
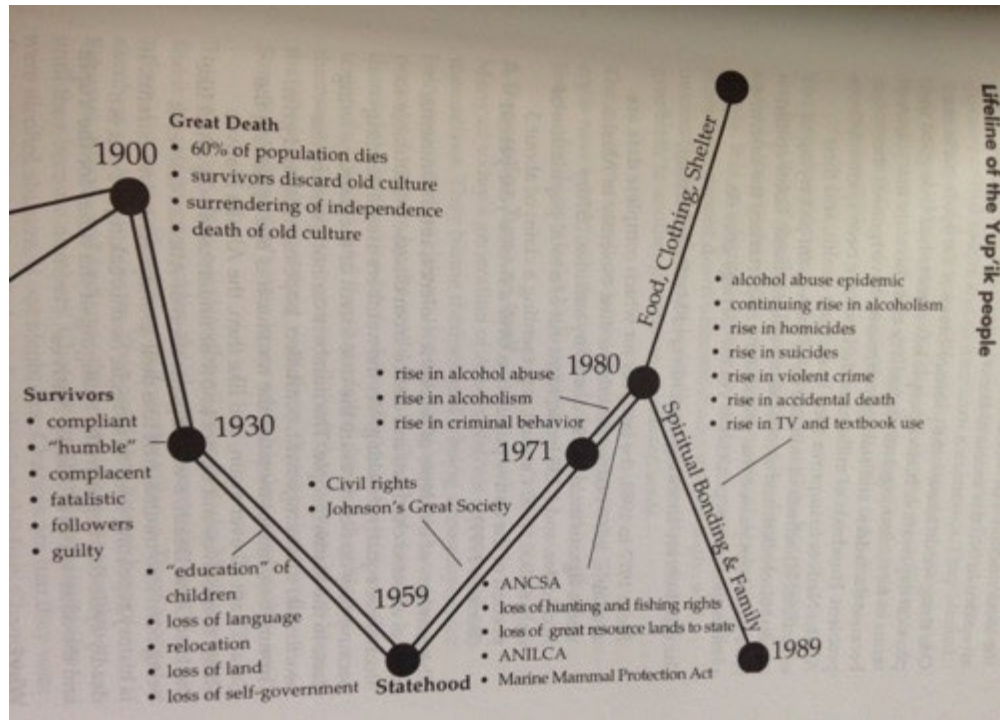


Figure 2. Definitions of Youth Success



# Relational Worldview

(Cross, Friesen, Jivanjee, Gowen Bandurraga, Matthew & Maher, 2010)



Napoleon, 1996

While trauma-informed care offers an important lens to support young people who have been harmed and emotionally injured, it also has its limitations. I first became aware of the limitations of the term "trauma-informed care" during a healing circle I was leading with a group of African American young men. All of them had experienced some form of trauma ranging from sexual abuse, violence, homelessness, abandonment or all of the above. During one of our sessions, I explained the impact of stress and trauma on brain development and how trauma can influence emotional health. As I was explaining, one of the young men in the group named Marcus abruptly stopped me and said, "I am more than what happened to me, I'm not just my trauma". I was puzzled at first, but it didn't take me long to really contemplate what he was saying.

Ginwright, 2018

Teaching About Past, Present, Future



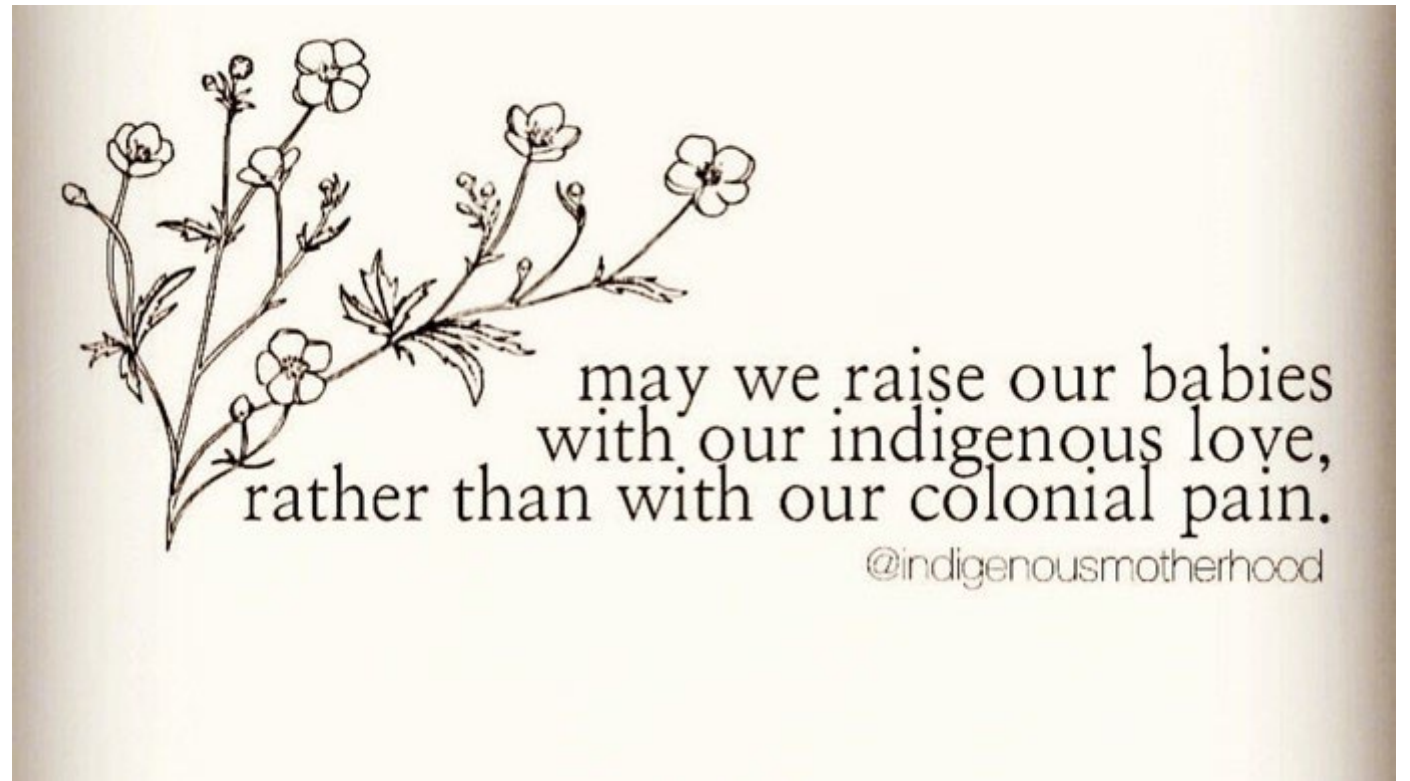


(Denham, 2008; Duran, 2006; Brave Heart Yellow Horse, 1998 and 2004)..





# A Shift to Focus On Wellbeing



may we raise our babies  
with our indigenous love,  
rather than with our colonial pain.

@indigenoumotherhood





Community Partners that Guided  
Indigenous Connectedness Research

# Listening to Lived Experience

25 Knowledge Bearers

9 Alumni

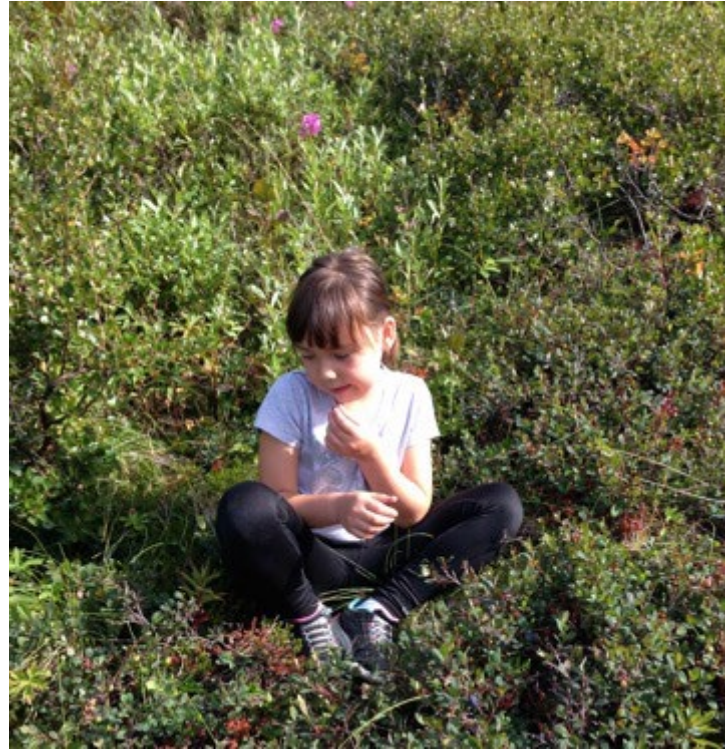
10 Relatives

6 Foster Parents

## Regional Alaska Native Corporations







Storytelling, Storylistening, Co-Storying

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A serene landscape featuring a calm body of water in the foreground, reflecting the surrounding mountains and a soft, hazy sky. The mountains are silhouetted against the light, and the overall atmosphere is peaceful and contemplative. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image, separated from the main title by a vertical line.

# Indigenous Storying

Lesson 1: Acknowledge Trauma,  
Disconnectedness and Relational  
Wounding



A vibrant yellow flower with a textured center, surrounded by green leaves and a background of grey pebbles. The flower is the central focus, with its petals radiating outwards. The background is a soft-focus mix of green foliage and grey, rounded stones.

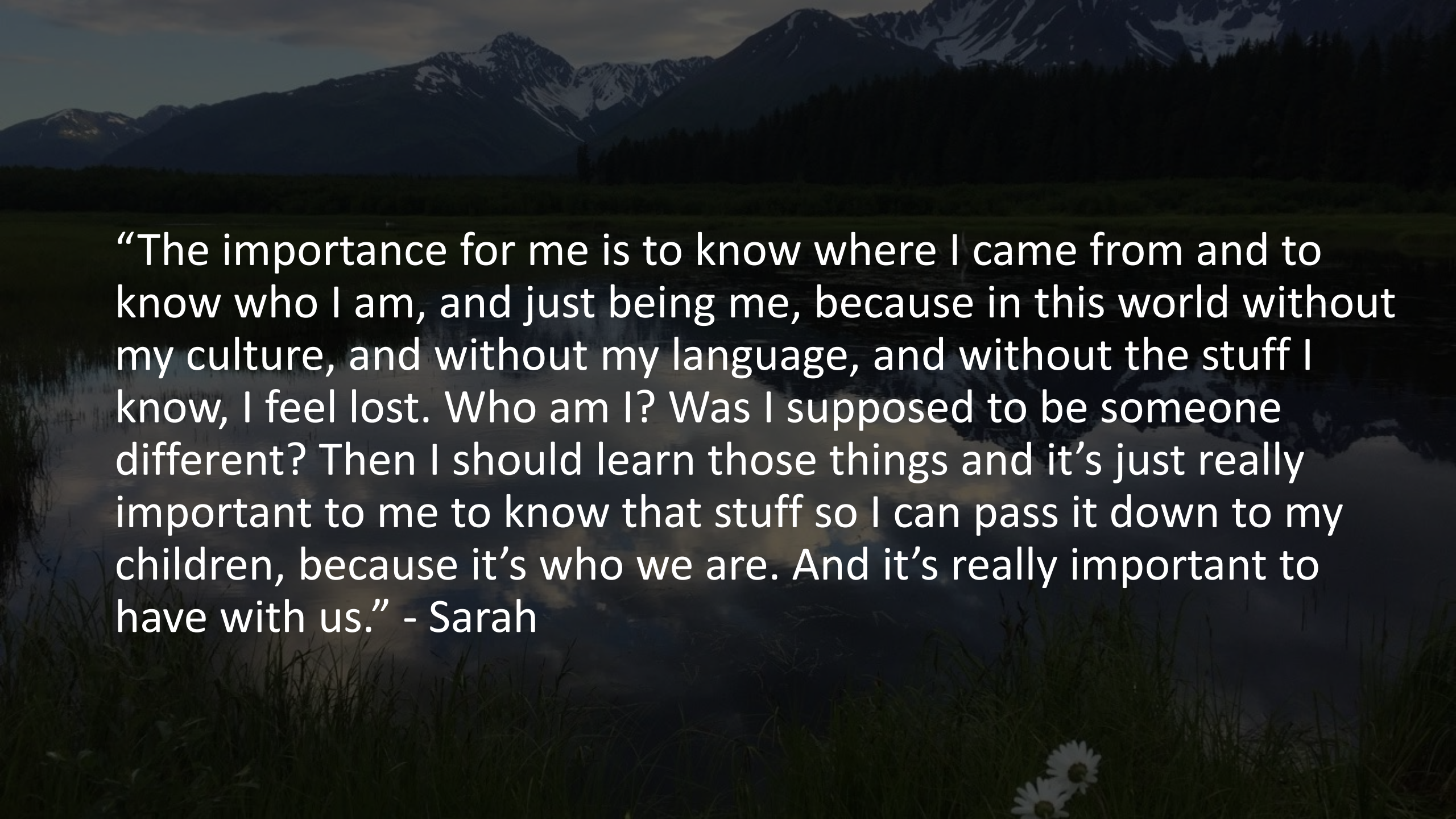
Lesson 2: Maintain Relational Continuity and  
Connectedness for Child Wellbeing



# Lesson 3: Know Who You Are and Where You Come From- Develop Internal Connectedness







“The importance for me is to know where I came from and to know who I am, and just being me, because in this world without my culture, and without my language, and without the stuff I know, I feel lost. Who am I? Was I supposed to be someone different? Then I should learn those things and it’s just really important to me to know that stuff so I can pass it down to my children, because it’s who we are. And it’s really important to have with us.” - Sarah



# INDIGENOUS CONNECTEDNESS FRAMEWORK

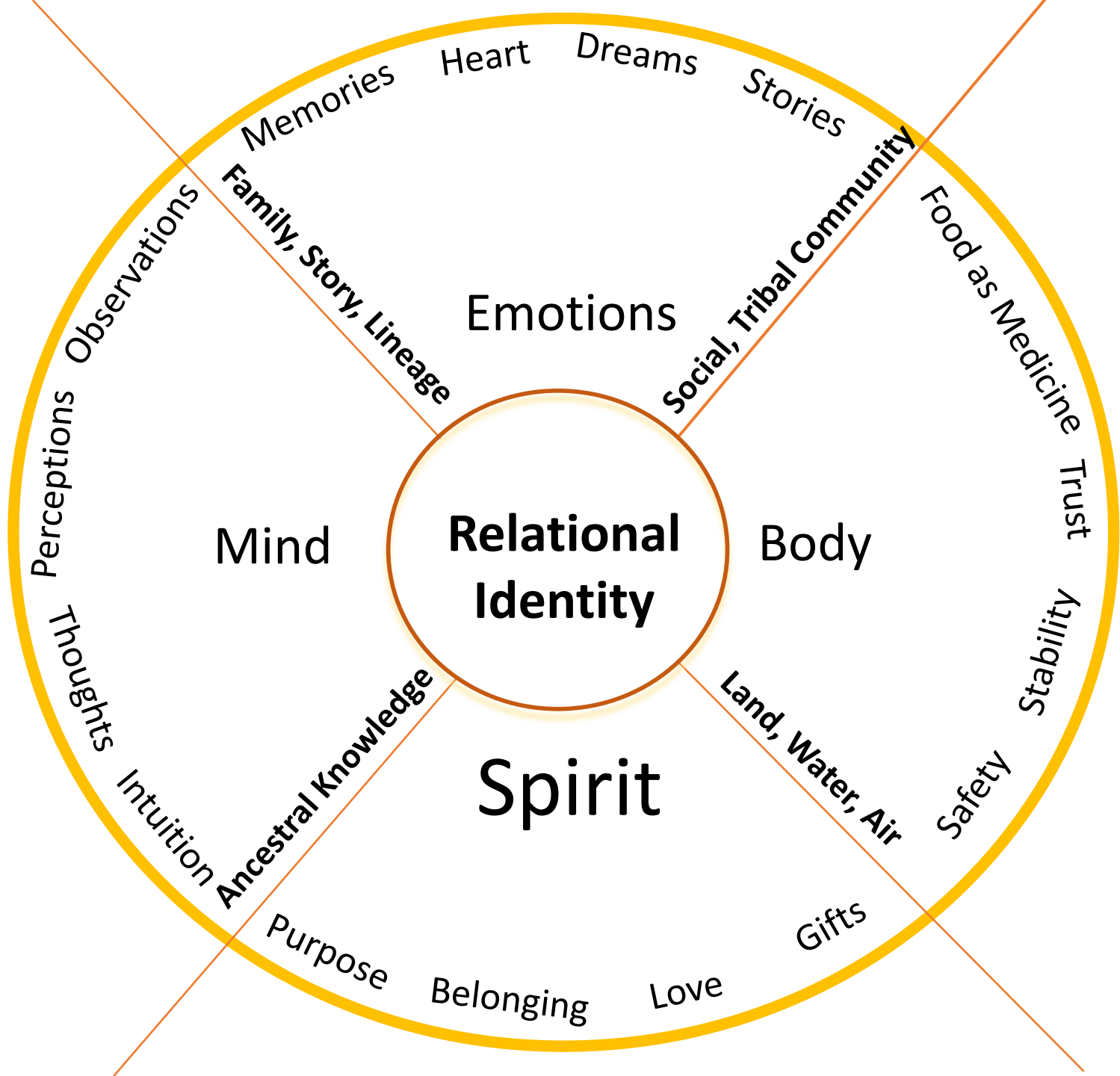




# Relational Identity

## An “Inner Ecology”

(Kawagley, 2006)





Connected to a Collective



# Protective Factors for AI/AN People

- Participating in cultural traditions
- Practicing traditional knowledge about health
- Connecting to community
- Interdependence

Sources: [https://www.cdc.gov/injury/pdfs/bsc/NCIPC-BSC-TWG-2019\\_J-Hymer-508.pdf](https://www.cdc.gov/injury/pdfs/bsc/NCIPC-BSC-TWG-2019_J-Hymer-508.pdf),  
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6150153/>





# Every Day is Ceremony

- An innovative AI/AN community-based intervention to prevent or mitigate the effects of intergenerational/historical trauma and adverse childhood experiences (ACES), which includes substance misuse and other health disparities with a focus on wellness and traditional indigenous knowledge.
- Funded CDC in the 5<sup>th</sup> Year
- Pilot Study funded under the EpiCenter/Indian Health Service





# Wellness

Sacred Tree: Four Worlds  
International Institute.  
<https://www.fwii.net/profiles/blogs/the-story-of-the-sacred-tree-1>




# Every Day is Ceremony

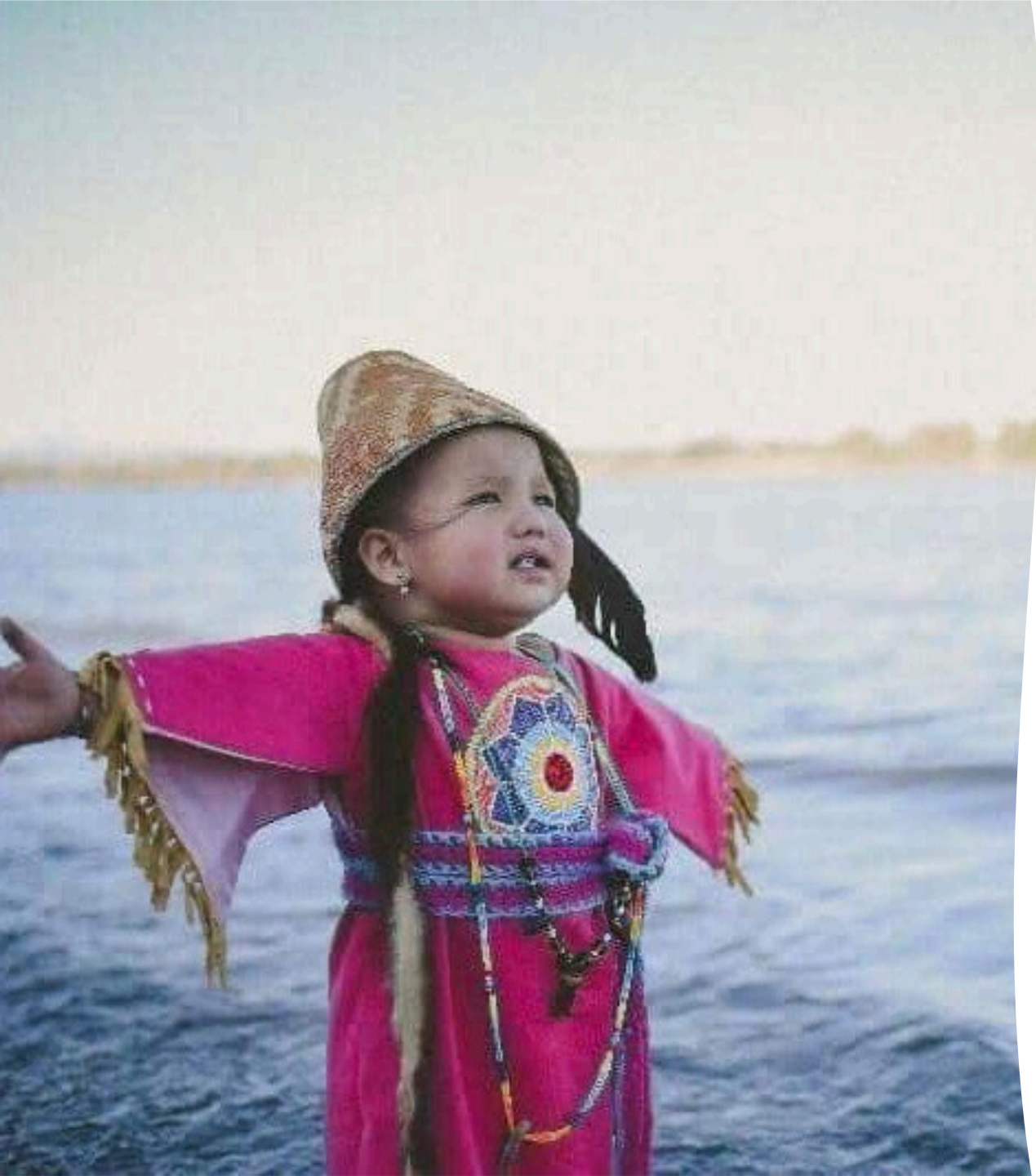
- ▶ Goal: Create an experiential learning tool that heals Native peoples' trauma and mitigate the effects of trauma on health outcomes
- ▶ Develop lessons around **7 aspects of being a whole human that include insights from the:**
  - ▶ Preparation
  - ▶ Journey
  - ▶ Reflection/prayer



# Seven Aspects



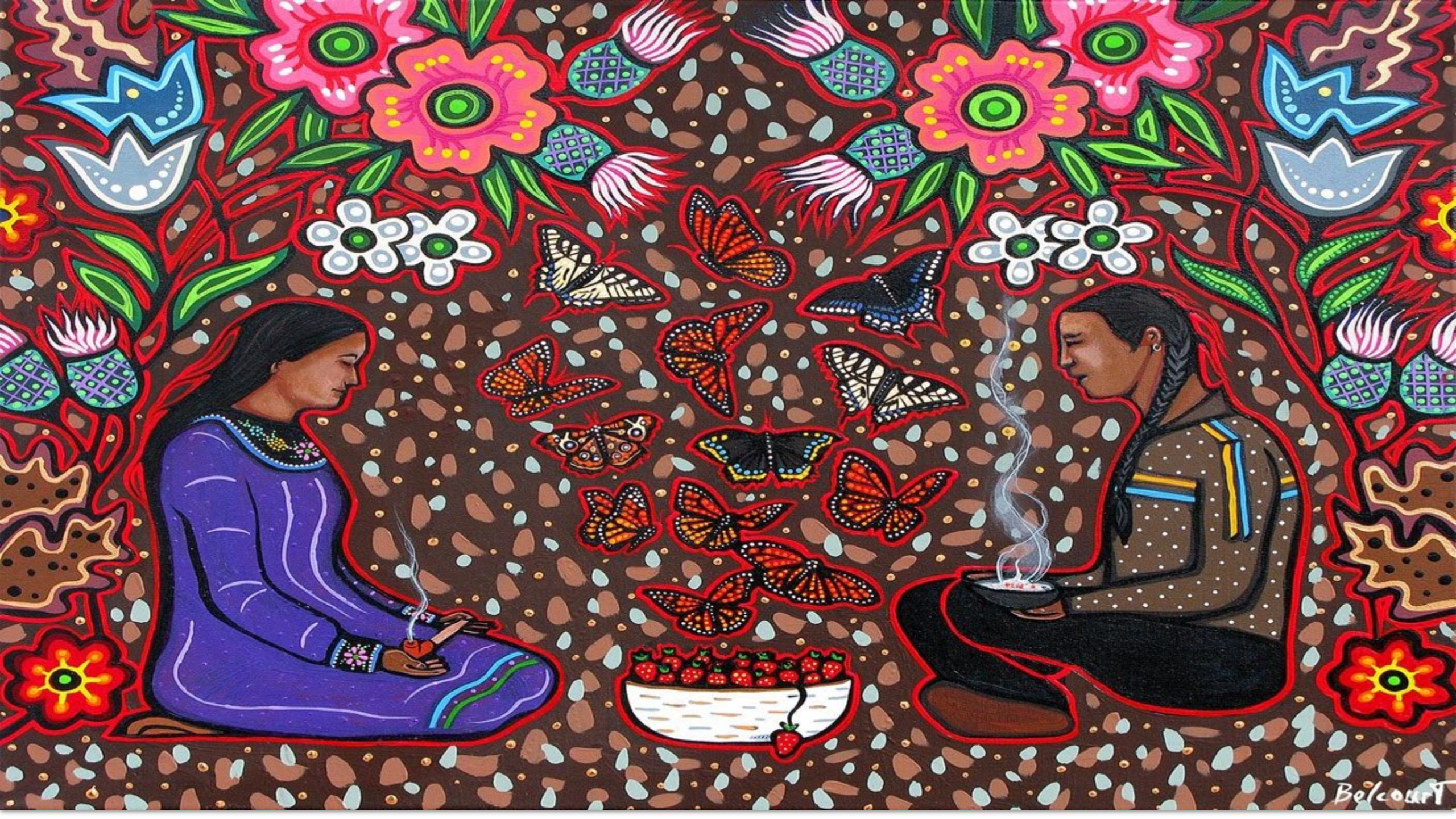
Physical  
Mental  
Emotional  
Spiritual  
Ancestral Wisdom  
Mother earth  
Sacred Fire Within



# Cultural Connectedness Factors

- Ancestral Connectedness
- Land Connectedness
- Cultural Connectedness
- Community Connectedness





Belcourt



LOVE  
COMES  
FROM  
THE



LIGHT  
INSIDE



# Reflections

## Discussion and Dialogue

What questions do you have?

What resonated with you?

How could this inform your work?

What will you take away and apply?

How could you build off this work?

