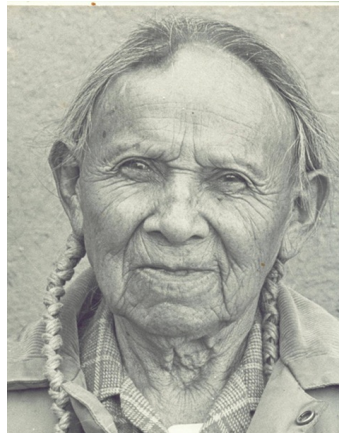


Culture as Prevention



Danica Love Brown, PhD
Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma
Behavioral Health project Director NPAIHB

Introductions – Danica Love Brown, PhD, MSW



Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (CSAP)



- Primary prevention activities are those directed at individuals who do not require treatment for substance abuse. In implementing the comprehensive primary prevention program

- Information Dissemination
- Education
- Alternatives
- Environmental
- Community Based Processes
- Problem Identification and Referral



- Trauma is disconnection
- Healing is Sacred Connection
- Therefore think of the importance of acknowledgement
- Maestro Jerry Tello - traditional healer

In the Circle Way: Teaching of the Spirit

Know that You are Sacred

Know that you are Honored

Know that you are Prayed for

Know that Others had offerings on your behalf

Know that you are Not Alone

Know that you were Known before you came to this place

Know that you have Choices

Know that you have a Name

Know that many know your Name

Know that when you reach, You are also reaching toward Others

Dr. Dolores Bigfoot

Spiritual Healing for Trauma and Addiction

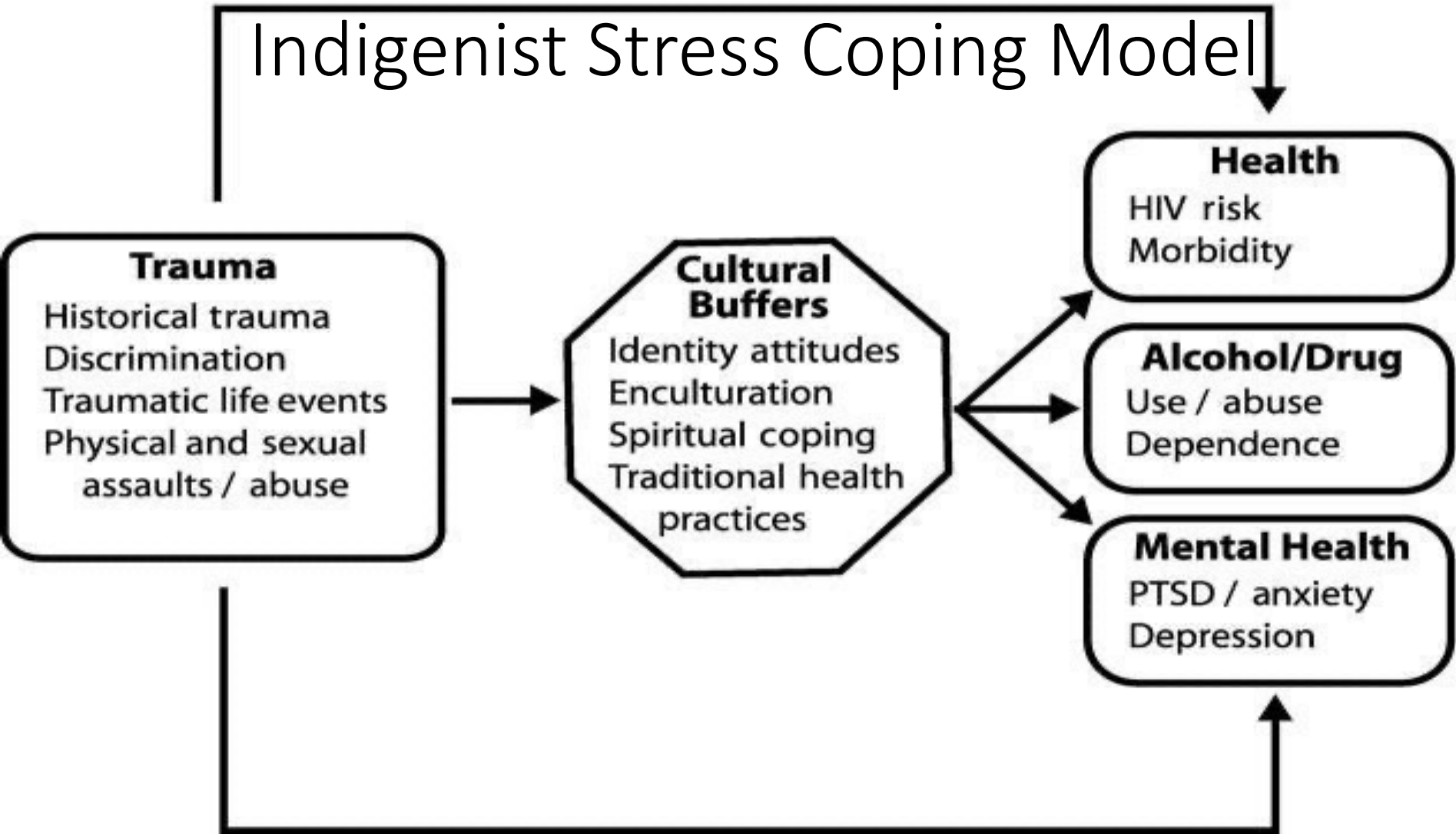
Discussions of Mental Health, Recovery, and Faith

STRESS

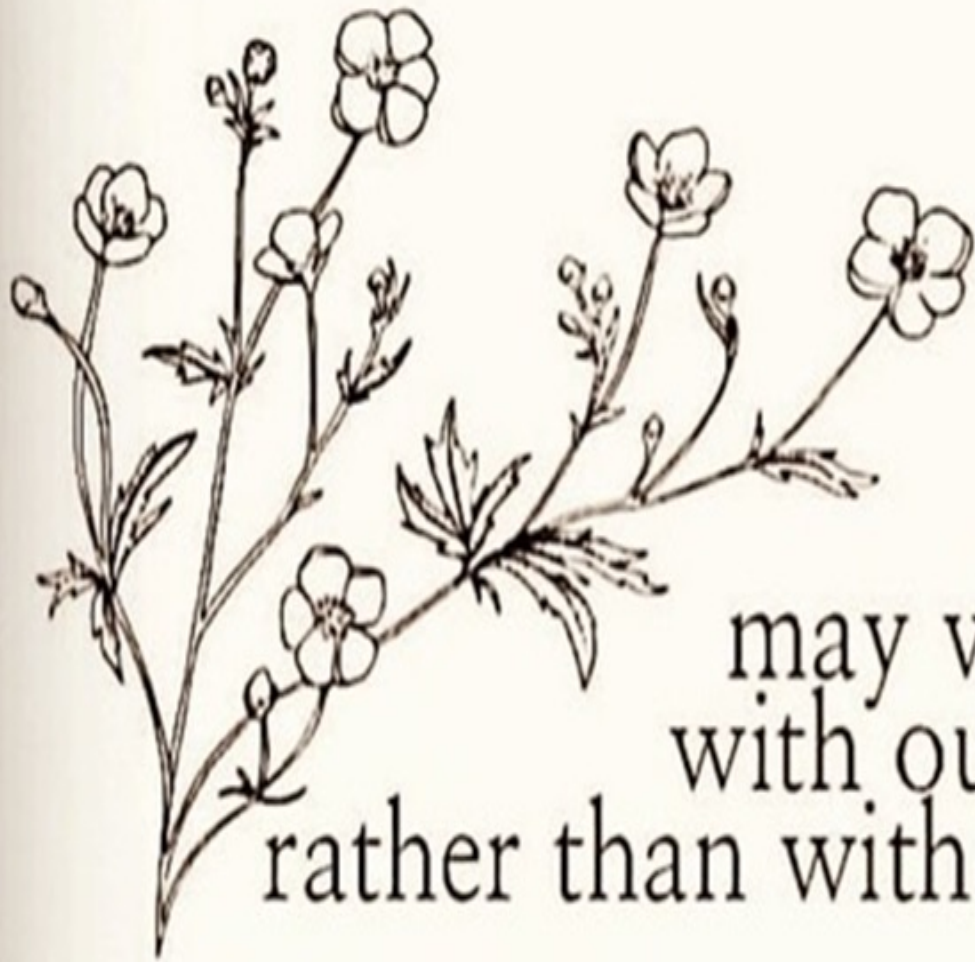
COPING

HEALTH OUTCOMES

Indigenist Stress Coping Model



Walters, Karina L, Simoni, Jane M, & Evans-Campbell, Teresa. (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.

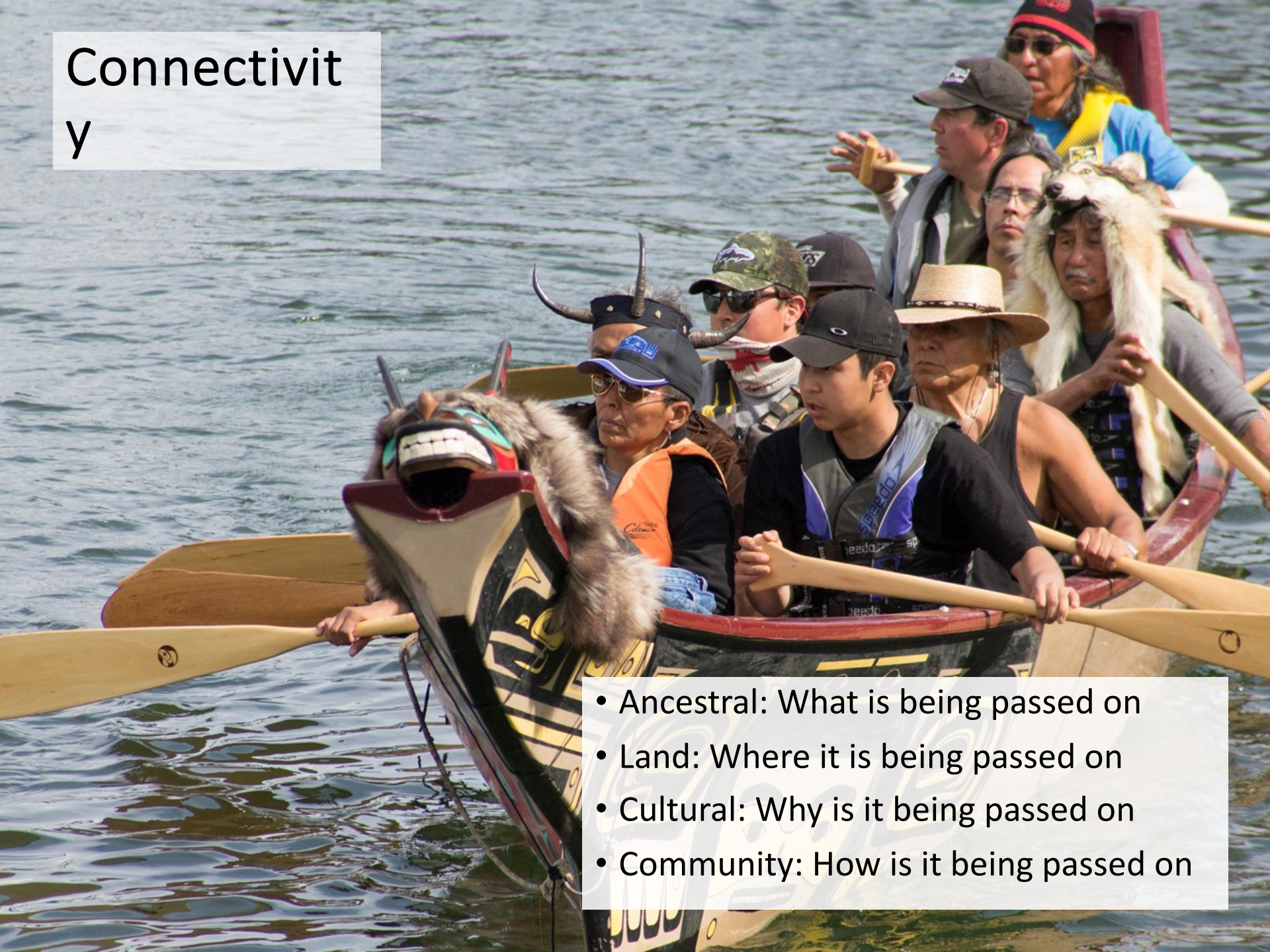


Indigenous
Cultural
Connectedness

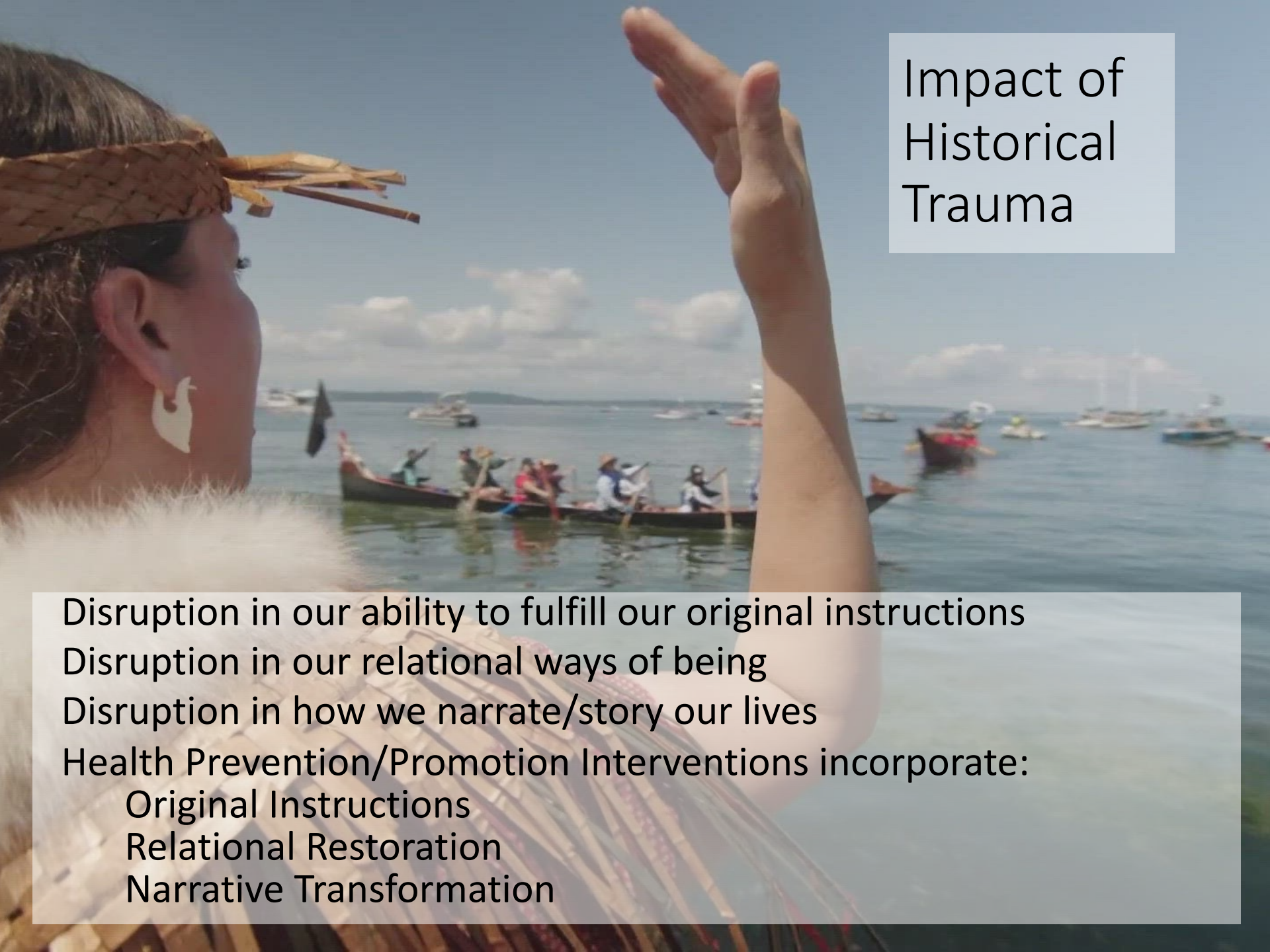
may we raise our babies
with our indigenous love,
rather than with our colonial pain.

@indigenoumotherhood

Connectivity



- Ancestral: What is being passed on
- Land: Where it is being passed on
- Cultural: Why is it being passed on
- Community: How is it being passed on

A woman in traditional Indigenous attire, including a woven headband and a large feathered headdress, is shown in profile, looking out over a body of water. In the background, several people are participating in a regatta, with a long canoe in the foreground and other smaller boats further out. The sky is blue with scattered white clouds.

Impact of Historical Trauma

Disruption in our ability to fulfill our original instructions
Disruption in our relational ways of being
Disruption in how we narrate/story our lives
Health Prevention/Promotion Interventions incorporate:
Original Instructions
Relational Restoration
Narrative Transformation



Effects of trauma

- Separates us from our bodies.
- Splits us from our feelings
- Limits response flexibility
- Fosters a 'shame' based view of self
- Distorts our view of the world
- Alienates us from the present

Maté, G., & Maté, D. (2022). *The myth of normal : trauma, illness, & healing in a toxic culture*. Avery, an imprint of Penguin Random House.

Image credit: grandriver / Getty Images.

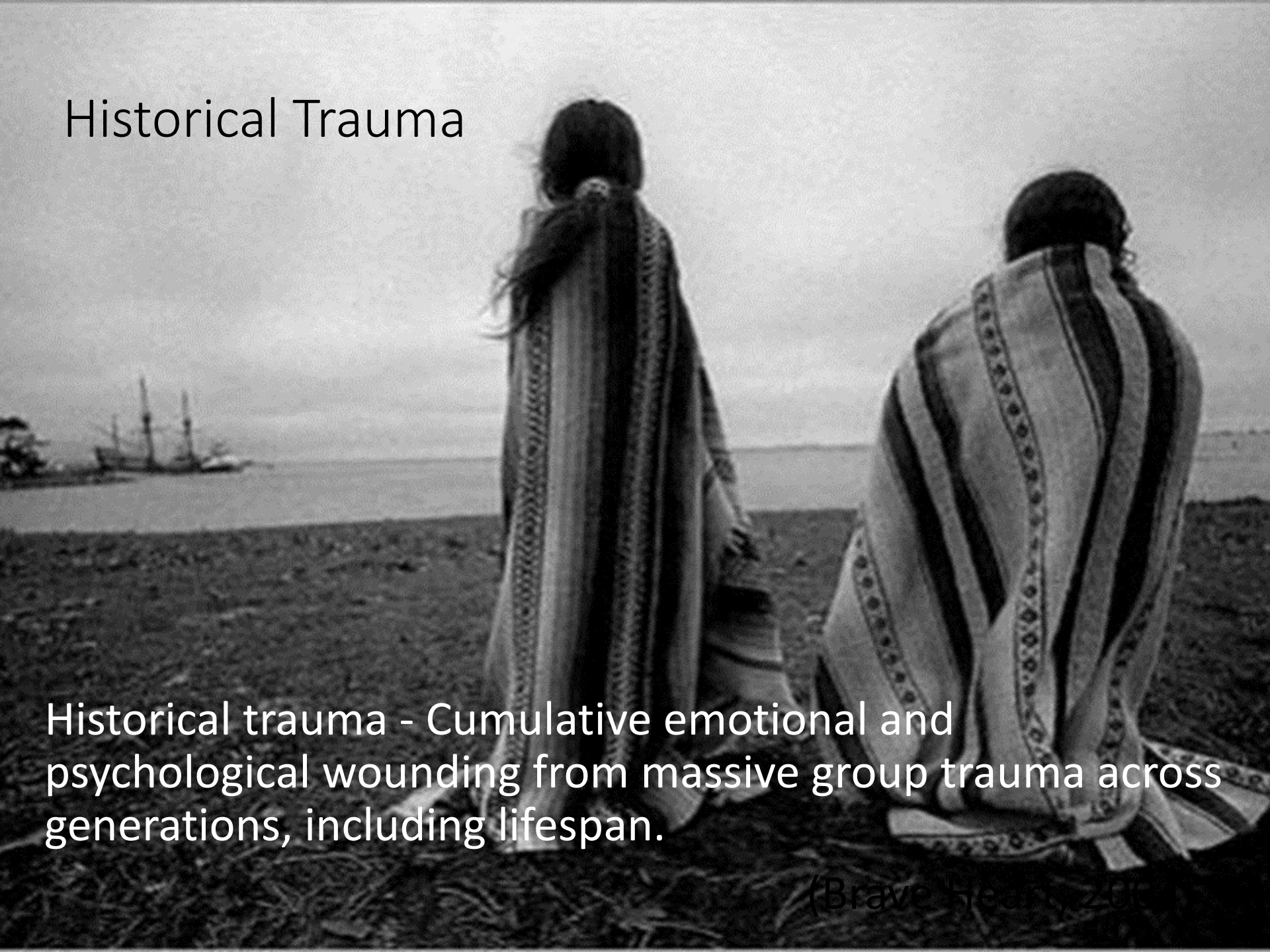
Source of the wound: Historical Trauma



Historical Trauma

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

(Brave Heart, 2011)



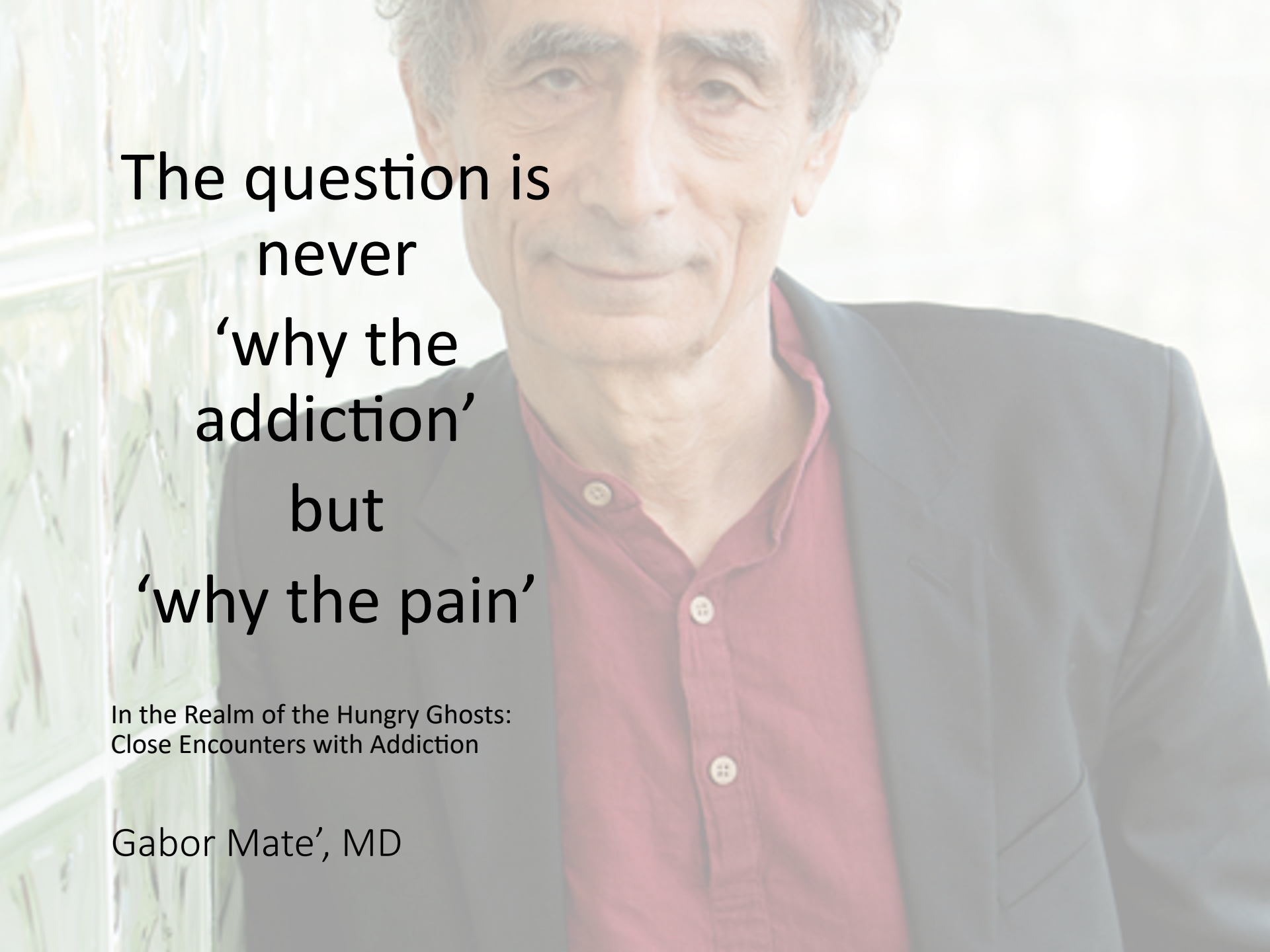


Epigenetic transfer of the trauma and
ancestral wisdom

“The memories of our ancestors are passed down on our blood”

Little Joe Gomez

Hamby, Sherry, Elm, Jessica H L, Howell, Kathryn H, & Merrick, Melissa T. (2021). Recognizing the cumulative burden of childhood adversities transforms science and practice for trauma and resilience. *The American Psychologist*, 76(2), 230–242. <https://doi.org/10.1037/amp0000763>



The question is
never
'why the
addiction'
but
'why the pain'

In the Realm of the Hungry Ghosts:
Close Encounters with Addiction

Gabor Mate', MD



**STRONG
RESILIENT
INDIGENOUS**

Wellness

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



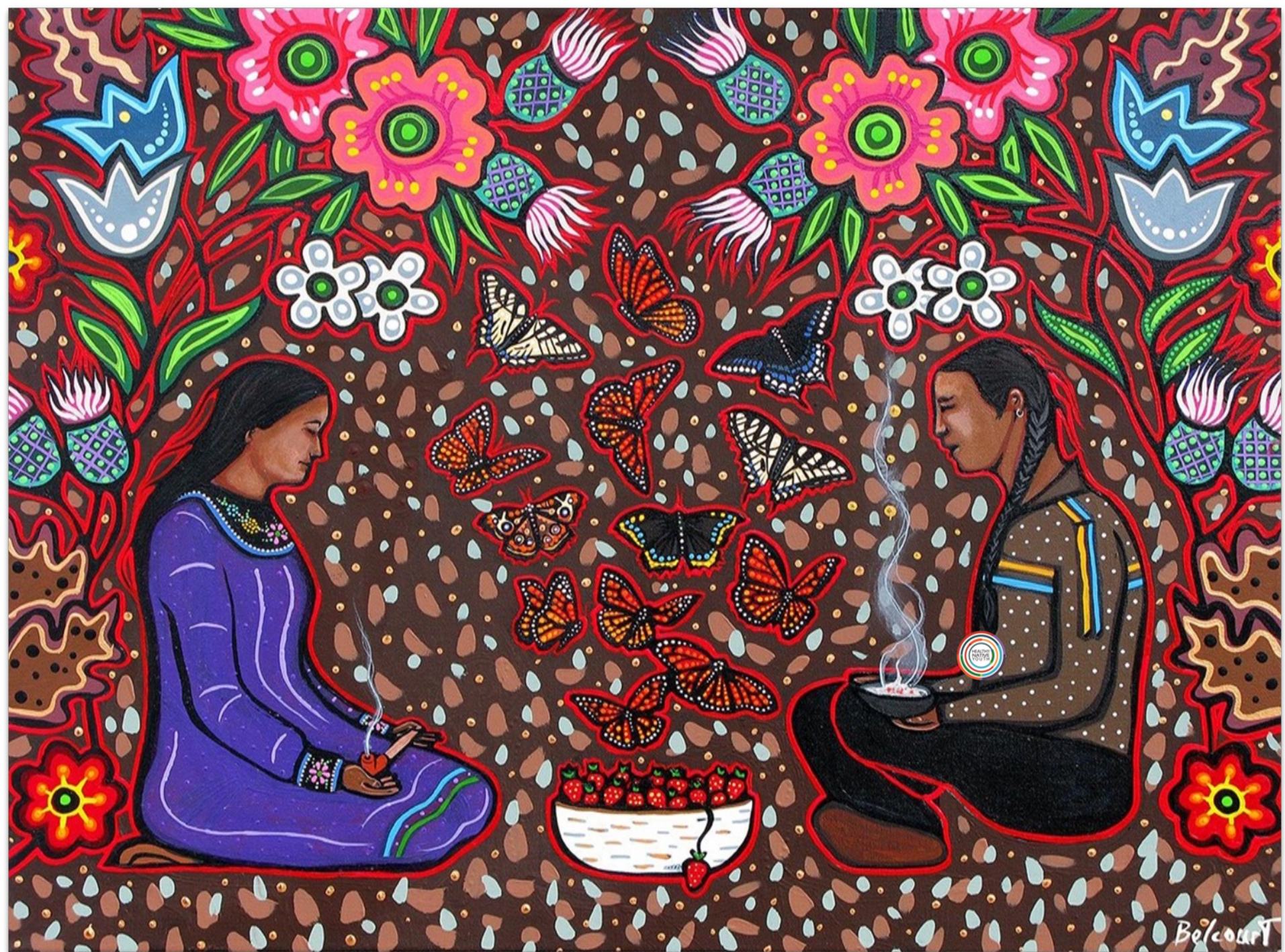
What does this look like in practice?



- Ceremony/Prayer/Ritual
Meditation/Deep Breath work
- Talking Circle
- Mutual Aid / Indigenous Economies
- Justice Movements (Standing Rock, Mauna Kea, MMIWG2S marches)
- Cultural Gatherings/Events
- Intergenerational Connection
- Practicing/Learning traditional arts, dance, music Food
- Wellbriety group

CULTURE IS
PREVENTION





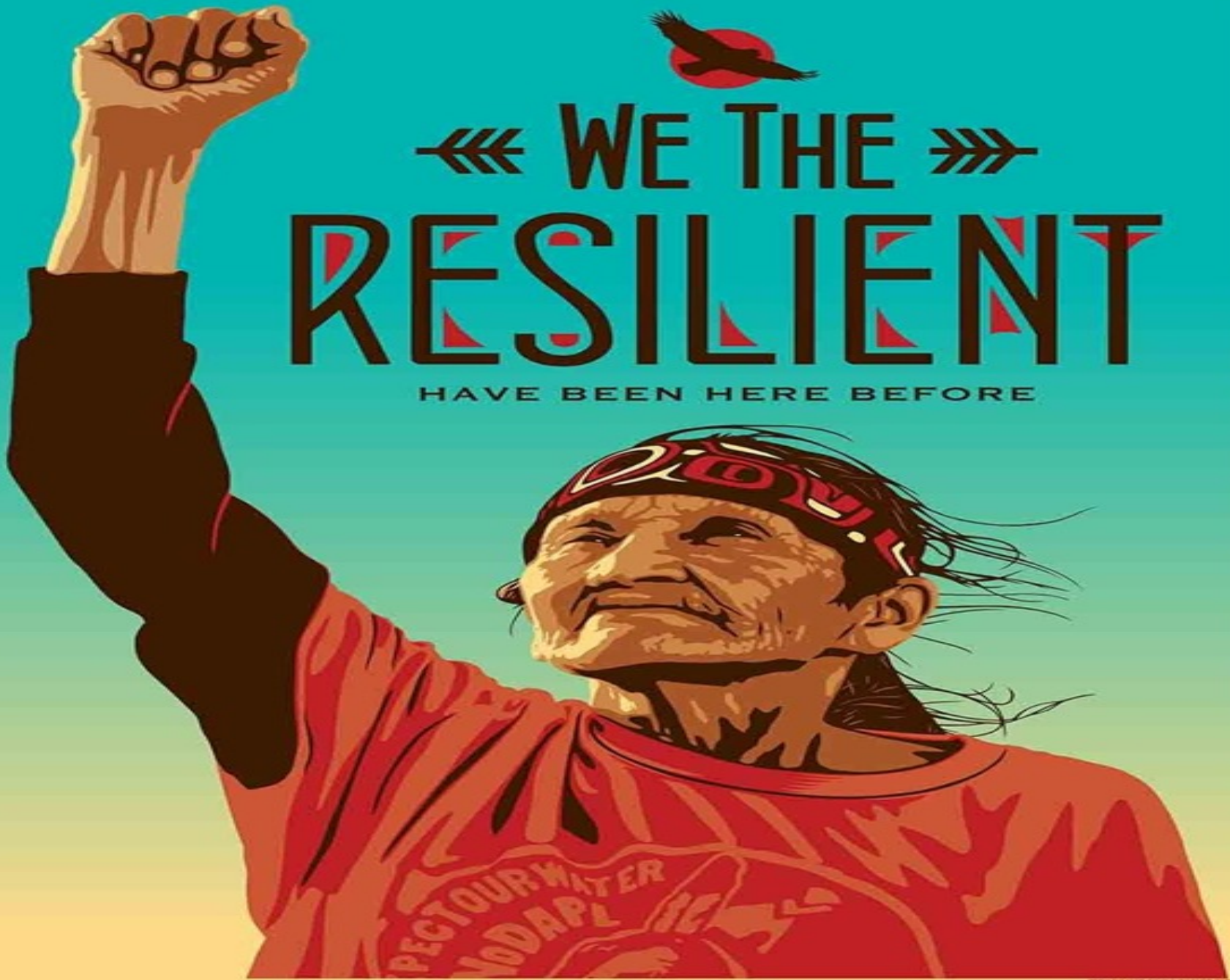
Belcourt



WE THE

RESILIENT

HAVE BEEN HERE BEFORE



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?

