

An Aboriginal Australian Republic

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* The views expressed here are my own, not of my employer



Story

“Aboriginal people believe that the spirit child comes from the earth... I haven’t seen this belief about the spirit child in any other culture, even Indigenous ones. We come from this earth, we are born from the earth. We believe that the whole of life is a spiritual experience and that we as Aboriginal people are actually more spirit than matter... I really believe that emotions can create chemical reactions in the body. If we don’t face those emotions, it can create sicknesses... So for Aboriginal people, the whole of life is a spiritual experience, and so the whole of sickness is a spiritual process. The spirit can not be in balance if it is out of balance with the body. If you’re spiritually unwell, you can’t help but affect the whole of your being... See, the impact of colonialism has been huge... we Aboriginal people are spiritual people and we are still recovering because of colonialism...”

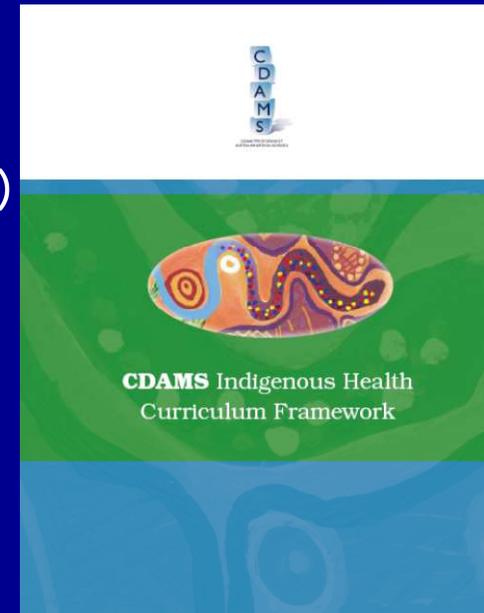
Story... Continued...

...There's not a lot of understanding about the part of white Australia because they have this misguided belief that colonialism doesn't affect them.....Of course it does! It's made them into the people they are today, which means they cannot hear what Aboriginal people are telling them... Many are trying to run away from their own history... As they get older and more mature [chuckles], hopefully they'll have a better understanding... You see, that mouth of the snake... our people have retreated into the belly of the snake. It's our consolidation of our Aboriginality, a renewing of our identity. Only recently have we begun emerging from the mouth of the snake with renewal and consolidation of who we are... You see, it's the white terms of reference, it's their misinterpretations that have given definition to Aboriginal illnesses."

Aunty Lilla Watson (in Phillips, 2003)

Indigenous health in medical education

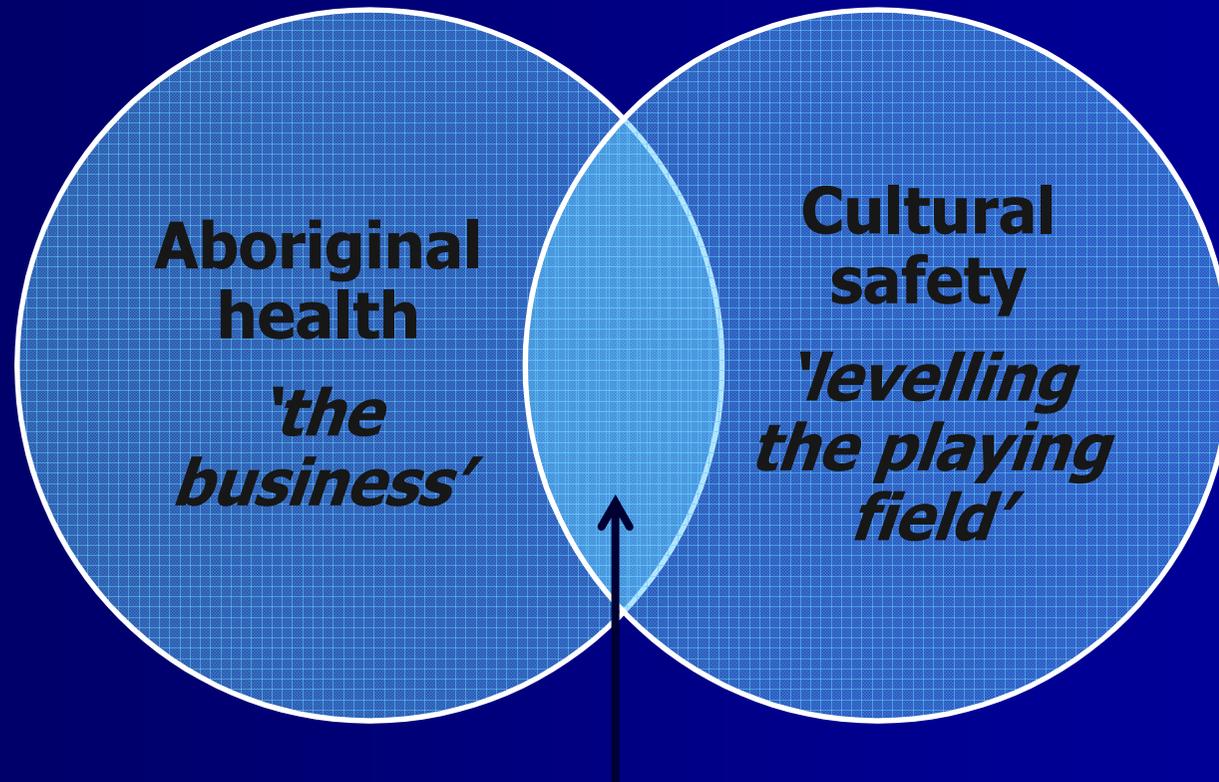
- CDAMS Indigenous Health Curriculum Framework (www.medicaldeans.org.au/projects/indigenoushealth)
- The LIME Network (www.limenetwork.net.au)
- Accreditation (www.amc.org.au)
- Review (2012)
- Hidden curriculum



Cultural Safety

- Cultural Awareness is learning about 'the other'
(Moreton-Robinson 2000)
- Cultural Safety is learning about 'the self', and reflexivity
(Ramsden 2002; Phillips 2005)
- Three tiers of change:
 - Cultural Awareness
 - Cultural Sensitivity
 - Cultural Safety
- Need for both Maori health and cultural safety

A Model of Applied Cultural Safety in Australia



'Aboriginal Knowledge' is about Intellectual Property - and depends on PLACE, history, social phenomena, languages, customs, cultures, spiritualities and religions

Terms of Reference

- Values
- Whiteness
 - Does not refer to ethnicity or skin colour
 - But values of 'white is right' or 'normal'
- 'Inclusion' on whiteness' terms
 - 'Fitting in' or being 'bolted on'

Relationality & the ATR

There is no Aboriginal equivalent to the Cartesian notion of “I think therefore I am”, but, if there were, it would be – “I am located therefore I am”. Place, being, belonging and connectedness all arise out of a locality in land... In the Aboriginal notions of autonomy, a place isn't a position. A place can't be a position because it's a matrix of relations, narratives, obligations – it has neither rigidity nor flexibility, it has soft, inclusive structure, spirit, agency and memory. And while position can also have the same kind of matrix as place, it has not come into the world to preserve relationality (like place) – it comes to contain, define and dominate relationality... It may seem unrealistic, even ludicrous to some, to propose or advance the notion that an ancient, non-agricultural culture may have some pertinent knowledge about the dilemmas of relations between states or Weber's 'the parametrics of social-logic inquiry'. However, the ancient society's notions may very well have some cogency if only in the sense of refusing to see relationality as some lost social artefact. Modern technology informs and dominates relationality, where really it should be philosophy, re-asserting its authority in this area. (Graham 2014: 2, 5)

Empathy instead of competition

“Aboriginal children are taught from a young age to share food. This is critical because it teaches them what Aunty Mary Graham refers to as the reflective motive. It teaches them to be aware of and consider the needs of others. Researchers have just found that empathy is best taught in the early years, and that if this is taught properly, it encodes empathy in the person from a young age. This is why Aboriginal people are teaching their children to share food very early, and even have lullabies for it. This reflective motive is why it is more important to consider how you teach, rather than what you teach. Aboriginal people teach by doing and showing context. White people’s education is often based on facts only – the focus is on the ‘what’. But unless you teach the ‘how’, you won’t have built empathic human beings, you will only have built competitive ones. Teaching equality, such as in feminism, only encourages competition between the sexes. But teaching congeniality in a community and group way helps build empathy.”

(Aunty Lilla Watson, in Phillips 2015)

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