‘It hasn’t worked so we have to change what we are doing’: First Nations Worldview in Human Service Practice.

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Author's Declaration

This is to certify that:

This thesis comprises only my original work towards the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy;

1. Due acknowledgement has been made in the text to all other material used;

1. The thesis does not exceed the word length for this degree;

1. No part of this work has been used for the award of another degree;

1. This thesis meets the University of Sydney's Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) requirements for the conduct of research.

Signature:

Name: Mareese Rose Terare

Date: 22nd March 2020

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This research journey has been the most challenging and enlightening period of my life. During this time I have endured a life threatening health scare for which I thankfully survived. I have had significant and profound loss of two mothers Beryl and Rose and my beautiful nephew Rhys. This thesis is in honour of these three very important people whom I feel are still with me, I know this from the strength I have found on the days where I had no care. Their spiritual messages of love, hope, resilience and resistance is what has got me to this stage.

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I dedicate this thesis to my grandchildren.
You give me purpose to be a better human being:
Zayne, Sahnyia, Shaquille, Tallas, Sharm-ba, Brenique, Zion, Amazhon, Mason, Anaishia, Arakai and Mareese.

Abstract

This research study explored how a group of 12 First Nations Research Participants, women and men working within NSW Government and Non-Government Human Services, worked with First Nations clients who experienced institutional and interpersonal trauma. The purpose of the qualitative study is to examine how workers developed and utilised their epistemology, axiology and ontological within their practice skills to support clients. The thesis is informed by Indigenous methodologies, with yarning enabling new understandings to be developed. The study involved three yarning circles and face to face and phone interviews yarn ups.

The significance of this research is that Research Participants maintained their rights by reclaiming their worldview through undertaking process of decolonising the mind. They provided voice to how they maintain their worldview within their workplace. The study explored underpinning knowledge and unique skills of those First Nations workers and how they applied their epistemology – their ways of knowing, their axiology – their ways of doing and their ontology – their ways of being.

Research Participants cited on a number of occasions the importance of maintaining tribal worldviews within the scope of supporting others. This gave voice to support and empower clients to reclaim their tribal belonging and identify. They demonstrated capacity to ongoingly critique western worldview; ways of knowing, ways of doing and ways of being, which is often unseen and invisible.

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Chapter 1. Introduction

Disclaimer: The name Aboriginal is a term that was used by the colonisers at time of invasion and the declaration of Terra Nullius. The term Aboriginal defined all Aboriginal people who inhabited Australia.

This definition does not acknowledge or honour that Australia was made up of different nations or tribes. The colonial construction of Aboriginal defined nations/tribes as one homogenous group – this is incorrect and a distinct indicative of the starting process of colonisation and genocide. The term Aboriginal does not accurately define us, in actual fact there were over 300 nations within mainland Australia, Tasmania and the Torres Strait Islands. Each nation or tribe had their very own epistemology, ontology and axiology.

In active resistance to colonisation and my lifelong commitment to decolonise my thinking and ways, I will be using First Nation peoples when referring to an individual or collective of 'Aboriginal People'. Individuals can then define their identity in terms of their nation or tribe.

This thesis arises from yarning between a Bundjalung Goenpul Woman and twelve experienced First Nations human service workers based in New South Wales. In this context Human Services are those Agencies that aim to challenge the wrongs of history. In fact, Human Services referred to in this research, relate to Agencies and workers that are committed to developing and building trustworthiness, where they promote human good within micro and macro approaches. They will utilise advocacy, social justice and collaboration, where violations of human rights are evident. The emphasis is on challenging abuses of power internally and externally where historical abuses of power were experienced. Common across these agencies are that they work to undo the oppression of socio political and historical contexts with the aim of building trust (Healy 2017). Healy's reference to Satire's wisdom *"one must not aim to "be just* but rather to act justly", [Sartre, 1957, p. 49] sums up their roles and responsibilities succinctly.

These yarns explored the practice of First Nations people working in the violence and trauma field. It aims to contribute to improved support for First Nations women, children and communities. The research questions that guided this study sought to understand the impact of First Nations

Worldviews (epistemology, axiology and ontology) on practice in the field of trauma and interpersonal violence. The thesis is informed by Indigenous methodologies, with yarning enabling new understandings to be developed. Yarning is linked with reclaiming epistemology – ways of knowing (Walker, Fredericks, Mills, & Anderson, 2014). It is a highly political practice, as "Indigenous peoples must now be involved in defining, controlling and owning epistemology and ontologies that value and legitimate the Indigenous experiences" (Rigney, 1999, p. 632).

My essence as a First Nations person is central to this thesis. The motivation, approach and insights from this thesis reflect my Worldview, my epistemology, axiology and ontology. In this way the thesis at times may be challenged by or even not conform with Western academic traditions. For example, the separation of 'themes' runs counter to the holistic, embodied, ways of knowing of First Nations people. This may be read as repetitious or give rise to questions about which 'theme' a specific quote should be analysed against. Between First Nations people recognition of others through acknowledgement is an important cultural practice. In this thesis I have done this through at times acknowledging full names rather than the traditional last name only method of referencing. I do this out of respect and acknowledge my First Nations pioneers and contemporaries in bringing Indigenous Knowledges into the mainstream academy. In reading this thesis I would ask that this struggle to fit Indigenous Worldviews within a Western academic tradition is acknowledged.

Five themes were identified through the participating in the yarning circles, re-listening to the audio tape and reading the transcripts. An analysis framework that explored participants' practice in relation to ways of knowing, ways of being and ways of doing was used to make sense of the Research Participants' experiences. These themes were: belonging; connections; always political – therapy; sharing knowledge with non-Aboriginal colleagues; and challenging Western theories.

Research Participants practice quotes are cross referenced with both thematic and worldview analysis. Therefore you will see references to some of their direct quotes repeated to demonstrate the nature of practice specifically where Research Participants accommodate both western ways and their tribal worldviews.

The research concludes that effective practice to support First Nations women, men, children and communities who have experienced trauma and violence has its foundations in Aboriginal Worldviews. This requires a deep understanding of Aboriginal clients ways of knowing, ways of being and ways of doing. Unpacking the meaning of Australian First Nations Worldviews is threaded through this entire thesis and is discussed in greater detail in subsequent chapters.

I have referred simply to the term Western as a definition of specific worldview with a view to delineating between Western and First Nations ways of being. This reference is not to say that they are in conflict: my aim here it to highlight that these worldviews are different. It is noted by the researcher that both worldviews serve meaningful purpose to individual's epistemology, ontology and axiology. Viewed from a human rights lens it clear that worldviews, irrespective of their culture and race, is no better than the other. This is not to deny that in the Australian context the Western worldview has historically been dominant.

1.1 Introducing the researcher

My name is Mareese Terare; I am Bundjalung Goenpul Woman. My creation story extends from Brunswick Heads NSW to North Stradbroke South East Queensland. Bundjalung from Tweed Heads both sides of the river; Minjungbal northern side and Pooningbah southern side. Goenpul from North Stradbroke Island. I am a granddaughter, daughter, sister, aunty, mother and grandmother. I am a descendent of 2 slaves (great grandfathers) and have connections to two villages on Tanna Island and my colonial side extends to Ireland. I was raised by my mothers who are proud Goenpul/Bundjalung women who taught me the importance of family, love and connections. I am committed to a lifelong journey of embracing and learning about my worldview, by unpacking colonial structures that have impacted greatly on my personal life and the lives of my families. This Research study is part of this lifelong journey.

I have worked within the health and welfare sector – women's and child protection services for over 30 years. My role's primary responsibilities within these services were to ensure that the services were accessible, fair and equitable to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

women and children. My tribal ways have helped develop my axiology, epistemology and ontology as a Bundjalung/Goenpul woman, mother and grandmother and supported and at times provided with me an essence of strength and self-empowerment which underpinned my practice within these roles. It is these ways of knowing, being and doing that have motivated, defined and informed this research and thesis.

Also critical to this research is that the success of my tertiary education; TAFE Course, Undergrad Course and Post Grad Course. Access became a reality because of the social justice approaches of the Gough Whitlam government's affirmative action policies in relation to equal access facilitated the development of First Nations only education opportunities. This affirmative action process created education programs where all of the students were First Nations peoples. This provided significant and progressive development to my current role as an academic, researcher and educator. This process provided me with re-empowerment and self determination to reclaim my essence as a Bundjalung Goenpul woman and to locate the meaningfulness of this in my every-day life both personally and professionally.

1.2 Motivation for research

This research is result of over 30 years' working in human services, firstly as a front line practitioner and later as an educator. This work focused on responding to the violence and trauma impacting on First Nations women, children and communities. The bane of my professional existence was our limited capacity to make helping services accessible to significant numbers of First Nations women and children. This frustration led to meetings with internal and external stakeholders regarding access and equity policies for First Nations women and children. Initially these meetings created a personal sense of validation and a sense of security that mainstream services were making their services accessible to Indigenous people with genuine consultation. However, over the years these meetings became challenging. Whilst services were committed to flying the Indigenous flags and implementing 'Indigenous friendly' arts and resources in their agencies there was limited increase in numbers of First Nations women and girls accessing these services. Although most of my work has focused on women and children I am aware of the challenge for services to provide accessible and relevant support to First Nations' men

as well. The experiences of male children, male community members and male human service workers are included in this study with the primary focus being on women.

I came to believe that it was imperative that we deeply consider this problem and to critically think of the issues preventing First Nations women and children accessing our services. I was driven to understand what practice approaches were most effective in supporting First Nations women, children and communities. I began looking around to find practices that seemed to achieve this. It became apparent that we, human service workers, had limited capacity to articulate the socio political and historical reasons why First Nations' women and their children were not accessing our services. I began to realise that the deficit-based beliefs about Indigenous people provided foundation for the emergence of an ideology of 'helping them'. Services were dominated by this welfare ideology as opposed to providing services founded on First Nations people's socio-historical and political experiences and First Nations people's Worldviews.

1.3 Significance of this thesis

I have referred to old and new data to indicate to the readers that the social issues we refer to as trauma have not changed. The extent of institutional and interpersonal trauma experiences is extremely high in Australian First Nations communities and families. The status quo has not changed over three decades in some instances it has become worse.

Institutional Violence is considered within socio historical and political context; that is historical experiences of colonization and genocide. These facts maintain the marginalisation of First Nations peoples. With high incarceration rates, unreasonably high morbidity rates, high mortality rates. This can also account for the high rates of interpersonal trauma. Historical experiences of interpersonal trauma like family and domestic violence, sexual assault and child maltreatment; physical, emotional and neglect of child sexual and young people has resulted in trans and inter-generational trauma in families and communities. It has led to higher hospitalization rates.

Indigenous communities are over-represented within statutory human services such as incarceration rates within adult and juvenile

detention centres, out of home care, mental health and drug and alcohol. We have data that highlights these phenomena across generations.

What we know: First Nations people are highly represented with regard to trauma experiences, family violence, sexual assault, and child maltreatment which includes; neglect, physical and emotional abuse of children and young people. The extent of interpersonal traumas such as domestic violence and sexual assault within First Nations communities far outweighs the mainstream community (Marcus & Braff, 2007). In 2006 all states and territories were funded by the Commonwealth governments to explore the cause, extent and prevalence of sexual assault, domestic violence and child maltreatment within First Nations Families and communities. Fast forward 9 years on and we see very little improvement in addressing the extent of trauma experienced by First Nations people: "Indigenous Australians experience violence (particularly family and domestic violence) at higher rates than non-Indigenous Australians" (The Australian Government, 2015, p. 45).

The high prevalence of family violence within Aboriginal communities are evident in all states and territories (The Australian Government, 2015). According to the ABS crime statistics in 2017 cited in Submission to the Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women (Australian Human Rights Commission 2017). Aboriginal women were the main victims of family violence-related assault;

- 64% (2700) Indigenous assault victims NSW
- 74% (3900) Indigenous assault victims Northern Territory
- 68% (1400) Indigenous assault victims South Australia

Perpetrators were commonly identified as partners or ex-partner.

Australian Indigenous respondents in the International Violence Against Women Survey (Australian Human Rights Commission, 2017) reported higher levels of physical violence during their lifetime compared to non-Indigenous women Indigenous women also reported three times as many lifetime incidents of sexual violence than non-Indigenous women. The data is very clear: Indigenous women experience a higher rate of violence than non-Indigenous women. The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Survey (NATSISS), during 2014–15 found that 63% of Indigenous women and 1 in 3 (35%) of Indigenous men who had experienced physical violence reported that the perpetrator of the most

recent incident was a family member, including a current or previous partner (ABS 2016b; Australian Human Rights Commission, 2017).

The disproportionate rate of violence against Aboriginal people is also seen in the data on hospitalisation. Analysis of hospitalisation data by NSW Department of Health found:

> The proportion of hospitalisations due to violence [is] much higher among Aboriginal people (18%) compared to non-Aboriginal people (5%). Aboriginal females are 12 times more likely to be hospitalised due to violence compared to the non-Aboriginal population (NSW Department of Health, 2011 p. 7).

In 2006 the NSW Attorney General's Department's *Breaking the Silence* Report clearly articulated the extent of this form of trauma (child sexual assault) in Aboriginal families (NSW Attorney General, 2006). The trauma of child sexual assault goes far beyond the individual act to profoundly disrupt family relations. NSW Ombudsman (NSW Ombudsman, 2012, p. IV) found "while just 4% of all NSW children are Aboriginal, they comprise 10% of all child sexual abuse victims".

The Australian Institute of Health & Welfare data shows that Indigenous children are over-represented across the child protection system compared with non-Indigenous children. Indigenous children are 10 times more likely to be under a care and protection order and ten times more likely to be in out of home care (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2013). In 2011, 55% of the 8,857 victims of sexual abuse in NSW were children younger than 16.

The effects of trauma associated with violence on Aboriginal people are profound and can be linked to the current health status of adults. Childhood trauma experiences, also known as adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), are associated with adult health problems (Dube, Filetti, Dong, Giles, & Anda, 2003). This body of research clearly articulates correlations between adverse childhood experiences with poor physical and mental health problems in the adult lifespan. As the ACE score (number of adverse experiences) increases the chances of being a user of illicit street drugs, tobacco or having problems with alcohol abuse and suicidal ideation increase (Dube et al., 2003).

High ACE scores can also be associated with higher rates of imprisonment. Lawrie (2003) found that Aboriginal people constitute 16

percent of all prisoners in New South Wales. Aboriginal men constitute 18 percent of all male prisoners and Aboriginal women constitute 31 percent of all female prisoners. While still a small percentage of the overall population, rates of Indigenous women's imprisonment continue to alarmingly grow. Seventy-eight per cent of Indigenous female inmates were found to have experienced adverse childhood trauma (child sexual assault and child maltreatment), which ultimately led to use of illicit drugs and petty crimes. Aboriginal young people can make up at any given time 40 percent of the juvenile detention population, and it is usually a higher rate for younger Aboriginal women (Lawrie, 2003).

Fast forward to 2020 and these numbers have not changed. Blagg, Williams, Cummins, Howane and Woodley found in 2018 that number of female prisoners increased by 8 percent (218 prisoners) from 2876 prisoners at June 30 2015, to 3094 prisoners at 30 June 2016 (Blagg, Williams, Cummings, Hovane, & Woodley, 2018) . By contrast, there were 35,745 male prisoners in Australian prisons, an increase of 7 percent (2489 prisoners) from 33,256 prisoners at 30 June 2015 (Baldry & Russel 2017). This growth in women prisoners appears to be made up largely of Indigenous women and women on remand (Blagg, Williams, Cummings, Hovane, & Woodley, 2018). These women incarcerated are mainly of child-bearing and child-rearing ages. This very sad fact raises at least three questions; firstly how are human services supporting First Nations women to prevent incarceration? And secondly, how are the children of these women incarcerated cared for? And finally, what support structures are available to re-connect women and children post-release?

There is a wealth of research that documents the extent of interpersonal trauma experiences within First Nations families and communities. These trauma experiences have profound trans- and inter-generational effects which also needs to be acknowledged by people working to support First Nations people and human services. Coupled with these adverse trauma experiences is trans- and inter-generational racism. Unacknowledged White Privilege perpetuates racist assumptions and permeates many contemporary human services, which unquestionably practice within a Western worldview. These experiences constitute a breach of First Nations human rights and demand urgent attention by all.

1.4 Why is it important? Improving practice

The purpose of this research is to explore how workers and human service agencies can better support First Nations people who have experienced institutional and interpersonal trauma. Specifically, the research asks how practitioners approach and understand their work with First Nations people who have experienced institutional and interpersonal trauma. What strategies do they find useful to this work and why? What are the specific skills required for this work? How have Aboriginal Worldviews – which have supported Indigenous people's survival for over 65,000 years on this land – informed this practice? And thinking more broadly, how might engaging with Indigenous people's epistemology, axiology and ontology assist in supporting Aboriginal women, children and communities?

As argued above, First Nations' people are experiencing institutional and interpersonal trauma-related issues at significantly higher rates than non-Aboriginal people in all areas of life. This fact tells us that ongoing marginalisation of First Nations men, women and children is constant and consistent within contemporary Australian societies. Current Western clinical responses do provide aspects of support, which in some instances are empowering for First Nations' clients, especially regarding the provision of safety and justice. However embedded within Western clinical responses are practices that can often maintain acculturative and colonial oppression of First Nations people' identity, ideas and purpose without any substantial long-term benefits. There have been numerous studies and reports identifying models of best practice when working in the field of interpersonal trauma. Whilst these modalities have been found to be effective with some of their target groups (NSW Department of Health, 2011) there is the need for greater response to the epistemological, ontological and axiology needs of First Nations children which informs us that a decolonization of human service practice will need to be considered and acted on. The NSW Ombudsman in his audit report on Interagency responses to First Nations children and young people experience child sexual assault forward message about 2012 report found lack of institutional responses to First Nations children,

> we have highlighted that poorly integrated services, a failure to deal with chronic staffing shortages in high-need locations, and weak accountability mechanisms, undermine the ability of agencies to identify and respond effectively to some of the

most vulnerable Aboriginal children in NSW (NSW Ombudsman, 2012, p. iv).

In fact this report was one of 4 Interagency Audit reports the Ombudsman undertook to examine the lack of response to NSW First Nations' children and young people and their families who had experienced child sexual assault. This demonstrates that the institutions are not working. This also raises questions about the effectiveness of their practice. Given this lack of institutional response. We need to ask those agencies, what do they do to ensure ongoing post-colonial and decolonization of knowledge and practice is undertaken, which will validate and support ways of knowing, doing and being from a First Nations perspectives?

This thesis conclude that responses to institutional and inter-personal trauma affecting First Nations peoples requires the incorporation of First Nation worldviews. Worldviews are not currently articulated as a critical component within the trauma field. Trauma-informed practice ideas relate to connections (Herman, 1992) and delved deeper into epistemologies, axiologys and ontologies. My research suggests that incorporating ways of knowing, doing, being and within our practice provides the practitioner opportunities to encourage and support First Nations' peoples' empowerment and self-determination; to explore and potentially re-create these ideas as per their tribal worldview.

1.5 The research participants

The study focuses on the practice of fourteen First Nations workers who have successfully completed the Education Centre Against Violence Aboriginal Qualification pathway in relation to supporting service users who have experienced interpersonal trauma. The Aboriginal Qualification pathway was delivered by the NSW Health Education Centre Against Violence (ECAV), a specialist RTO established in 1986. ECAV provides state-wide specialist education and training for health workers in relation to domestic violence, sexual assault and child maltreatment trauma experiences. In 2000, ECAV developed the Aboriginal Family Health education pathway (consisting of 0619 Nat Certificate IV in Aboriginal Family Wellbeing and Violence Prevention Work and 10634 NAT Advanced Diploma of Aboriginal Specialist Trauma Counselling) for Australian First

Nations people who work in the trauma field. This education pathway aimed to create a skilled First Nations workforce responding to high rates of interpersonal trauma; domestic violence, sexual assault and child maltreatment; physical, emotional abuse and neglect of children and young people within their communities. ECAV provides training across a broad range of health practitioners including mental health, drug and alcohol, primary health, sexual assault and domestic violence, social work and medical practitioners. At the stage of data collection of this thesis approximately 50 people had graduated from the pathway. I will expand on the role played by ECAV in developing the First Nations workforce in more detail in Chapter 2.

At the time of the data collection, the Research Participants were located in numerous remote, rural and regional services within NSW. The towns consisted of; Broken Hill, Bourke, Dubbo, Dubbo/Wellington, Sydney – City and Parramatta, Grafton/Coffs Harbour/Yamba, Tweed Heads, Toomelah and Yamba. The Research Participants consisted of 13 females and 1 male; their tribal affiliations included Gumbainnggir, Goomeroi, Dunghutti, Wiradjuri, Weilwan, Barkindji and Bundjalung. Most were living and/or working on their country.

They were employed in various positions with primary aim to provide support to clients who had been affected by adverse trauma experiences like; family violence, domestic violence, sexual assault, child maltreatment – physical and emotional abuse and neglect of children and young people. Overall their primary roles included; counselling, group work, advocacy, community development, policy development and practice management. Their target group being First Nations women, men, young people, children, families and communities.

Those services consisted of NSW Government Health Services, Non-Government Health Services, Community Control Health Services, Family Support Services, Juvenile Justice and Neighbourhood Services. Their roles were varied; from women support worker, men access worker, team leaders, youth support work and Aboriginal family health worker. Three workers had various roles with different agencies. All workers have been employed in the trauma field for over 5 years with a variety of other qualifications. Most of the participants had participated in the Aboriginal Family Health Network.

All participants were recruited via the Education Centre Against Violence and had successfully completed the Advanced Diploma Aboriginal Specialist Trauma Counselling course. The course involves 6 modules over a 12 month period. All students of this program are Aboriginal and have completed the Certificate IV in Aboriginal Family Wellbeing and Violence Prevention Work.

1.6 Methodological decisions

My choice of Indigenous Research and Reflexivity methods came after much reading, reflection and discussion with research peers and supervisors. Even though, the process of decision making was consumed with feelings of uncertainty and angst about whether the method was appropriate for my aims whilst honouring and acknowledging the research participants. Reflection now the methodological decision feels so different to those initial feelings. It is clear to me that Indigenous Research methods fit perfectly for this study. I cannot imagine gathering the rich and quality data from any other methods.

In this study I have incorporated principles of Indigenous research methods from wisdoms of those Indigenous scholars that paved this path for myself and other aspiring early career researchers. I have used the principles of critical self-reflection to develop strategies to understand and define the power and privilege and how these underpin my role as a researcher. My approach to this study sees research as ceremony and seeks to incorporate tribal epistemological ways of telling sacred personal stories (Wilson, 2008). Ceremonies have supported First Nations peoples ontologies and axiologys for over 65,000 years. Ceremonies allow knowledge to be developed, clarified and shared. In this study, yarning circles were structured as ceremony enabling our knowledge to be developed, clarified and shared. Whereas, Reflective Methods supported me to maintain objectivity and professionalism.

The process of gathering data consisted of initiating yarning circles and interview individual yarn ups with those individuals that were unable to access the circles. Yarning involves deep listening to uncover spoken and unspoken meanings. As the researcher and yarning facilitator, I started the yarn, sharing my story, similar to the personal introduction. This links me to country and gives participants opportunity to share their connections. This is an important ontological process within Frist Nation worldview, where

new relationships and connections are being sought and made (Martin, 2009). This process locates First Nations people with country, kinship and epistemological processes (Moreton-Robinson, 2000).

The Research Participants were then invited to introduce themselves, to help others in the yarn understand the context of their work with victims/survivors of violence. During the preliminary stage of yarning circle, Research Participants were welcome to share anything about themselves, for example, 'where they are from, their tribal background, their connections or whatever information they felt safe and comfortable to share. This stage was designed to ensure Research Participants felt comfortable, more of an opportunity to meet, greet and connect as First Nations colleagues working with First Nations people, families, and communities within the trauma sector. This process was purely optional as participants were welcome to share whatever they felt like sharing. Research Participants felt really comfortable sharing their ways of being. This is evident with every research participant sharing their tribal affiliations and their connections.

Setting the scene for ceremony is very important. The setting up of the venue to reflect circle work was an important part of this process. Gathering food and catering for participants was also an integral part of the initial development of yarning circles. The topic; practice and theory underpinning institutional and interpersonal trauma service delivery to First Nations people is considered sensitive in nature. It was decided to honour the creative part of First Nations axiology and set up the space to include arts and crafts materials so that participants can maintain focus on the topic whilst doing creative work. The placing of 'data collection' within ceremony and yarning will be explored in greater detail in the Methodology chapter.

1.7 Definitions of key terms used

There are a number of terms that are used throughout this thesis that require definition. These definitions are not claims for a single truth but reflect how I use language in this thesis. My choice of language reflects both existing scholarship and my own epistemology.

Aboriginal: Refers to people who identify as being Aboriginal and who live in NSW.

Aboriginal Healing Framework: Aboriginal Healing Framework refers to a set of principles that underpin effective human services for Aboriginal people. The principles refer to connectedness to four concepts; land, kinship, belief system and culture (Randall, 2007)

Aboriginal Worldview: Aboriginal Worldview provides and essence with which one sees them self within the world. One's purpose and their success within their life are measured by their worldview (Sherwood, 2010).

Acculturation: Acculturation is a process in which members of one cultural group adopt the beliefs and behaviours of another group. Acculturation erodes one cultural understandings and beliefs. It is evidenced by changes in language preference, adoption of common attitudes and values, common social groups and institutions, and loss of separate political or ethnic identification. Aboriginal and other Indigenous people adapt to survive a dominant, colonizing culture (Tjanara Goreng Goreng, 2012).

Acculturative Stress: Is the stress one's feels when they are expected to adopt another culture as their new way of being and existing due to the acculturative process (Gil, Vega, & Dimas, 2006).

Axiology: Is being accountable and responsible to your connections and relationalities. Being accountable to your knowledge and beliefs. What you do? How you do it? What is your intentions? (Wilson, 2008)

Bundjalung: Bundjalung relates for the purpose of this research and my identity, the traditional area protected by the Nganduwal Minjungbal Bundjalung language group. Located on the Tweed River and surrounds. The Bundjalung tribal area is much bigger and encompasses most of the northern rivers of NSW from Grafton to the south and Tallebudgera Creek to the North.

Cultural Safety: Cultural Safety is when one feels absolutely free from discrimination, judgment and prejudice for their difference. Where people feel liberated to articulate their understandings,

feelings and needs without negative repercussions. Where there is no question of their differences (Richardson, 2004)

Colonisation: Colonisation is the forming of a settlement or colony by a group of people who seek to take control of territories or countries. It usually involves large-scale immigration of people to a 'new' location and the expansion of their civilisation and culture into this area. Colonisation includes dominating the original inhabitants of the area.

Deadly: Is not an Aboriginal word however it has taken its own meaning among Aboriginal society. ‘Deadly’ to Aboriginal people means ‘excellent’, ‘amazing’, ‘really good’. This can be quite confusing to non Aboriginal people who might witness someone’s artwork being described as deadly. (Welcome to Country, 2019)

Empowerment: When someone is strong and assertive to open dialogue with regard to their needs and the needs of their family and loved ones.

Epistemology: Is the study of the foundation of which human knowledge is formed. It is a coherent foundation where examinations reveal both possibilities and limitations imposed on the types of knowledge that it can support (Spender, 1998).

First Nations: The term Australian First Nations are those people who were here when invasion took place in 1788. The Researcher uses this term to define and highlight that Australia was home to over 300 Nations prior to invasion and the subsequent declaration of Terra Nullius. The term First Nations includes those people who are defined as Aboriginal or Indigenous. The term is used to highlight that First Nations people belong to different nations and or tribes and with that bring their worldviews or Cosmo they had their own specific names, and in many instances, speak/spoke their own specific language. We are different in every sense of the word. First Nations are the original people of the land we call Australia. Aboriginal people on the continent now known as 'Australia' are not the 'First Australians', they are made up of peoples from the First Nations that all have Therefore as a group they are the First Nations peoples or Original peoples (Sovereign Union – First Nations Asserting Sovereignty, 1999).

Genocide: In the present Convention, genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, such as:

a) Killing members of the group;
b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;
e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group (United Nations General Assembly, 2004)

Human Service agencies: The scope of what is meant by human services is debated. In this thesis I have used it to describe organisations with the purpose of assisting people, that is, individuals and communities, towards change through a 'problem-solving' approach (Wiles, 1994) and where the emphasis is on human rights and righting the wrong of oppressive systemic power abuses (Healy, 2017)

Human service workers: The workers who implement interventions within human service agencies (whether paid or volunteer) are described in this thesis as ‘human service workers’. It is acknowledged that within the human services workforce there is a very broad range of education, qualifications and experiences (Wiles, 1994).

Indigenous: Indigenous is a generic term to refers to Indigenous peoples of Australia, who are originally from this continent.

Indigeneity: First nations reclaiming worldviews as a process of decolonisation (Feyo-King, 2014).

Indigenist: In relation to Indigenist research, is where all things exist to relatedness (Martin, 2008).

.Institutional Trauma: Racism, lack of awareness of worldview, lack of social justice service, dealing with high rates of recidivism within juvenile and adult prisons, child removal

Interpersonal Trauma: In this study Interpersonal trauma includes sexual abuse (historical sexual abuse, current sexual abuse, child sexual abuse); Family/Domestic Violence (violence between intimates); and Child Maltreatment (physical abuse, emotional abuse, psychological abuse and neglect)

Intergenerational Trauma: Is when trauma feelings are passed from one generation to the next generation (Atkinson, 2002).

Kinships: Kinship refers to extended family connections. Kinships encompasses descendants of many family connections that are not limited to nuclear family but includes many other families. Kinship relates to the indistinguishable connections to country, belief system and cultural understandings.

Mainstream: For the purpose of this research Mainstream will refer to non-Aboriginal/Indigenous/First Nations services and workers. Refers to those workers and agencies. It will relate to those workers and services that are based dominant western worldview. They are not Aboriginal, Indigenous and First Nations. The workers and services are usually seen as being white and in most cases have power over and carry the burden of unresolved privilege.

Ontology: Within an Indigenous context it is individual belief that has relational responsibilities with the tribe. What they believe in their world?

Post-colonial: Post colonialism deals with the effects of colonization on cultures and societies. Post-colonial critiques the world post colonization and often will consider power within this context. Specifically who has power and where power is located (Ashcroft, Griffins, & Tiffen, 1998).

Re-empowerment: Narrative term and is based on a belief that all people are equal and at some stage in their life and their ancestors' life they had absolute control over the destiny. Re-empowerment is an inherent right to claim what is rightfully theirs – to be treated with respect and with love.

Regional: Relates to approximately 2 hours' drive from Sydney and include the highly populated east coast.

Remote: Relates to areas that are eight plus hours' drive from Sydney heading either north and south-west and away from the densely populated east coast.

Rural: Relates to approximately 6 hours' drive from Sydney and away from the populated east coast.

Torres Strait Islander: Refers to People who identify as belonging to the Torres Strait Islands and who have a separate worldview to Aboriginal people. Torres Strait Islander people share similar stories of being colonized by the English.

Trans Generational Trauma: Transmission of experiences memories, emotions and lived experiences are passed on unconsciously to subsequent generations within families this includes feelings of guilt and shame. Also defined as trauma that has been passed down from one generation to another, either directly or indirectly (Frazier, Goodman, St. Juste, & West-Olatunji, 2009).

Urban: Relates to inner Sydney and greater metropolitan area including suburbs and the Blue Mountains, within a 2-hour drive.

White Fragility: White people are protected by the dominant and popular views or whiteness. This sets them up in privileged positions of basing their worldviews on their whiteness. Everything is measured by this. When people who are not white challenge these views they are received from a defensive position to the extent where white people deny those people of colour's narratives and experiences of oppression. They can't make sense of the social construction of whiteness (DiAngelo 2011).

White Privilege: White privilege is inherent belief system that being white superior and is never seen nor critiqued. It provides an unquestionable tool of measurement. This is where groups and individuals are measured against. It assumes equality and this is based on the lived white experience. Most racist acts committed in Australia are based on white privilege and because of this the powers rarely if ever question it (Tannoch Bland, 1998).

Yarning or Yarn up Circle: Yarn up is a colloquial informal term relating yarning whilst sitting in a circle with like-minded people, where individuals discuss relevant social issues and remedies whilst

maintaining absolute connections, commitment and safety with and to each other. Circles represent important principles in the Aboriginal worldview and belief systems, namely, interconnectedness, equality, and continuity. Circles are inclusive and lack hierarchy. Going around the circle systematically gives everyone the opportunity to participate. Silence is also acceptable – any participant can choose not to speak (Ontario Department of Education, 2009).

Phillips et al affirms, *"'For Aboriginal peoples, story and storytelling commenced at the beginning. Stories are embodied acts of intertextualised, transgenerational law and life spoken across and through time and place. In and of the everyday and everytime, stories—whether those that told of our origin or of our being now—all carry meaning: a theorised understanding that communicates the world".* (Phillips et al., 2018, p. 8)

1.8 Layout of this thesis

This thesis adopts a familiar structure. The opening chapter (this one) provides an overview of the key aspects of the study, introduces the researcher and the Research Participants as well as outlines the methodological approach and the glossary. The aim of this introduction is to orient the reader to the overall study.

The second chapter reviews the existing research and scholarship in relation to First Nations women, men, children and communities who have experienced trauma. The chapter provides overwhelming evidence of the significant challenges facing human service providers and individual practitioners in supporting First Nations people who have experienced violence.

The third chapter provides an extensive exploration of Indigenous Research Methodology and its appropriateness for this study. It also provides details of the research participants, the strategies used to ensure the ethics of the study and specific details of the yarning circles. The analysis approach adopted for the study is also detailed as are the study's limitations.

The following section, Privileging First Nations Voices, extends into 3 chapters; chapter 4, 5 and 6. Chapter 4 encompasses the experiences and insights of research participants. It captures their wisdoms, visions and sacred stories about their practice. Chapter 5 encapsulates and summaries their wisdoms and apply these to First Nations worldviews; their ways of knowing, doing and being when working with First Nations men, women, children and communities around institutional and interpersonal trauma. Chapter 6 discusses the data at length. It explores what I have learnt from the research participants, reflection and scholarship. The discussion chapter in returns to the driving questions of this thesis: how do we better support First Nations women, children and communities who have experienced trauma?

The Final chapter; Chapter 7 covering the bibliography.

Chapter 2. Literature Review

This chapter places the thesis in the broader context of knowledge. It includes two sections: firstly, it outlines the theoretical framework that shapes this study; and secondly, it reviews existing research and literature in relation to supporting First Nations women, men, children and communities who have experienced institutional and interpersonal trauma.

2.1 Theoretical framework: Ways of knowing, ways of being and ways of doing

This thesis is embedded in the concept of Worldview, which informed the methodological choices, relationships with Research Participants and analysis. Worldview however is much more than a theoretical framework: it informs who I am as a researcher and how I understand the world. Much of the wisdom of Elders and Indigenous knowledges in relation to Worldview sits outside of Western academic texts. Gradually writers such as Sire (1988), Phillips (1991) and Solomon (1994) have articulated the concept of Worldview in more mainstream publications. More recently Sherwood has argued Worldview provides: "frameworks for interpreting and exploring the world, supporting the way we act and relate to our world" (2010, p. 57).

Worldview from a First Nations perspective is important for this research as it sets the foundation for overall wellbeing. In this thesis I will focus on First Nations worldviews in contrast to Western views – within Canada, United States, Hawaii, New Zealand and Australia. The similarities and common themes from these groups also provide a platform for common knowledge. The emphasis will be on the International First Nations groups that were colonized predominantly by, but not only, the English.

For approximately 65000 years there were approximately 300 tribes/nations (Tindale, 1974, p. 6) inhabiting Australia. In 1780 Captain James Cook on behalf of the crown declared Terra Nullius no inhabitants, which forever changed the social and cultural landscape of Australia. The declaration of Terra Nullius allowed lands to be colonised in every aspect. First Nations people were not perceived as humans. The people of the Land in this regard First Nations people were seen as problematic (Bennett, 2019) where visibility of first nations as problems and invisible in

context of human and therefore rights which ultimately initiated the ongoing issues that have greatly impacted on our peoples. Given the number previously articulated by Tindale of 300 First Nations tribes, it would be an improbable task to identify one specific 'tribal' worldview. Accordingly, in this thesis I am writing from a collective perspective, which will include common themes that were and are still currently utilized at different levels by First Nations people across Australia and more specifically within NSW.

First Nations Worldview encompasses a unique set of values and beliefs system, creating a theoretical location of First Nations people and culture. Creation stories were well established in Australian First Nations lives before 1788. Belief systems sustained First Nations people throughout First Nations Australia's history. Prior to 1788 First Nations people had unique way of being (Williamson et al., 2010). The nature of First Nations worldview their epistemology (ways of knowing) and axiology (ways of doing) and their ontology (ways of being) treasure and reveres the wisdom of elders. Wilson talks to the importance of use of titles such as Uncle, Aunty as term which reaffirms relationships and further defines the importance of connectedness (Wilson, 2008). Chilisa concurs:

> within a contemporary sense the title that is constantly used when referring to elders is either Uncle or Aunty. This is sign of respect and a process of honouring their Elders' worldview which consist of their epistemology, axiology and ontology (Chilisa, 2020)

In this specific regard, I am referring to Uncle Bob Randall wisdoms as articulated in this text Kanyini. Uncle Bob defines (2006) Worldview as connectedness – connection to four concepts:

- country/land, flora and fauna;
- belief System;
- family/kinships and
- culture.

Further to Uncle Bob views he relates to this connectedness from the belief of unconditional love. Uncle Bob refers to the underlying principles of unconditional love towards his connections to country land, flora and fauna. Which now locates him as being responsible for this. The commitment extends to reciprocal responsibilities.

Dulumunmun Harrison, a Yuin elder also known as Uncle Max Harrison, explains First Nations worldviews; 'way of being' looking at what the earth has to offer with 'ancient eyes', not his eyes, the eyes of his ancestors (Dulumunmun Harrison, 2012). This is a connection so profound that it is beyond the human capacity and transcends into the metaphysical world. This is a significant component of a First Nations worldview and connection to spirit world – the dreamtime and individual tribe's and clan's creation stories (Harrison, 2012). Harrison (2012) also talks about connection to country, which is beyond and deeper than his current life; it is beyond his time and place. This belief and understanding goes back thousands and thousands of years and is learned from a lifetime of inner deep listening.

This applies Internationally across other First Nations groups. Prior to contact with Euro-cultures and colonizers, Indigenous nations in Canada had social, political, economic, and cultural structures which emerged from their specific worldviews (cited in Poonwassie & Charter, 2001, p. 64). First Nations cultures across Canada, for example, have specific cultural imperatives (Poonwassie & Charter, 2001) which influence their actions and beliefs of unique traditional ways of being that are transformed from dreamtime to creation stories.

There is considerable scholarship on worldviews within Canadian First Nations groups (Charter, Hart & Pompana, 1996; Hamilton & Sinclair,1991; Miller, 1997). Poonwassie and Charter reaffirm Hamilton and Sinclair's findings that is at a;

> fundamental cultural level, the difference between traditional First Nations and Western thought is the difference in the perception of one's relationship with the universe and the Creator (Poonwassie & Charter, 2001, p. 64).

This way of being reflects ancient wisdoms. Davis (2010) in his Massey Lecture tells us about the Way Finder: Polynesians who are using the wisdoms of their elders to map their way across the Pacific Ocean from island to island. Davis reveals how the warriors become as one with the teachings of the sea: whilst at sea they are guided by nature and the environment and more specifically birdlife. Specific birdlife indicates how far land is; the frigate bird heading out to sea indicates calms, white terns indicate land is within 200 kilometres and the brown tern reaches out as far as 65 kilometres. The nature of the tides provide them with sufficient

evidence to forecast the weather, where certain clouds provide guidance with regard to the weather, e.g. brown clouds bring strong winds and high clouds bring lots of rain and no wind This is information passed down over the years; the learning of ancient wisdoms – the way to learn is to listen. Elders teach the warriors to become familiar with the sea at a very young age (Davis, 2010).

The teachings of Australian First Nations Elders is about listening; listening to self; listening to others and listening to the world around you, your environment. Ungunmerr Bauman (cited in Atkinson, 2002) refers to Dadirri; that inner deep listening 'in our First Nations way we learnt to listen from our earliest times'. Deep listening is learning in a First Nations way. Bauman refers to our contemplative way and our ability to be still and wait. Listening and waiting also relates to connecting and communicating with the flora and fauna – this was a critical process for survival.

Throughout time First Nations people related with their environment so that they could maintain and sustain their way of life and being. Connection to the wisdoms of elders is essential part of First Nation epistemology. Malloch (1989) describes the roles of Elders in relation to healing and helping; Elder status and title is not a given; you don't become an Elder because you reach a certain age (cited in Poonwassie & Charter, 2001, p. 65). The bestowment of this Status relies on one's capacity to live within humanity and not within self. It relies on collective approaches – to be bestowed with this title one needs to be guided by integrity and humility. Elders are not required to behave in certain way; rather their behaviour is part of who they are and is a given process that is beyond entitlement and ingrained in one's essence of responsibility for the whole tribe. It is bigger than one person and one family; it is the human strength of the Tribe. The tribe is the core the hub and each individual is required to maintain their responsibilities and ensure process and protocols are followed. The term 'Elder' is used to describe someone who has knowledge and understanding of the traditional ways of his or her people, both the physical culture of the people and their spiritual tradition (Mindell, 2001).

Also an Elder may be considered as a traditional healer, but is not necessarily one. Elders are generally an older person with a rich life experiences, yet he or she need not be Elderly. Mindell reinforces the status, roles and responsibility of Elders – the Elder sits still and waits, the elder examines the moment they acknowledge ghost (problems that are

entrenched and unspoken) and unresolved issues, they learn from others and they try to find the truth in everyone (Mindell, 2001).

The Elder status is usually gained unintentionally and by mutually respectful practice. The Elder shows deep consideration and presents with humility and respect. It is their ability to demonstrate wisdom by actions and telling Stories – wisdoms of Creation Stories. This is a significant component of Elder roles and responsibilities. Buffalo (1990) expands on this point: "healing through stories is but one aspect of synthesizing our relationship with ourselves and with the entire universe" (cited in Poonwassie & Charter, 2001, p. 67).

As mentioned earlier and worthy; a very influential articulation of Australian First Nations Worldview is Uncle Bob Randall's notion of Kanyini. Kanyini refers to an expansion of Kanyini context to include unconditional love – unconditional love for all things. Uncle Bob reinforces, we are one with the flora and fauna. This is First Nations way. This is clearly an established way of being and has supported First Nations livelihood since time immemorial. The four connections of Kanyini as noted previously; is in essence about love and respect to four concepts (Randall, 2006). This is the profound and significant process of a First Nations worldview – this deep connection is the essence of reciprocity an opportunity to demonstrate love to/for those aspects that give and enhance one's life:

- Love and respect for country/land, flora and fauna;
- Love and respect for belief System;
- Love and respect for family/kinships
- Love and respect for culture

The connections are collective rather than individual. The whole tribe held these beliefs. It was a togetherness and united approach. This love for country is evident in contemporary First Nations communities with their ongoing movement for sovereignty of land.

Tribal connections to country are deep and complex; Tribes knew from their ancestral teachings changes to seasons would bring certain bush food and medicines, where time was measured by the moons and by the changing of the weather. The cycle of life also extends beyond the individual. Tribes knew when flora changed it indicated other things e.g. in the Bundjalung tribes would watch and wait for the wattles to blossom in their yellow to know the mullet would be plentiful in the inlets and estuaries.

A Flock of Black Cockatoos screeching loudly as they fly over is a warning of heavy rainfall and potential flooding.

First Nations people were innately as one deeply rooted with country and as such a natural process at being as one with the environment. Mother Earth – Father Sky this form of interconnectedness is beyond a western discourse (Dulumunmun Harrison, 2012). The ways of being were embedded in First Nations worldviews. The knowledge has been passed on from one generation to the next and this occurred since time immemorial. The process encompassed deep breathing, with every deep monitored breath you acquire skills to listen deeply, to yourself and to the environment, to explain the process Ungunmerr refers to Dadirri – "this is deep contemplative approach", listening and quite still awareness. Dadirri means "Listening to one another" (cited in Atkinson, 2002, p. 15).

The scenario of absolute sense of trust for the environment is created and adhered to. Within this trust is a deep understanding of love and respect. This way of being can be linked to contemporary processes of healing and wellbeing. Comparisons can be drawn for example to the strategies for smoking cessation program, "preliminary evidence which found that controlled deep breathing relieved several symptoms of smoking withdrawal" and "relative to the control condition, controlled deep breathing significantly reduced levels of craving and negative affect while resulting in the maintenance of self-report arousal" (McClernon, Westman, & Rose, 2004). This is a reflection of one's personal power and self determination to overcome strong psychological and physiological withdrawals.

The principles of love, respect and trust have maintained and supported the lifestyle and worldview of Indigenous groups Nationally and Internationally. Principles heightened by a sense of being and connection. Principles supported First Nations people to have a deeply profound appreciation of adversities and conflicts also known as the Prun. The Prun is a ceremony embedded in First Nations ways of being to allow Tribes to deal with conflict – also known as a cleansing process (Kelly & Behrendt, 2006). Lived principles and ceremonies have supported tribes to maintain their beliefs with the environment and within their kinships/clans. Every person, adult and children, had a role to play and with this came status and responsibility. Sharifian explains this concept further: "patterns of kinship and knowledge associated with them are not part of an objective reality but

are constructed and conceptualised by cultural groups" (Sharifian, 2006, p. 15).

Individuals were loved and nurtured; this was expected as a standard process. Randall talks about this love being extended to flora and fauna. Randall states that First Nations people were one with the environment – they related to the environment as mother earth. Harrison explains more of Yuin tribal and ancient belief system to include earth, sky, sun and moon, which he endearingly relates to as mother earth, father sky, grandfather sun and grandmother moon. This is about being part of the environment – being whole within their worlds.

Smith (2004) observes that:

> within Indigenous Australian cosmos, power flows from inherently powerful ancestral beings to the land, which is imbued with a potency given to it by the actions of people and ancestors in the past. In this way, every facet of the landscape becomes imbued with ancestral associations A cultural-conceptual approach and world and ascribed with social identity. This power flows through to living people, some of whom have the ability to call upon the force and authority inherent in both the land and the ancestral beings (cited in Sharifian, 2006, p. 18).

In the early days of developing sound social and emotional health responses, Swan and Raphael were clear about the concepts of health and holistic within a First Nations context. They considered a holistic concept that encompasses your physical, cultural and spiritual requirements as essential. You need to consider ways of knowing, being and doing as essential and relevant Frist Nations worldview especially regarding culture (Swan & Raphael, 1995).

In the Canadian context, Poonwassie and Charter (2001) also acknowledge the validity of a First Nations worldview within the healing framework: "many First Nation peoples today believe this system continues to be the framework from which they live their lives" (Poonwassie & Charter, 2001, p. 65).

It is worthy to note that First Nation's worldview is not visible within our dominant paradigms therefore not considered a framework to measure one's life against. In contrast Western worldview, one that supports 'white'

way of being, is considered the rule of all social measurements. First Nations people through formal western education and other hegemonic practices and institutions like the media have played a powerful role in presenting and normalizing western ways of being. Advertisements within these paradigms strongly reaffirm this view. This is extremely powerful; as it not only tells the viewer that whiteness is the good 'norm'; it also insidiously suggests the notion of capitalism is also the measurement of success and this goes hand in hand with whiteness. This method informs the masses; and thus imposes a Western Worldview (Fogarty & White, 1994).

First Nations' worldview is not considered within this context. When it is, it is mostly perpetuated as alien and often; a barbaric lifestyle and is rarely promoted in a meaningful and good way. The Western way of being – a Western Worldview is presented as the popular and, often, dominant preferred way of being and this is promoted widely in communities and in Australian society. Australian success is measured in accordance to a Western worldview, which mostly encompasses ideas of capitalism and not from First Nations worldview perspectives of connection to country, belief systems, spirituality, land and kinships.

One of the many loses through colonial constructs was loss of worldview and unique difference. We have seen emerging over the past 5 decades where First Nations people are rightfully claiming their worldview.

There is growing recognition among First Nations people that in order to maintain our survival and add meaning to our lives we need to raise our consciousness and reclaim what is rightfully ours – to define and live within their First Nations worldview. First Nations Elders such as Kunoth-Monks, who resisted the top-down approach of the Northern Territory Emergency Response, also argue for the significance of Worldview (Watson, 2011):

> The biggest thing that we have an argument with the government is, we are not white people. We have our Worldview, which encompasses; our own language/s; our own ceremonies; our own belief system and our own lands. What is required from government is real help and real funding rather than imposing their law and ways of being (P. 154)

The foundation for First Nations wellbeing lies within our capacity to live and maintain our re authored version of worldview within contemporary society. This worldview, depending on the individual, their family and their tribe and given the extent of acculturation and colonisation, will be self-determined to allow ongoing empowerment and re-empowerment.

2.2 Existing research

The remainder of this chapter aims to link this thesis to existing bodies of knowledge and identify gaps in current understandings. Together with the theoretical framework (Worldview) this literature review contextualises the methodological approach and findings discussed later in the thesis.

Any discussion of supporting First Nations people needs to commence with the impact of waves of colonization on First Nations people in NSW since 1788. This review will focus on the impact of first, second and third waves of colonization on First Nations people in NSW since the arrival of the first fleet in 1788. The emphasis in the review of literature will be on the human rights violations and the links colonization has with genocide. I will focus on the profound affects this phenomenon had on First Nations people, kinships, clans, tribes and connections to spirituality, belief systems and country. The socio political and historical perspectives will be closely scrutinized, in order to provide the foundational understanding of the current status of First Nations people within Australia populations.

This is not merely historical background but provides insight into the ongoing effects of acts of genocide, colonization and acculturation of First Nations people. The review will examine the effects of acts of genocide, colonization and acculturation of First Nations people including trans- and inter-generational trauma and the effects this form of oppression has had on First Nations populations. Institutional trauma is considered within the backdrop of colonisation and genocide. An understanding of institutional and interpersonal trauma is key to effective practice to support First Nations women, men, young people and children and their communities who have experienced trauma.

Research in relation to current service provision and educational support for practitioners in relation to support First Nations people and their communities will then be reviewed. Research in relation to the dominant

approaches to service delivery to First Nations people and their communities highlights the centrality of critical perspectives on power for individual workers, services and policies. Effective practice strategies need to acknowledge this history and provide opportunity for First Nations people to reclaim their human rights and move past the trauma that was imposed throughout Australia's white history. Overcoming historical oppressive legacies of colonization and attempted genocide on First Nations people is critical to acknowledging the lived reality that is a consequence of this history. This section identifies the strengths and benefits of acknowledging and adapting a First Nations worldview within service provision to First Nations people.

2.3 Process of Genocide, Colonisation and Acculturation

The impact of colonization and genocide in Australia has a profound impact on all Australians, especially Australian First Nations. The absolute dispossession of epistemology, axiology and ontology weaves its destructive way in our communities. It is therefore critical that we have understanding of this part of colonial Australian history so that we can pave the path for much more humane and cultural response.

The English 1788 declaration of the lie Terra Nullius (no inhabitants) set the scene for unjust and complete subordination of the original inhabitants of Australia. Since 1788 First Nations people have been subjected to extreme racism (Sykes, 1989). The violent and oppressive acts are indicative and are comparable to acts of Genocide. The complete breaches of human rights were systematic and calculated – Governments, settlers, convicts approached the killing times without fear of retribution (Randall, 2007).

The effects of colonization on First Nations people are evident in current times. The people suffered greatly at the hands of the English and the effects of these crimes against humanity continue to be experienced today. First Nations people are disadvantaged and this is reflected in their current state of wellbeing. This is often seen as a First Nations created issue – no connections or reflections are made to the terror experienced through the dispossession of country, government sanctioned abduction of First Nations children and the killing times that had occurred on these lands since white invasion. These atrocities occurred well into the 20th century.

The experiences of First Nations people are similar to the experiences of the Jewish population within Europe during the Hitler Nazi regime. There are profound similarities of trauma experiences; where massacres were regular events and families were dispossessed and forced apart (University of Newcastle, 2018). These similarities are also having a great impact on the future generations of Jewish and First Nations populations. Atkinson refers to trans- and inter-generational trauma to explain this further (Atkinson, 2002).

Trans-generational trauma may be transmitted across generations, whereas inter-generational trauma is considered to be transferred from one generation to the next. Evidence of trans-generational trauma can be seen in the way families interact with each other in both sociological and psychological spheres. Briskman expands further: “a population decimated by grief and powerlessness and exclusion” (Briskman, 2007, p. 3).

These are the effects of the constant and ongoing intervention of racist practice within First Nations life since 1788. This can be understood as three ‘Waves of Colonisation’ (Korff, 2020). These waves shape the collective psyche of Australia as a colonized nation. Colonized people suffer a similar sequence of inter-generational and trans-generational trauma that separates their experiences from others:

> The first generation of colonisation First Nations men and boys were killed, imprisoned, enslaved, driven away and deprived of the ability to provide for their families. Women became single parents and many children were conceived through rape and forced prostitution.
>
> Second Wave
>
> The second generation of colonisation First Nations people were rounded up and sent to missions and reserves where they were further removed from being able to obtain work, balanced diets, housing, sanitation, health care and education. This is the stage that the misuse of alcohol and drugs became embedded as a mechanism for coping with grief and the profound loss of dignity.
>
> Third wave

> In the third generation of colonisation, First Nations children were removed from their fractured families and placed into non-indigenous care environments where they suffered the horrors of forced inferiority, deprivation and abuse, documented for all to read in the Report of the National Inquiry into the Separation of First Nations Children from their Families in April 1997. The majority of these children became parents without exposure to parenting and therefore the opportunity to develop parenting skills (Korff, 2020).

Understanding the nature of colonization specifically about power dynamics is essential and those who work with First Nations who have experienced trauma need to have extensive knowledge of socio political historical context created by colonization. Practice to support First Nations women, children and communities experiencing trauma takes place in the context of ongoing colonization. The important factor here is to understand the powerfulness of colonization. Colonisation is ongoing and has occurred over the past two hundred years whether it was in waves as Korff suggests or any other way. The corrosion of First Nations people and communities can be linked to the colonisation process. The trans- and inter-generational effects are seen in communities across this country and more specifically in NSW. First Nations communities have been denied basic human services up to 1967 represents nearly 200 years of constant oppressive intervention and the forced inclusion of an alien worldview and the indoctrination of new spirit teachings. Intervention that explicitly states 'we know what is best for you', and we will do everything in our power ensure this without asking you and without any consideration of your difference. Authors have repeatedly reflected on the human rights atrocities over numerous decades. The enormity of the impact of colonization was highlighted by Sykes who stated: "blacks were treated in a number of ways – as sub-human; non-human; beast and pestilence" (Sykes, 1989, p. 5).

The uncertainty about First Nations people' status pre 1967 allowed for the management of the 'First Nations problem' to be controlled by the states and territories. Sykes (1989) highlights the dismissal of First Nations humanity through the Australian Constitution, specifically through Section 51 Clause XXVI:

> The Parliament shall, subject to the Constitution, have powers to make laws for the order and good government with respect

to: the people of any race other than the First Nations race in any State, for whom it is deemed necessary to make special laws.

and Section 127 ("In reckoning the number of people of the Commonwealth, or of a State or any other part of the Commonwealth, First Nations natives shall not be counted"). This knowledge is especially crucial, to have when working with clients where institutional abuse has occurred.

The situation provided for those governing states and territories to act with liberty and without fear of retribution to maintain absolute control over the lands and continue with the dispossession of First Nations people to their land, which included ongoing intrusion and interference in their ways of being. This gave way to the introduction of new beliefs systems and spiritual meanings (Randall, 2006).

As stated earlier the declaring of Australia as Terra Nullius was a lie so profound that it set the scene for centuries of oppression and subordination of Australia's original inhabitants and provided non-First Nations people with a false view of their history. This lie went without question and provided an opportunity for white settlers with hubris attitude to violently take control of people and their country (includes flora and fauna). The belief that First Nations people ceded country is a common and untrue and is part of how white Australian history is constructed. However what this 'history' omitted until recently was that First Nations people were resistant all over this country. First Nations people were presented as non-violent and passive therefore the dispossession of their land a 'simple' and 'rightful' legal process (Reynolds, 1999). First Nations people in the contemporary period are also demonstrating resistance – the First Nations flag is a typical example of never ending resistance. The ongoing and constant battle for land rights is another form of resistance. The celebration of 'Yabun' Survival Day on 26th January when other non-First Nations populations enjoy the festivities of Australia Day is another example of resistance from the popular and dominant culture.

2.4 The effects of Genocide, Colonisation and Acculturation.

The effects of trans- and inter-generational trauma coupled with the loss and destruction of First Nations Worldview which encompasses

connection to land, spirituality, belief and family can be seen in most First Nations communities across this nation. This context is central to the practice challenge of supporting First Nations women, children and communities experiencing trauma. First Nations people relate to this loss as cultural genocide. They refer to this as, cultural imperialism, the greatest violence which brings on loss of spirit, loss of identity, destruction of self and destruction of soul (Atkinson, 2002, p. 69).

Effects of colonization and attempted genocide are seen in the First Nations communities today and can be seen within the current social issues that are plaguing First Nations Communities; high rates of substance abuse; high rates of interpersonal trauma e.g. family and/or domestic violence, sexual assault, child maltreatment; high imprisonment rates for both male, females and young people; homelessness and social and emotional wellbeing issues. First Nations and non-First Nations writers (Atkinson, Calma, Moreton-Robinson and non-First Nations writers include Briskman, Reynolds and Cunneen) have identified direct correlation to colonisation as the core of the social issues facing First Nations people today.

The past is in fact littered with government reports and enquiries documenting the plight of First Nations people. Those effects are reflected in the finding of numerous government reports and enquiries. First Nations people and communities are to date the most 'disadvantaged' groups within all social sectors, in Australia. There are complex issues, which represent a combination of general factors – such as education, employment, income and socio-economic status – and factors more specific to the health sector. This is particularly evident in the high rates of incarceration of First Nations people. Krieg argues that many First Nations people who are imprisoned are there as a direct consequence of the shortfall in appropriate community-based health and social services, most notably in the areas of housing, mental health and wellbeing, substance use, disability, and family violence (Krieg, 2006).

The following reflects comparison 2 – 3 decades of critical data, of how not much has changed and may at explain why First Nations communities are in fact dire straits.

> In 2015, 225,349 Aboriginal people resided in NSW, representing 3% of the NSW population and 30.9% of the Aboriginal population of Australia (NSW Health Ministry, 2016).

> The Difference in life expectancy in NSW is 9.3 years lower for Aboriginal males and 8.5 years lower for Aboriginal females compared with non-Aboriginal people (NSW Health Ministry, 2016).

There is overwhelming evidence that First Nations people are being treated unjustly. The over-incarceration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians is an example of this inequity and is one of our nation's most significant human rights concerns. Incarceration rates have increased exponentially to 45% since 2008 – 2018.

Comparable data from 2007 to 2019 indicates high incarceration rates are steady. Simon et al noted First Nations people are incarcerated at 6 to 7 times the expected rate. Around 22% of those Incarcerated are First Nations people however they comprise only 2 to 3 percent of the population (Corben, 2010). The ABS Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander prisoners accounted for just over a quarter (28%) of the total Australian prisoner population. The total Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population in Australia aged 18 years and over in 2018 was approximately 2% (Australian Bureau of Crime Statistics, 2019).

For Indigenous women the rates are slightly higher, comparing breaking research of its time by Lawrie In 2003 NSW Attorney General and University NSW implemented and collaborated a research study on First Nations women incarcerated in NSW. Lawrie found startling and challenging information. First Nations people constitute 16 percent of all prisoners in New South Wales. First Nations men constitute 18 percent of all male prisoners and First Nations women constitute 31 percent of all female prisoners. The growth has been steady since 1995 where in NSW the proportion of First Nations men in prison has increased by 4 percent, and the proportion of First Nations women increased by 14 percent. First Nations women make up less than 2 percent of the general NSW population. The over representation is well documented (Lawrie, 2003, p. 7). The implications of this on First Nations families and the future of children are profound most of the First Nations women incarcerated are of the age from 20 – 34 which is at the child bearing and rearing age. First Nations women are 'disproportionately represented in all stages of the New South Wales criminal justice system, and specifically in the adult and juvenile prison population', (Lawrie, 2003, p. 6). Two decades on, these statistics continue to rise.

First Nations' women are the fastest growing prison population in Australia. They comprise around one third of female prisoners in NSW, despite making up 3% of the populations. Approximately 320 Aboriginal women are in custody in NSW on any one day in comparison with 690 non-Indigenous women (Australian Bureau of Crime Statistics, 2019). The majority of First Nation women in prison (more than 80%) are mothers (Kendall, Lighton, Sherwood, Baldry, & Sullivan, 2019).

NSW First Nations women experience domestic violence at a higher rate than non-First Nations women (NSW Department of Health, 2011). The extent of family, domestic violence within First Nations communities are also of great concern. The following data provides an example of prevalence of interpersonal violence; domestic/family violence and child protection

- In NSW the number of female victims of sexual assault as least four times higher than male victim. 552 females compared to 151 males (Bureau Crime Statistics, 2018 p).
- Indigenous people were 32 times more likely to be hospitalised for family violence as non-Indigenous people". Indigenous adults were 32 times as likely to be hospitalised for family violence as non-Indigenous adults (. (Australian Institute health and Welfare, 2019, p. IX)
- In 2017–18, 25% of Indigenous specialist homelessness services clients sought assistance for family violence (Australian Institute health and Welfare, 2019, p. IX)
- In 2017–18, 16% (48,000) Indigenous children received child protection services—a rate 8 times as high as non-Indigenous children (Australian Institute health and Welfare, 2019, p. 106)
- In 2017, the majority of Indigenous assault victims recorded by police were victims of family violence, ranging from 64% (2,700) in New South Wales (Australian Institute health and Welfare, 2019, p. 106)

First Nations people are also represented at a higher rate with hospital admissions. Hospitalisations due to violence was much higher among First Nations people 18 percent compared to non-First Nations people 5 percent. First Nations females are 12 times more likely to be

hospitalised due to violence compared to the non-First Nations population (NSW Department of Health, 2011).

Family violence occurs at higher rates for Indigenous Australians than for non-Indigenous Australians. Family violence within Indigenous communities needs to be understood as both a cause and effect of social disadvantage and intergenerational trauma (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2018).

In comparison to Non-Indigenous Australians,

- First Nations Australians experience 2 times the rate of homicides
- 32 times rates of hospitalisations and
- Up to 7 times rates of child abuse and neglect cases (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2018)

These statistics point to the extent of crisis being experienced by First Nations people and families. Practice that supports people with these experiences of crisis is lacking. Despite extensive policies and programs the so called 'gap' has not been closed. The most recent CTG report clearly outlines that more work needs to be done and more collaboration with peak First Nations groups is required (Australian Government, 2020).

Child abuse symbolises the profound corrosion of First Nations communities. Tragically, First Nations children are significantly over-represented in the child protection system. The number of child protection reports made to Community Services for First Nations children and young people has increased by more than 3 times in the past 8 years. The rate of child sexual assault of First Nations females under the age of 16 years in 2004 was more than double that of non-First Nations females. However, of all the children who accessed services that respond to sexual assault in 2003-2004, only 11 percent were First Nations (NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics, 2007). This suggests that current sexual assault practice and services have limited capabilities in terms of ensuring their services are accessible to this target group. First Nations advocates refer to the current removal of Aboriginal children as the ongoing Stolen Generation. The grass roots social justice organisation called Grandmothers Against Removals (GMARs) was initiated as a direct response to unprecedented high rates of removals of First Nations children and young people of which are comparable to children being removed during decades of forced removal

of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people, now known as the Stolen Generations.

The release of the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from their Families final report Bringing them Home in 1997 was pivotal in the documentation of institutional violence perpetrated against First Nations people. The personal testimonials of experiences of trauma and profound loss and grief; being forcibly removed from their connections, to family, country, spirituality and belief systems are profound and demonstrate the inner strength in the face of extreme adversity which defy the genocidal impact. Testimonials of people who are faced with adversity that defies human right – these are stories of courage and humanity. Their strength and courage fundamental in how they were able to maintain their humanity and love (Dodson, 2008).

The extent of child sexual assault in First Nations communities is high. This maintains the pressure and demand on institutional and interpersonal trauma services where Research Participants work. It is critical that these services have broader understandings and knowledge of co factors that impact greatly on First Nations workers in this sector. The landmark Breaking the Silence Report on child sexual assault in First Nations communities quite clearly documents about the extent of this form of trauma in families. This report was overseen by the NSW Attorney General's Department via the First Nations Child Sexual Assault Taskforce Secretariat (ACSAT) which consisted of First Nations and non-First Nations people. The consultation and development of the report was comprehensive involving approximately 29 communities across NSW. First Nations people were also invited to contact the Taskforce either by phone or more formally in writing (NSW Attorney General, 2006). Everyone who spoke to ACSAT as part of this inquiry said that child sexual assault was a huge issue in their community and often used words and phrases such as 'massive', 'epidemic' and 'it's a way of life' to describe the extent of the problem. Jonas in the 2003 Social Justice Report identified these issues as "causing more destruction to the fabric of Indigenous communities than family violence" (Jonas, 2004 p. 155). This again highlights the challenges facing human service practitioners and services in supporting First Nations women, children and communities.

The oppressive structures of colonization have overwhelmed and hidden other forms of oppression that give rise to violence against First Nations women and children (Baines, 2011). Similar to other black women

around the world, Australian First Nations women have been ambivalent about embracing feminist critique. However, the feminist movement in all its variations: socialist feminism, radical feminism, separatist feminism have at some level played a role in raising consciousness about the power disparity within gender roles often seen played out in First Nations families (Baines, 2011) Power disparity in this context is played out in families and may be observed as family and domestic violence, sexual assault and child mal-treatment (Briskman, 2007) It is therefore critical that we consider power in terms of the intersection of gender and race (Crenshaw, 1993). In essence this movement has provided validity to First Nations women's struggles around the same issues. Feminist analysis of gendered power has validated First Nations women's concerns about these profound issues in First Nations communities, which are threatening the very fabric of their existence and brought attention to gendered power in families, kinship networks and communities.

Historically, raising awareness around social issues like family violence, sexual assault and child maltreatment has fallen squarely on the shoulders of First Nations people who have become leaders in their communities in this area of community development. As previously mentioned GMARs is one such community group that is constantly challenging the status quo of high removals of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people. Following is their edit of their submission into Submission to The House of Representatives Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs Inquiry into Local Adoption:

> Grandmothers Against Removals (GMAR) opposes the adoption of First Nations children. There is a clear line from the genocide of the past to the contemporary push for adoption. Adoption as a policy has been tried before; the horrific results are detailed in the Bringing Them Home report. First Nations children need to grow up within their culture, with their families and communities. This is how well-being and stability are ensured, not by removing children from their families and communities (Grandmothers Against Removals, 2018, p. 3).

First Nations communities have been pioneers in adopting community development strategies to address violence (Ife & Tesoriero, 2006). Community development in this context is about raising awareness about oppressive structures whilst essentially including an analysis of

power to ensure their human rights are heard (Ife & Tesoriero, 2006). Community development starts 'where the people are' (Campbell et al, 2007), ensuring local communities determined what is needed and how this is delivered. Programs such as Women out West was an example of this type of community development to achieve broad social action program (Women's Legal Resources Centre, 1992). First Nations and non-First Nations women joined forces to visit communities and townships in Western NSW in the late 80s and early 90s. Their mandate was to gather information about First Nations women's experiences of system violence, sexual assault and family violence (Women's Legal Resources Centre, 1992). Another example of this 'frontier work' was the Queensland Taskforce on Family Violence in First Nations Communities in 2000. The Chairwoman, Bonnie Robertson, concluded that feminist approaches to family violence were partial and needed to be more mindful of the socio-political history of First Nations communities (Robertson, 2000).

These previous reports and research provide guidance for the development of human service approaches to effectively support First Nations women, children and communities. Existing research identifies the importance of considering the socio political history of Australia and its implications for First Nations generations.

2.5 An alternative view – incorporating principles of First Nations Worldview into Service delivery

The extent of violence and trauma in First Nations communities in NSW demands a new way of doing business. Current programs appear unable to respond adequately to the immense social issues experienced by First Nations communities (Bennett, Green, Gilbert, & Bessarb, 2013). First Nations people who are in contact with human services are clearly in need of adequate and basic client focused support. This lack of access to human services that provide appropriate, safe and relevant support cascades into higher rates of incarceration (Krieg, 2006). In this section of the chapter key ideas on practice in human services and practice development strategies in relation to providing support to First Nations women, children and communities will be reviewed.

One early model for analysing the cultural proficiency of workers and agencies to support First Nations women, children and communities

experiencing trauma was developed by Terry Cross (1988) in relation to out of home care in the United States. Cross (1988) argued that cultural proficiency is an ongoing process where workers and management collaborate to improve practice with First Nations people and define how they are going to reach this goal. The overall aim of this model was to ensure agencies were fully aware of differences between First Nations clients/service users and non-First National clients/service users and to honour those differences within their service delivery. Cultural proficiency can be validated in the policies and practice delivery of human services according to Cross (1988) across a continuum of cultural competency

Cross expands this further, in terms of a cultural competence continuum:

Cultural Destructiveness	Cultural Incapacity	Cultural Blindness	Cultural Pre-Competence	Advanced Cultural Competence

Cultural Destructiveness consists of attitudes, policies and practices that are destructive to cultures. The three waves of colonization discussed previously created human services provision that were cultural destructive. The model suggests that agencies and workers are not deliberately destructive but may be culturally incapable. Agencies and workers are however biased towards those who are similar to them and services are provided with the paternalistic view that everyone should have the same values and belief system as the dominant culture. Cultural Incapacity can lead agencies and workers to act as agents of oppression through racist, classist, sexist, ageist and homophobia policies and by maintaining stereotypes. Recruitment of staff is also affected greatly by this stage of the continuum. The Culturally Blind agency and workers will assume that everyone is the same and provide services based on this. Cultural Blindness leads to no regard being given to the socio historical and political backgrounds of people and communities. It assumes people will be all on an equal playing field and can led to 'blaming the victims' for their issues. Programs are usually developed from western and white worldview and context and success and failure is measured on this.

There is no opportunity for empowerment as they assume the problems lies within the individual's pathology. According to the Cultural Competence continuum pre-competent agencies accept and respect

difference. They have a greater awareness of socio political and historical backgrounds and provide services accordingly. Research, policy and practice are reflective of this difference. Minority groups are genuinely consulted and as a result are active in developing service delivery. Those agencies and workers with advanced cultural competency possess a deep and sincere appreciation of diversity and culture. They are proactive in conducting research, developing policies and providing ongoing professional development for their staff. They provide affirmative action processes to ensure recruitment is fair and equitable. They are aware of the challenges of diversity and are proactive in talking about the power dynamic within this context. They appreciate the diversity and accommodate the with policies and practice to maintain the evolving and organic nature of cultural competence. They consult widely and to ensure their service provision is desired and receptive (cited in Cross Terry L, 1988). Whilst cultural proficiency marked an important development for improved support for First Nations people the reality of racist notions and ideas within human services need to be considered; and the implications of these practices on First Nations people.

First Nations residents' experiences of racism in Australian is a relatively under-researched area (Osborne, Ziersch, Baum, & Gallaher, 2011). There is very little research on racism among human service agencies or workers, with assumptions made that this would be unintentional. Language, however, is powerful and has the potential to empower, re-empower and dis-empower (Baines, 2011). First Nations groups are often regarded and referred to as socially 'disadvantaged' by human service agencies and workers. This terminology in its essence is insulting and condescending and is usually based on the perceived needs from a white, western privilege perspective. Appropriate and helpful discourse or language is a critical component of cultural safety, which is essential in making services and workers accessible for First Nations people. First Nations people are usually labelled and defined by well-intentioned non-First Nations social workers, health professionals and service providers (Bennett et al., 2013). Often these workers have little or no understanding of their privileges as a non-First Nations and often, white worker.

The concept of 'white privilege' has emerged more recently in discussions about practice with First Nations peoples in various national contexts such as Canada, United States and New Zealand. This concept

has some similarities with the cultural blindness stage identified earlier by Cross (1988). White privilege can be understood as a Framework that being is not questioned and thus, becomes a , standard way of being (Briskman, 2007). Tannoch Bland expands this view to include white privilege as being invisible and derived from the historic dispossession of First Nations peoples:

> White Australia's privilege in this country is based on past acts – all white Australians live here because of past actions of murder, massacres, poisoning, torture, dispossession, internment, enslavement and genocide (Tannoch Bland, 1998, P. 1).

Crenshaw (1993) advocate for human services to be mindful and responsive to the intersections of power (advantage/disadvantage) that affect clients, particularly women of colour:

> The fact that minority women suffer from the effects of multiple subordination, coupled with institutional expectations based on inappropriate non-intersectional contexts, shapes and ultimately limits the opportunities for meaningful intervention on their behalf (Crenshaw, 1993, p. 1251).

Moreton Robinson (2006), a leading First Nations writer in Australia, argues that whilst Australian women may be classed, sexualized, aged or abled they are always imagined as white: "White women are not represented to themselves as being white; instead they position themselves as variously classed, sexualised, aged and abled" (p. 246).

One of the many challenges facing human service workers is the lack of contact they have with First Nations people prior to meeting them as 'clients' (Walter, Taylor, & Habibis, 2011). Many non-First Nations people have grown up without ever having regular contact with Indigenous people (Tannoch Bland, 1998) and the issues they face on a daily basis. Those workers either consciously or unconsciously relied on the media for information to form their understandings of First Nations people. The media usually portrays First Nations people as a negative construct, drawing on the notion of terra nullius to maintain propaganda and sensationalized news. Sensationalising, stereotypical, portrayal of First Nations people (and others) further traumatized the 'victims', creating a trauma vortex. Herring and colleagues argue that a desire for cultural contact is a key to

developing better human services for First Nations peoples (Herring, Spangaro, Lauw, & McNamara, 2012). The media is often quiet is powerful in terms of changing the views of people generally and specifically in terms of First Nations people and community. They have capacity to promote promote healing, but are rarely seen to do this.

Human service agencies and workers face an enormous challenge providing support for First Nations women, children and communities who have experienced trauma. Reflection and research are important to the development and implementation of services that are reflective of a First Nations worldview. First Nations people are within their right to demand a more effective support. The challenge is now upon human service agencies to delivery support that reflects historical experiences within a trauma-informed approach. This will be without any doubt very different to responses from a western paradigm and discourse.

First Nations people have done extremely well to maintain their identity through barbaric treatment by those in power. The socio-political and historical status of Australian First Nations populations provides us with first and foremost direction that we need to approach this group differently and from a First Nations Worldview: Poonwassie and Charter found similar issues in Canada, “An understanding of traditional worldviews and cultural, and particularly those who work First Nations clients, is an important step towards de-colonization and facilitation of empowerment” (Poonwassie & Charter, 2001, P. 64).

2.6 Decolonisation

Colonisation is at the core of First Nations oppression and current inequity. From the onset of Invasion the British colonised First Nations peoples and their lands. First Nations societies “were seen and continue to be seen in the beliefs that Aboriginal people need to be civilised, saved and controlled” (Green & Baldry, 2012, p. 171). The waves of colonisation as noted by Korff (2020) involve the measured and calculated actions to take over and maintain control of the peoples and their countries. Unacknowledged and unlawful requisition of country and the indoctrination of another spirit teaching are example of colonial constructs. British Colonialism within First Nations history is the invasion and taking over of a place and peoples by and alien culture. This was achieved by mandated policies and oppressive practices, over two centuries of colonial rule. The

absolute oppression of First Nations worldviews; their epistemology, ways of knowing, their ontology – ways of being and their axiology – their ways of doing.

It therefore makes perfect sense for First Nations peoples to establish themselves on revolutionary path of re-discovery and emancipation, by maintaining their Worldview and reclaiming what is missing from their Worldview. This process of re-discovery and emancipation embraces a determination to slowly and succinctly resist the Colonial Worldview. Revolutionary in this context is about social change and ongoing resistance. This process is not simply about immediate change it is a considered thought and planning process. Zubrzycki and Crawford (2012) argue that "decolonisation undoes the pernicious effects of colonisation" (p. 192).

Decolonising involves maintaining First Nations narratives around colonisation through truth telling and initiate narratives that counter these ways: "the future of white social work in Australia will depend on how we address the violence of colonisation" (Walter and Baltra-Ulloa, 209, p. 75). The process of decolonising is and continues to be about listening about other truths. It is time for non-First nations social workers to engage without fear of other truths, about the socio political and historical contexts of invasion and the colonial constructs that followed.

Thriving for emancipation from Western colonialist and colonising Worldview can be understood as First Nations people's right to social justice, actioned for liberation. It encompasses a constant consciousness raising educational processes to transform ones thinking and ultimately ways of being. It is a process of reclamation of one's right, of one's tribal Worldview. This process enables reclaiming what was taken, our Worldview that has maintained and provided protection, guidance, support and nurturing of First Nations people for over 650000 years on this land.

Martin (2008) reflects on First Nations or Indigenous Academics capacities' to define emancipation in this context. They consider the theory of post colonialism. Post colonialism in this context relates to reclaiming worldviews through validating our epistemology, ontology and axiology. Martin calls for Indigenous academics to interrogate colonialism in all its forms (Martin, 2008). Aboriginal post-colonialism is estimated as a paradigm that not only challenges existing colonial structures and holds

these to account (Martin, 2008). Aboriginal post – colonialism is where First Nations realities are validated.

Laenui (2000), a First Nations person from the United States, theorises that First Nations people experience five phases (rediscovery and recovery; mourning; dreaming; commitment; action) when going through a decolonising process, noting that "like the steps of colonization, these phases of decolonization do not have clear demarcations between each other" (p. 2). These phases are linked to overwhelming feelings of grief to feelings of enlightenment or empowering and determination. In a similar vein in the New Zealand context, Tuhiwai Smith (1999) defines decolonising as centring our Worldviews and then becoming to know and understand theory and research from our perspective for our purpose.

A critical aspect of the decolonising process is that we must understand that every single Aboriginal person at different levels are directly affected by separation policies, practices and the laws (Martin, 2008). The legacy is felt today and can be identified within the context of inter-generational and trans-generational trauma (Atkinson, 2012). It is crucial that decolonising processes are defined where First Nations people can make informed decisions about how they process their feelings and thoughts around this.

Decolonising, post-colonial or anti colonial practice are not new paradigms. There has been resistance to colonialism initially on invasion in 1788. Resistance has taken many forms, from direct action (the Tent Embassy) to political participation (the 1967 Referendum). Resistance has also taken place in the human services sector, reflecting broader community activism. Demands for self-determination and civil rights in the mid-1900s saw the development of community-controlled Aboriginal organisations like Aboriginal Medical Centres, Aboriginal Legal Centres, Aboriginal Child Care Centres and education institutions like Tranby (Herring & Spangaro, 2019):

> This was the basis of practice that saw the birth of Aboriginal organisations such as the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation, the Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care, the Aboriginal and Islander child-care agencies and the Indigenous Social Workers Association (Fejo-King , 2014, p. 63).

Decolonising processes directly oppose and challenge the oppressive ideas and beliefs constructed by colonisation. Within social work practice and human service agencies decolonising involves deconstructing the systems of oppression through construction of social justice methods (Bennett et al., 2013). Social justice methods in practice enables social workers and human service workers to be agents for social change. Social change emancipates First Nations people to reclaim their Worldviews. This involves practice that prioritises the goals of First Nations people and a commitment to listening to understand the experiences of First Nations groups (Bennett et al., 2013).

Decolonising practice is regarded as essential process for professionals and social workers, irrespective of who they are working with. It needs to be sound and embedded practice. These are central to any strategy of self-determination and cultural responsiveness. Decolonisation aims for human service workers to deconstruct old ways of knowing and (re)construct honest and truthful narratives (Zubrzycki & Crawford, 2012). It requires human service workers to have the capacity to analyse power relationships and be prepared to decolonise their practice perspectives. This includes critiquing ideas and beliefs of privilege and the implications of this on the experiences of power, what is power, how do we use power are guides to support consciousness raising among our colleagues and our clients or service users (Herring et al., 2012). For human service workers decolonising involves recognising that history matters; reconstructing practice for new legacies of truth, hope and transformation to empowerment (Zubrzycki & Crawford, 2012). Structurally, human service agencies have sought to decolonise through establishment of governance structures that ensure Aboriginal voices are central to decision making such as the NSW Aboriginal Communities Matter Advisory Group. In addition to direct work with individual clients or service users, decolonising involves critiquing policies and practices to see how colonialism is intertwined and reinforced.

2.7 Trauma-Informed Practice

The nature of institutional and interpersonal trauma affecting First Nations people's lives are inextricably linked to colonial and historical experiences. As noted elsewhere in this thesis colonisation impacted greatly on the whole way of life of First Nations peoples. This ultimately

affected and, in most situations, distorted our Worldview notably our spiritual and healing epistemology. First Nations people were prevented by government policies and the indoctrination of Christian religious teachings from practicing and teaching our spiritual and healing ways (Wilson, 2008). The colonial or colonising experiences in fact is an experience of trauma. Accordingly, the Healing Foundation (a national Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisation that partners with communities to address the ongoing trauma caused by actions like the forced removal of children from their families) has justly defined this as great suffering: “The greatest suppression of spirituality and healing seems to have occurred at times of great suffering” (McKendrick, Brooks, Hudson, Thorpe & Bennett, 2015, p. 13).

This suppression has occurred at times and periods when spirituality and healing was most needed. The impact has an ongoing effect on First Nations people, families and communities today. It is for this reason that knowledge of the experience of First Nations people of institutional and interpersonal trauma is critical amongst human services workers, including its definition, nature, characteristics, extent and prevalence (Herring et al, 2012).

Trauma is defined as a serious psychological experience, that encompasses a serious injury or shock to the body, experienced from violence or an accident (Herman, 2015). This definition of trauma is broad. It includes responses to powerful one-time incidents like accidents, natural disasters, crimes, surgeries, deaths, and other violent events. It also includes responses to chronic or repetitive experiences such as child abuse, neglect, combat, urban violence, concentration camps, battering relationships, and enduring deprivation. This definition intentionally does not allow us to determine whether a particular event is traumatic; that is up to each survivor (Herman, 2015).

Traumatic experience can be defined as one single event or a prolonged event. Single event are one off events; an accident, car accident, house fire, bush fire, or floods. The individual experiences a (subjectivity) threat to life, bodily integrity, or sanity (Pearlman & Saakvitne, 1995, p. 60; Sober Recovery Organisation, 2010). An emotional wound or shock that creates substantial, lasting damage to the psychological development of a persona which without healing support, often can lead to neurosis and/or psychosis. Stress reactions can be both psychological and physiological. Traumatic events refers to an extreme stress that

overwhelms a person's ability to cope. The event is known to cause great distress and disruption to their lives. The cognitive and thought responses are life changing as it filters through to physical, behavioural and interpersonal responses (Cloitre et al., 2009). As is evident from this description, the psychological literature and research on 'trauma' strongly focuses on the individual experience of trauma. Tseris (2019) critiques this individualising tendency in theorising and responding to trauma arguing that this construction of trauma shapes human service agencies responses to survivors, their experience of the events and conditions of his/her life.

'Trauma-informed practice' has emerged over the past decade as a priority for some human service agencies and workers, reflecting the greater awareness of the extent and significance of trauma on people. Funston (2019) identified a number of principles that commonly appear in Western 'trauma-informed practice' models (p. 23), including: the provision of a physically and emotionally safe environment; sharing power with clients or service users accessing the service in order to maximise clients or service users choice and control over service decisions that affect their lives; ensuring a culturally safe service; ensuring communication is open and respectful; and, practice that aims to support the goals, strengths and interests of people accessing the service. The impact of trauma on human services workers has also been identified, understood as the risk of vicarious trauma (Bloom & Farragher, 2011). Bloom and Farragher (2011) describes those working in the trauma field as vulnerable to feeling 'hopeless', 'helpless', 'hyper aroused', 'overwhelmed' and 'confused' (p. 3). Many human service agencies recognize the risk of vicarious trauma and often includes training, education and supervision of human service workers in their 'trauma-informed practice' models (Funston, 2019).

The experiences of First Nations people is best understood as being complex, compounded and cumulative trauma. Compounded trauma relates to experiencing trauma events that occur whilst the person is recovering from other personal and psychological events. Thus those experiences then compound on current experiences of trauma and potentially the burden of passing onto trans- or inter-generational generations. Cumulative trauma is defined as being exposed to multiple traumas and therefore associated with more complex symptoms (Cloitre et al., 2009). As mentioned previously, domestic and/or family violence, sexual assault and child abuse is unfortunately highly prevalent. Human service agencies and workers need to be mindful of the complex,

compounded and cumulative trauma experiences of First Nations people in their practice.

The phenomenon of intergenerational and or trans-generational trauma is one of the most insidious aspects of colonialism that is currently impacting on the hopes and aspirations of contemporary First Nations people (Herring et al., 2012). Intergenerational and transgenerational trauma happens when the effects of historical trauma are not resolved in one generation and passed on to the next generation. In colonial contexts such as Canada and Australia where the experiences of trauma have been denied or ignored at both a personal, institutional and political level trauma then is passed from one generation to the next (Wesley-Esquimaux, 2004). Atkinson (2002) defines intergenerational trauma as passed down directly from one generation to the next and trans-generational trauma as transmitted across a number of generations. Herman (2015) concurs; intergenerational trauma involves the transmission of experiences memories, emotions and lived experiences are passed on unconsciously to subsequent generations within families.

In recent decades the Healing Foundation found Australian First Nations, not unlike other first International First Nations peoples, have been striving to heal themselves from the impacts of historical and present-day traumas (McKendrick et al., 2015). Trauma – is an event or process which overwhelms the individual, family or community, and the ability to cope in mind, body, soul and spirit, which ultimately encompasses one's worldview, their epistemology – ways of knowing, ontology – their ways of being and their axiology their ways of doing. In most instances the effects of colonisation have had great impacts on worldviews in every essence.

The nature of trauma brings a broad array of feelings; that consist of confusion, feelings that are painful and often brings feelings of shame. There is a sense of 'why did it happen to me', and this is closely linked to feelings of blame where victims feel overwhelming feelings of blame and shame. Trauma expert Judith Herman (2015) argues that telling the truth about terrible events is perquisites both for the restoration of the social order and for healing of individual experiences of terror.

Human service agencies have a responsibility to provide safety for those who have experienced institutional and interpersonal trauma to share their stories of pain and loss. Pain and loss in this context is often considered experiences of trauma and most cases those experiences are

defined as tragic and traumatic experiences. The client's sacred stories of pain, loss and grief is the guide in which human services need to strategically design and develop their practice.

2.8 First Nations Human Service Workforce development

Developing and supporting human service practice to respond to First Nations women, children and communities who have experienced institution and interpersonal violence is a priority. NSW Health is committed to creating an environment that is culturally safe; in fact they state: "spiritually, socially, emotionally and physically safe" for Aboriginal people. They are committed to achieving cultural competency for all NSW Health Professional who engage with First Nations people and their communities (NSW Health Ministry, 2016). This section details training and education opportunities targeting the Aboriginal Health workforce. The Aboriginal Workforce Strategic Framework 2016 – 2020 outlines their commitment to First Nations health and wellbeing. There targets are to increase First Nations participation in NSW Ministry Health and their partners through key priority areas;

1. Lead and Plan Aboriginal Workforce Development
2. Build Cultural Understanding and Respect
3. Attract, Recruit and Retain Aboriginal staff
4. Develop the capabilities of Aboriginal staff
5. Work with others to achieve workforce priorities
6. Track our achievements and improve results (NSW Health Ministry, 2016)

New South Wales' Education Centre Against Violence (ECAV) has played a significant role in the development of culturally safe professional development and education for First Nations students as outlined in the key priority area. The Research Participants of this study successfully graduated from the ECAV Aboriginal Qualification pathway. The rationale for selection criteria was that graduates from the ECAV Aboriginal Qualifications pathway had received training and education that sought to empower practitioners to provide historically contextualised and culturally affirming practice when supporting First Nations people, families and

communities experiencing interpersonal violence, sexual assault and child abuse.

ECAV is a state-wide delivery site within NSW Health Registered Training Organisation (RTO). ECAV's role is to develop professional development training for NSW Ministry of Health – Health Professionals covering subjects relating to definitions, extent, characteristics, impacts and effects of family violence, domestic violence, sexual assault and child maltreatment; emotional abuse, physical abuse and neglect of children and young people. ECAV play an active role in national and state legislative and policy development pertaining to family violence, domestic violence, sexual abuse and child abuse. ECAV is a significant training institution with over one hundred continuing and casual staff, both First Nations women and men. Graduate statistics as at 2018 demonstrate the importance of ECAV in the training and development of the First Nations workforce:

- Over 300 graduates from one or more of the three pathway courses
- 17 years of provision of the Certificate IV Aboriginal Family Health (Family Violence, Sexual Assault & Child Protection)
- 7 years of provision of the Advanced Diploma Aboriginal Specialist Trauma Counselling Course with 52 graduates
- 4 years of provision of the Graduate Certificate in Human and Community Services delivery with 25 graduates (Inca Consulting, 2018).

2.9 Historical context

The 1984 the NSW Child Sexual Assault Taskforce provided chilling information demanding the NSW Government to rethink and plan better responses to sexual assault. The Taskforce called for a major overhaul of services following extensive consultations, including a series of public hearings involving victims and their families, the community, health services, academics, criminal justice and other relevant sectors.

The final report prepared by the task force included 65 recommendations aimed at improving responses to victims of child sexual abuse. Recommendations included the need to implement a community child sexual abuse education program; to ensure that representatives of

services involved with victims of child sexual abuse have the necessary skill sets and education, and to expand mandatory reporting laws to include additional professions (Boxall, Tomison, & Hulme, 2014)

The Government's response to the Taskforce finding and recommendations included the establishment of sexual assault services in hospitals across the State. Following soon after in 1985 was the funding of training and professional development delivery centre, initially called the Women's Health and Sexual Assault Education Unit (this later became the ECAV). The Women's Health and Sexual Assault Education Unit started with three workers; one manager and two educators (Laing, 2015). Their primary role is to consult, design, develop, implement and deliver child sexual assault training to Sexual Assault workers working within NSW Sexual Assault Services. This training aimed to extend practitioners knowledge of the definition, extent, prevalence and characteristics of child sexual assault including offender power, tactics and grooming victims. Since its establishment the scope of its work has extended to cover domestic and family violence, child neglect and adult sexual assault. The Centre grew with new and increased funding which extended to more specialist fields within the health system including mental health, alcohol and other drugs, disability and other primary health services. The Centre is located in the heart of Dharug country in Westmead.

Within the training and education provided by ECAV Cultural and Linguistically Diverse Communities and Australian First Nations people, families and communities are targeted due to their marginalisation from mainstream. ECAV's work is supported by the Aboriginal Community Matters Advisory Group, a reference group of experienced First Nations practitioners and community advocates. During the mid 1980s ECAV recruited the first Aboriginal Identified educator. This worker identified gaps and provided feedback to ECAV on how they can better access First Nations people, families and communities. ECAV responded with casual contract for more first Nations workers. These workers were in definition frontier workers. In fact they visited First Nations communities across NSW raising awareness about taboo subjects like domestic violence, sexual assault and child maltreatment. The trainers provided education and awareness of domestic violence, sexual assault and child abuse to communities that were dealing with those issues regularly. They visited remote, rural and regional communities. The training participants were a

mix of health workers, community workers, education, land councils, housing, support and legal as well as community people.

ECAV played a vital role in the development of the NSW Aboriginal Family Health Strategy which set the framework for practice and policy development in relation to supporting First Nations women, children and communities experiencing institutional and interpersonal trauma. The vision of the Strategy was "that all Aboriginal people in NSW live safe and healthy lives free of family violence" (NSW Health, 2008, p. 5). This Strategy included specific goals, including:

- Reduce the incidence and impact of family violence in Aboriginal communities.
- Build the capacity and strength of individuals and communities to prevent, respond to, and recover from, family violence.
- Nurture the spirit, resilience and cultural identity that build Aboriginal families (NSW Health, 2008)

These goals led to the adoption of an Aboriginal Family Health Care Model, where the foundations of Aboriginal Culture and family are core elements and are based on healing approach. The Strategy included: strategic leadership; effective service delivery; culturally competent workforce; and strong community capacity (NSW Health, 2008). ECAV continues to play a vital role in workforce development through their Aboriginal Qualifications Pathway which includes:

1. Certificate IV Aboriginal Family Health (Family Violence, Sexual Assault & Child Protection) (implemented since 2001)

   Course content:

   Explore how power and control are used at a historical, political, social, cultural and personal level. Implications of power and control for work in domestic and family violence, sexual assault, and child physical abuse and neglect in Aboriginal communities

   Participants will have the opportunity to gain skills in: Knowledge and understanding of grief and loss within an Aboriginal world view; Knowledge and understanding of trauma-informed care within an Aboriginal world view, Theories behind work in domestic and family violence, sexual assault, and child

physical abuse and neglect and the implications of these for work in Aboriginal communities

2. Advanced Diploma of Aboriginal Specialist Trauma Counselling (implemented since 2011)

   Course content:

   Advanced Diploma of Aboriginal Specialist Trauma Counselling aims to develop specialist skills within an Aboriginal Healing Framework to respond to Aboriginal Individuals, families and communities affected by a history of trauma such as adult and child sexual assault, family violence and child abuse and neglect.

3. Graduate Certificate in Human and Community Services (Interpersonal Trauma) (implemented since 2013)

   Course content:

4. Graduate Certificate in Human and Community Services combines policy practice and research in the human and community service industry. The program aims to graduate critically reflective and skilled practitioners for the health and community services sector and other fields of practice.

Evaluations of ECAV training noted the importance of First Nations people being involved in the design, development and delivery of training (INCA Consulting, 2018, p. 10). Students noted that ECAV education "differs from other mainstream education and training programs in that it allows participant to learn and develop skills within a culturally safe space" (INCA Consulting, 2018, p. 10).

ECAV educational approach encompasses aspects of andragogy, the art and science of helping adults learn (Knowles, 1980). Learning theories apply to the teaching and facilitation of new knowledge for adult learners. This makes the learning environment dynamic in every sense of the word. Managing the dynamic nature of learning environment where everyone's learning is different is challenging. Cultural safety is negotiated and learning styles of participants are considered and acted on. All participant and trainers have this common understanding of each class that the learning environment needs to be safe in every essence. Cultural safety in the sense that is where everyone feels safe to articulate their thoughts, strengths, understandings and fears (Terare, 2019). Developing

a safe learning environment is exceptionally critical when working with marginalised groups who have had oppressive historical experiences. Developing cultural safety, whilst considering and honouring the profound difference in realities created by politics of race and class (hooks, 1994) in the learning environment, is essential for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous students cohort/s (Terare, 2019). Privileging students voices in the learning environment is way forward to emancipatory education and offers self-determining learning opportunities (Rigney, 2001). Importantly from an education perspective, Eades (2000) observed that language usage is a site of misunderstanding and "that silence achieves certain functions for First Nations speakers which are non-familiar to non-First Nations speakers" (p. 163).

The training provided by ECAV is trauma-informed, strength based and considers the socio political and historical context of First Nations people. This makes the graduates from the ECAV Aboriginal Qualifications pathway ideal for exploring how to support First Nations women, children and communities who have experienced institutional and interpersonal trauma. As a result the ECAV courses

> have a high retention rate; there is a high level of employment amongst graduates; the courses are designed to meet industry needs; and the pathway facilitates a conduit to tertiary education for Aboriginal students who have a very low university participation rate (INCA Consulting, 2018, p. 8).

This literature review clearly articulates the journey of survival of First Nations people, who over the past 200+ years have relied on their capacity to function whilst under complete duress and within oppressive and often racist institutions. The attempted genocidal approaches which incorporates waves of colonization and the resulting acculturative stress has played a monumental and significant role in the current status of First Nations people and their communities.

Chapter 3. Methodology

This chapter details the methodological framework of this study. In undertaking research with First Nations people in relation to supporting those within our community who have experienced institutional and interpersonal trauma I wish to acknowledge the profound responsibility this carries. This is not merely 'another research study'. Accordingly, this chapter commences with a discussion of the philosophical stance taken in this study, arguing for the perfect 'fit' of Indigenous Research Methodologies for the purpose of this study. In reality the decisions about the research methodology emerged overtime through a natural organic process. The methodology emerged from connections and relatedness that have underpinned principles of my epistemology, ontology and axiology and the influences of these ways of being doing and knowing have had on my research processes. In this way, reflexivity guided the research process, enabling and building new knowledge. The reflexive nature of the study allowed me to acknowledge and define my epistemology, axiology and ontology whilst honouring and privileging others' epistemology, axiology and ontology. The practicalities of the study – ethics, recruitment, data collection, data analysis – are also discussed in this chapter.

Australia has up to 649,200 First Nations people (as per last census). That is 649,200 First Nations People who have their own cultural and national identity. That is 649,200 ways of being First Nations. Therefore their epistemology, axiology and ontology are also unique, diverse and different. The social colonial construction of First Nations people post 1788 also influences on contemporary identity. The fusion of different spirit teachings is also evident.

3.1 Indigenous Research Methodologies

Indigenous research methodologies are organic, responding to the dynamic processes through which Worldviews are formed. This creates challenges for both researchers and research participants. For participants, Indigenous research methodologies seek to connect individuals to the ontology or their Worldview. Their ontology informs and often validates their epistemology and axiology. All research at different

levels is guided or influenced by values (Wadsworth, 1998). It is therefore assumed that Research Participants can expect to be treated with utmost respect for their individuality and to partake in the development of rights from a collective perspective aligned to Aboriginal Worldview of kinship connections and circle work.

Indigenous Research Methodologies have the potential to enhance Aboriginal ways of being as outlined by individuals, by ensuring the human rights of Aboriginal people are upheld by avoiding some of the criticisms made of past health research as identified by Baum and colleagues including:

> (1) Indigenous people being exploited and treated disrespectfully, (2) research processes that see non-Indigenous researchers and research bodies retain all the power and control, (3) the lack of specified short and long term benefits to Indigenous people and communities, and (4) the misrepresentation of Indigenous societies, cultures, and persons by non-Indigenous academics and professionals (Baum, MacDougall, & Smith, 2006, p. 855).

Indigenous Research Methodologies have been chosen for this study to specifically reinforce the rights of First Nations people to reconnect with their Worldview.

The aim of this research was to give First Nations participants a voice that is informed by their Indigenous ontology; more specifically the way they see the world and what is real in their world. It also sought to understand Research Participants' epistemology, or how they are thinking about their realities, set of beliefs, morals their axiology, their belief system (Wilson, 2001). This process resonated with the proactive nature of my tribal essence as a Bundjalung and Goenpul woman. This commitment to 'voice' is a form of resistance to those research methods that are located in western epistemology and a commitment to ongoing decolonization and emancipation with the intention of reclaiming of tribal epistemology, ontology and axiology. Rigney affirms by using an Indigenous methodological framework within research means pushing boundaries "Indigenous research is carried out by Indigenous Australians whose primary informants are Indigenous Australians and whose goals are to serve and inform the Indigenous liberation struggle ot be free of oppression and to gain power" (Rigney, 1999, p. 118). Rigney articulates a set of

interrelated principles informing his notion of Indigenist research: resistance as the emancipatory imperative, political integrity and the privileging of Indigenous voices (Rigney, 1999). It is, as mentioned earlier, critical for this research to consider the implications of colonization and acts of genocide and therefore focus on the implications of Australia's history and treatment of Aboriginal people since the declaration of Terra Nullius which allowed the European colonial power to take control of the 'empty' country. In adopting a design informed by Indigenous Research Methodology this study teased out the processes that have supported the survival of Aboriginal people throughout onslaught of two centuries of genocide, colonization and oppression as a result of Terra Nullius.

Indigenous Research Methodologies 'fit' the purpose of the study as they have similarities with principles underpinning Aboriginal Worldview: connections, relationality and reciprocity for caring for flora and fauna. The use of culturally safe research methodologies is therefore critical, in terms of supporting and maintaining Aboriginal emancipation. Similar to Shawn Wilson (2001), Rigney argues: "Aboriginal people now want research and their designs to support their self-determination and their liberation struggles as defined and controlled by their communities" (Rigney, 1999, p. 109).

Consequently this research is guided by understandings of socio political and historical of contemporary Aboriginal peoples. The Indigenous context of knowledge production and research methodologies is about countering racism and including Indigenous knowledge and experiences for Indigenous emancipation (Rigney, 1999). Developing safety within the research domain by addressing power and privilege are significant and critical components of Indigenous and Reflexive Research methods.

3.2 Enabling participation: creating safety for research participants

As mentioned prior in this thesis, Research Participants in this study are working in occupations that deal with preventing and responding to institutional and interpersonal trauma and its impacts on Aboriginal families and communities. All have successfully completed the Education Centre Against Violence Aboriginal Qualification pathway comprising of the 10619 NAT Certificate IV in Aboriginal Family Wellbeing and Violence Prevention

Work and the 10634 NAT Advanced Diploma of Aboriginal Specialist Trauma Counselling. Accordingly, the Research Participants were well placed to explore if and how the practice of First Nations workers (Aboriginal family violence counsellors, men and women business yarning circle facilitators, advocacy and community development workers and educators) draws on Aboriginal Worldviews in their work with clients who have experienced adverse traumatic institutional and interpersonal trauma as children, young peoples and adults.

What we know from history is that Aboriginal people endured negative experiences and culturally unsafe research processes, and often, oppressive research has led to Frist Nations Peoples having limited or no confidence in or being part of research projects either as target groups or as researchers. Indigenous researchers like Ungunmerr noted,

> that inappropriate and insensitive research has led to a continuing oppression and subordination of Indigenous Australians in every facet of Australian society to the point that there is no-where that we can stand that is free of racism (cited in Rigney, 1999, p. 15).

Anecdotal yarning tells us that our families and communities or First Nations people were commonly researched via western constructs, these research methods were guided by principles based on western knowledge which usually did not acknowledge other worldviews. Kendall concurs: “western ways of knowing fail to fully reflect the needs of Indigenous communities” (Kendall, Sunderland, Barnett, Nalder, & Matthews, 2011 p 1719). Indigenous Research Methodologies allow the researcher and Research Participants to sit as one to listen, validate and honour their experiences collectively.

Moreton-Robinson and Walter argue that

> Indigenous methodologies are a vigorous and active field of knowledge production, which involves Indigenous peoples from Australia and around the world, applying their own lenses, perspectives and understandings to social research and methodologies (2009, p. 2).

Historically, research has been used as a tool to maintain oppression and power over Aboriginal people. These facts need to be

considered when planning research with Indigenous communities and their people.

Moreton-Robinson also argues that: “Aborigines have been represented as objects – as the known, rarely are seen as subjects – as knowers” (2004, p. 75). Tuhiwai-Smith affirms this realization arguing that the “West have extracted and claimed ownership of our ways of knowing, our imagery, the things we create and produce” (Tuhiwai-Smith, 1999, p. 54). Research outcomes were based on the belief that Western/White ways are superior. It is often thought by Aboriginal people that the term “research is inextricably linked to European imperialism and colonisation” which consisted of acts of extreme paternalistic approaches based on western context and white privilege and example of this power abuse; “skulls of first nations people were filled with millet to measure capacity of mental thought” (Tuhiwai-Smith, 1999, p. 1).

Excitedly there have been First Nations researchers who have developed new models of research now recognized and described as Indigenous research methodologies. The new method has been around for bit over a decade and was motivated by those First Nations Researchers who were pursuing new ways of gathering information based on individuals Worldviews. The intent of these pioneering researchers was to avoid making the same mistakes of colonial and oppressive researchers. Indigenous Research Methods in this case arises from a critique and is in contrast to other research methods.

Indigenous Research methods is relatively new and as a result attracts attention from others – non-Indigenous academics – and sometimes critiqued from this perspective. These critiques highlight the dangers of essentializing Indigenous people (Hill, 2014) Whilst acknowledging these dangers in this study Indigenous Research Methodologies aim to support epistemological, ontological and axiological de-colonization. Through reflexivity the self is multiple, becoming and unfixed (Moreton-Robinson & Walter, 2009). Indigenous Research Methodologies have been designed for and by First Nation people to ensure their epistemologies, ontologies and axiology are both respected and validated. Especially within the context of Worldviews to apply a colonial critique on Indigenous knowledges from non-Indigenous scholars is somewhat ironic and questionable.

In the context of Indigenous Research Methodologies it is expected that the researcher has extensive knowledge of socio political and historical context of First Nation peoples with regard to research experiences, and ultimately will implement strategies to avoid making the same mistakes. The researcher is guided by the wisdoms of fellow First Nations Researchers and reinforce the philosophy and values of (Rigney, 1999). From an Indigenous Research Methodologies perspective the production of knowledge seeks to counter racism and include Indigenous knowledge for emancipation purposes. The adoption of this approach demands that the researcher facilitates cultural safety, validate oral and creative feedback. It is with this mantra of cosmos emancipation foremost in mind I implemented cultural safety process with every yarning circle and individual one-on-one yarn ups. This strategy was to support Research Participants to identify power with the intent of eliminating those disempowering dynamics and to ensure they have a sense of ownership and feel safe and secure – safe and secure to find and use their big voice about things that are important to them.

Whilst my Worldview as a Bundjalung and Goenpul woman influenced my decision to select Indigenous Research Methodologies this carried some risk. My closeness to the research topic and Research Participants meant it was critical to ensure I maintained reflexivity to ensure my ideas, views and experiences did not overwhelm the Research Participants' ideas and views. In this way I enhanced Indigenous Research Methodologies with reflexivity. I chose the rigour and philosophy of Indigenous Research and Reflexivity Methodologies to guide my research practice and cognitive processing in the hope of contributing to better support of First Nations women, children and communities experiencing institutional and interpersonal trauma.

As noted earlier, Indigenous Research Methodologies allow the researcher and Research Participants to sit as one to listen, validate and honour their experiences collectively. Indigenous Research methodologies provided the opportunity to gather rich data and for the participants to collaborate in meaning making through culturally safe ceremony or yarning circles or individual yarn ups. This research approach reaffirms the roles and responsibilities of all involved as self-determined. In this way, the meaning made through the yarning becomes a form of 'giving back' participants (reciprocity), allowing greater control over their stories (findings in the more traditional research paradigm) and encouraging

Research Participants to play a significant role in the dissemination and use of those findings.

My decision to adopt Indigenous Research Methodologies in this study followed an initial interest in Participatory Action Research methods (PAR). Indigenous Research Methodologies has many principles in common with PAR given both are participant focused, underpinned by empowering principles that honour and validate individual worldviews. A fundamental principle of PAR methodology is that participants have power over and in the research process. This critical component fits well with the notion of self-determination. Schnarch defines self-determination within research discourse as opportunity to own, control, access and possess (OCAP) (Schnarch, 2004). Schnarch maintains research with First Nations people and communities as a

> political response to tenacious colonial approaches to research and information management. OCAP has become a rallying cry to many First Nations and should be a wakeup call for researchers. It offers a way out of the muddle of contemporary Aboriginal research and the ethical dilemmas that characterize it (Schnarch, 2004, p. 80).

Another principle of PAR methodology in common with Indigenous Research Methodologies is the focus on raising awareness of historical contexts with the aim of empowering and or re-empowering (Baum et al., 2006). In designing this research project this resonated with my essence as a Bundjalung and Goenpul woman and my passion and purpose to maintain a personal decolonizing process, whilst honouring, respecting and privileging my epistemology, ontology and axiology. This process of reflection led me to think critically about a troubling element of PAR methodology within Western research paradigms: ownership.

As a PhD study in reality I am unable to cede complete ownership of this research to the Research Participants as would be the case if the study was a community-led PAR project. I was uneasy with the PAR principle of ownership being solely with participants as this was not going to be the case. I was concerned that misleading Research Participants about ownership of the research findings and outcomes would replicate a process of colonization and wanted to be absolutely transparent about the ownership of this specific research activity. This process of reflection and critical engagement with the principles that underpin different research

approaches led me to adapt my research design to create a hybrid methodology combining Indigenous Research Methodologies and Reflexivity.

I am forever grateful and sincerely thankful to the wisdoms of Indigenous research pioneers such as Lester-Irabinna Rigney, Shawn Wilson, Karen Martin, Aileen Moreton-Robinson, Linda Tuhiwai -Smith and Margaret Kovach whose wisdom and work brighten my way through a maze of uncertainty and confusion to find place of greater authenticity and order.

3.3 Reflexivity

Reflexivity is a process through which a researcher or practitioner plan, act and reflect (Rix, 2018). Reflexivity assisted the setting up personal structures or strategies to support me to maintain distance and more specifically to set up boundaries around myself which ultimately separated me from the participants. This was to ensure that my consciousness and awareness of my values and beliefs or worldview and that they are intact and therefore, liberated me to hear and listen to the participants reflection on their worldview. This was particularly important for me in this research due my connections with the research topic, my work history and my essence as a First Nations woman.

Reflexivity is a dynamic, organic and an evolving process. It is expected that social workers continually engage in critical reflective processes (Bennett, Green, Gilbert, & Bessarb, 2013) to ensure practice and knowledge is current to maintain professionalism. It is equally important to those undertaking research in the social work and human services field (Fook, 2012).

In undertaking this study, I was aware that the title of ‘researcher’ brings with it status and power and for ‘participants’ this may not always be experienced as empowering. In research as in practice it is essential for us to have a better understanding of privilege, allowing for consciousness around our own privilege (Pease, 2002). Given First Nations peoples histories with oppressive and abusive aspects of research it was likely that many of my participants experience of ‘research’ may have been oppressive and dis-empowering. I was aware and acknowledged that as a Researcher, irrespective of my status as an early career researcher, I

entered the room with power and privilege. Power and privilege framed my role, and privilege was assumed by status enhanced by education within western construct. Additionally, my knowledge of my Worldview and tribal ways created another form of privilege, given the historical contexts of dispossession and genocide in this country where so many First Nations people have 'lost' this knowledge and connection. The colonial myth that all First Nations people are homogenous (all the same) has created complexities for the ways in which First Nations people identify and reclaim their Worldview. Methodologically, this means it is important to acknowledge that with over 300+ Australian First Nation Groups that our Worldviews are diverse (Tindale, 1974). As a researcher I was constantly aware that the backdrop to this study was our colonial history, genocide and dispossession of most Australian First Nations' people (Pease, 2002). In this context, First Nations Research Participants may fear that their voice will not be heard. In doing this research it was critical for the empowerment or re-empowerment of First Nations Research Participants that they felt absolutely safe and secure. Creating safety was vital to establish a strategy that aimed to ensure overall safety for research participants, especially where participants are exploring and sharing worldview; their epistemologies, ontology and axiology. Therefore, the challenge for me as a researcher was to ensure my power and privilege was not misused and that the Research Participants' experiences were productive and empowering.

My experience in planning and undertaking this research was that critical self-reflection or reflexivity is an integral research skill especially where the intention is to emancipate marginalized groups (Bennett et al., 2013). As mentioned in the introduction, my driving motivation was to improve the support available to First Nations women, men, children, young people and communities who have experienced institutional and interpersonal trauma. In this way, my research sought to be emancipatory. The research method sought to give the participants a voice where they could discuss their sacred knowledge and wisdoms about their practice; where they could share their practice links to individual Worldviews; and reflect upon their experiences free from judgment.

Through reflection I realized that the process of making meaning was collaborative and my Worldview was further clarified. Like Rix (2018) the process of this research, informed by Indigenous Research Methodologies and Reflexivity, has become a personal journey of

discovery (Rix, 2018). The discovery established my boundaries – my worldview of where I begin and end. Such a process was critical to the overall rigour of the research that my Worldview did not blur or insidiously impose views onto the participants sacred stories. In actual fact the overall outcome as per the Indigenous Research methods standards is to liberate thinking so I can hear participants' sacred stories of their Worldview. This is also a process of honouring the participants and the researcher's self.

The act of doing this research has great cultural responsibilities and meaning. Indigenous Research Methodologies and Reflexivity are not simply intellectual 'choices'. This stance influenced all aspects of the research process which are discussed in the following sections.

3.4 Formal ethics approval

This research received formal ethics approval from the Aboriginal Health & Medical Research Council (AH&MRC) of NSW Human Research Ethics Committee (Project Application No. 1275) and the University of Sydney Human Ethics Committee (Protocol 2017/396). The AH&MRC ethical guidelines (2018) aim to ensure all human research undertaken with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities:

- respects the shared values of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples
- is relevant for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander priorities, needs and aspirations
- develops long-term ethical relationships among researchers, institutions and sponsors
- develops best practice ethical standards of research.

The AH&MRC identifies six core values that inform ethical research of particular importance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples: spirit and integrity, cultural continuity, equity, reciprocity, respect, and responsibility.

Several specific strategies were used to ensure this research met these expectations. Firstly, the research was undertaken by a Bundjalung woman who shares these core values with other First Nations people. This made the research different from the vast majority of research done 'on' Aboriginal people since colonisation. My starting point here was one of

commitment to our people and our healing. It was not an academic exercise but a profoundly meaningful expression of care. Being an 'insider' to the community being studied is recognised as challenging but the benefits that flowed from my shared experience with participants were immense. Ethically, recruitment was done at an arms-length through the ECAV graduate database. No direct contact was made to potential participants and my social media presence ceased during the recruitment process. An invitation was sent to all graduates on the data base with those interested in participating in the study asked to contact me directly by phone and email. The response from potential participants was enthusiastic with over 20 people contacting me initially to express interest.

The relevance of this study is demonstrated by existing research (presented in the previous chapter). The need for more effective support for First Nations women and children who have experienced institutional and interpersonal trauma is overwhelming. In order to ensure the relevance of the research to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander priorities, needs and aspirations specific approval was also sought from the Elders of Bundjalung country. These Elders provide guidance and have authority to those wishing to work on Bundjalung country, including academics and I sought approval to hold a Yarning Circle on Bundjalung country. I was required to develop a five-minute presentation about the meaningfulness of the study and the potential implications of findings for the Bundjalung people. This was in stark contrast to the administrative ethics process commonly used in University in Australia. It was personally challenging and humbling. The presentation took place on Bundjalung country (Lismore) and following the presentation the Elders asked questions. Without their endorsement of the project this research is unlikely to have proceeded.

Relationships are key to First Nations ways of knowing, doing and being. Accordingly, research with First Nations people should be embedded in relationship. I was guided in my research by a Reference Group comprising representatives from Aboriginal organisations such as LinkUp, Yerin Aboriginal Medical Service (Wyong), Know More Legal Service and the Aboriginal Communities Matter Advisory Group. These organisations have been heavily involved in advocacy and service provision for First Nations people who have experienced institutional and interpersonal trauma. All were invited to participate in the Reference Group to ensure the research responded to the priorities of First Nations people but also to develop long-term ethical relationships among organisations

and researchers. The study also drew on the longstanding relationship with ECAV, which commenced in 2000. Without this relationship with ECAV again the study would not have been possible.

Ensuring objective research approach and to also maintain ethical processes as outlined by AHMRC ethical process, I initiated a research reference committee. The Terms of reference are attached. The members of the reference group were identified as First Nations and were located within community controlled medical service, state-wide counselling service, national link up service and state wide legal service. Even though we were able to meet regularly in the early days of the research, as time went on these meetings were limited as workers roles and responsibilities increased.

The research reference group further supported the project to meet the ethical guidelines of the AH&MRC has implications for future research and develops best practice ethical standards of research among other academics. In my teaching at the University of Sydney I aim to demonstrate to other researchers' ethical research practice, building the capacities of the broader community of scholars in relation to ethical research with Aboriginal people. Drawing on my experience doing this research I have provided master classes on Indigenous Research Methodologies for doctoral students as well undergraduate students.

In addition to these specific strategies to ensure the research meet ethical obligations to First Nations participants the project meet more generalised principles of responsible research conduct (University of Sydney Human Ethics Committee, 2020). These generalized principles of particular relevance to this research were:

a) Honesty in developing, undertaking and reporting research. Throughout this research I have sought to be transparent and open with all involved: institutions and research participants.

b) Rigour in developing, undertaking and reporting research, including underpinning research by an appropriate methodology, acknowledging what might be perceived as 'bias'. This notion of 'bias' is acknowledged as complex for insider research and requires ongoing reflection.

c) Transparency in declaring interests and reporting research methodology, data and findings

d) Fairness in the treatment of others, including appropriately referencing the work of others. Indigenous research is a small academic field and many of the people have connections, creating even greater responsibility for acknowledgement.

e) Respect for research participants, the wider community and the environment. This was demonstrated through care for those involved and the country on which the research was undertaken. Again, in Indigenous research this carries greater responsibility than traditional research.

3.5 Research questions

This thesis sought to unpack how individual workers approached the task of supporting First Nations individuals who had experienced institutional and interpersonal trauma. This was operationalised through a qualitative inquiry based on the following research questions:

1. How do First Nations workers in the trauma field understand their practice?
2. In what ways are these practices shaped by First Nations Worldviews (epistemology, axiology and ontology)?
3. How might practice in the field of trauma and interpersonal trauma be improved?

3.6 Recruitment of Research Participants

As stated earlier the target group for research was Aboriginal Workers who have successfully completed the Education Centre Against Violence (ECAV) Aboriginal Qualifications pathway. I worked collaboratively with ECAV to promote the research. I developed a recruitment package and sent this to ECAV to send out to potential participants. In accordance with the ethical requirements of the University of Sydney and the Aboriginal Health Medical Research Council I did not have access to potential participant information and no direct contact was made by the Researcher to the potential participants. At the time of the Research Project there were 50 people who had graduated from the ECAV Aboriginal Qualification pathway. The recruitment package including a

covering letter and research promotional material. The content of the covering letter provided succinct description of the research and included an invitation if they were interested to initiate contact with the researcher. Out of the 50 graduates 20 made contact expressing interest in participating in the research (suggesting a response rate of 40%), which indicated widespread interest in the research and affirmed the importance of the research focus.

This study was completely voluntary. The information package was very clear assuring potential participants of their rights. Potential participants were assured that their decision would not affect their current or future relationship with the researchers or anyone else at the University of Sydney and Education Centre Against Violence. Participants were free to stop participating at any stage or to refuse to answer any of the questions. Whilst no participant in the Yarning Circle or Yarn ups withdrew or refused to answer questions some asked for pauses. These pauses allowed the Research Participants to sit with their emotions before continuing. These pauses, when understood as Dadirri (Baumann & Wells, 2007), re-enforced cultural safety and allowed new meanings to be created.

Three Yarning Circles were planned, and the 20 interested people were invited to attend the closest one. The Yarning Circles were strategically planned for one urban area, one regional area and one rural area. The final Yarning Circle was scheduled to coincide with the annual network meeting of the Aboriginal Family Health Network. There are a significant number of network members who are also part of the target group.

Three Yarning Circles were coordinated: in Parramatta on Dharug Country; Dubbo on Wiradjuri Country; and in Tweed Heads on Bundjalung Country. The timing and location of each Yarning Circle were arranged in consultation with participants. Following contact from potential Research Participants it was anticipated that approximately 15 First Nations human service workers would attend the Yarning Circles. However on the day we were successful with accessing for; Dharug yarning circle 3 participants, Wiradjuri yarning circle 2 and the Bundjalung yarning circle 3. Due to other obligations, eight people participated in the Yarning Circles. This demonstrates that even though participants were keen and commented on the potential useful outcomes of the research, some were unable to participate. A request to modify the project was approved to include

individual (either face to face or via telephone) interviews (Yarn Ups) enabling those wishing to participate but unable to join the Yarning Circle to participate. Four interested workers accessed the face to face and phone individual 'Yarn UP Sessions'. The lessons from these recruitment challenges for future research with First Nations people is the importance of persistence, flexibility and resources in the recruitment process.

3.6.1 Research Participants' Profile

The Research Participants were well placed to assist in building knowledge on improving support for First Nations women, children and communities who have experienced institutional and interpersonal trauma. The Research Participants have broad experience, ranging from direct front line workers to managers. Their roles encompassed: policy development, management of teams, and practical support for women, men and children who have experienced interpersonal and systemic trauma. Their workplaces ranged from non-government, government organisations, NSW health services, neighbourhood and legal services, youth mental health service and juvenile justice. Their job titles were varied, including health worker, counsellor, female Aboriginal family health worker, male Aboriginal health worker, health educator, telephone counsellor, advocacy, team leader and manager.

Dharug Yarning Circle – Participants

Nation/Tribal Identity	M/F	Title	Roles	Workplace
Participant 1 Dhungutti	F	Counsellor	Telephone and face to face crisis and short term counselling	NGO
Participant 2 Goomeroi	F	Educator	Provide State-wide accredited training to family violence workers	Government

Participant 3 Goomeroi	F	Case Worker	Provide face to face telephone, counselling	Government

Wiradjuri Yarning Circle – Participants

Nation/Tribal Identity	M/F	Title	Roles	Workplace
Participant 4 Barkindji	F	Health Manager		Area Health Service
Participant 5 Weilwan	F	Team Leader and Case Worker	Provide support, guidance and advocacy to young mums through maternal health program.	NGO Health Service

Bundjalung Yarning Circle – Participants

Nation/Tribal Identity	M/F	Title/Roles	Workplace
Participant 6 Bundjalung	F	Senior Health Educator	NGO Health Service
Participant 7 Goomeroi	M	Men Social Leadership Coordinator	NGO
Participant 9 Goomeroi	F	Aboriginal Family Health Worker	Government

Face to Face and Phone Interviews: Bundjalung Country

Nation/Tribal Identity	M/F	Title	Roles	Workplace

Participant 9 Bundjalung and Gumbainnggir	F	Counsellor and Group worker	Provides support advocacy to women and men who experiencing trauma.	Various
Participant 10 Yaegal and Gumbainnggir	F	Team Leader/ Manager	Supervise, Support and develop policies and best practice for Indigenous youth.	NGO Health Service
Participant 11 Letteremairrener	F	Family Support Worker	Support Groups, Counselling	NGO – Family Support Service
Participant 12 Dhungutti	F	Consultant, Author and Facilitator	Develop and run trauma-informed Aboriginal women's group	NGO

3.7 Preparing for Ceremony (implementation)

Figure 1. Minjungbal Ceremonial Ground

Indigenous Research methodology provides the researcher with opportunity for the participants to collaborate and inform the research about their epistemology, ontology and axiology. Reflexive Methods prepares the researcher to receive this information with an open mind and without judgement. Wilson's (2008) description of research being ceremony resonated with me and influenced my research practice in terms of defining the research activity as ceremony. I used a metaphor of gathering food as an example of research ceremony. My axiology of gathering food or in this instance digging for Ugheries also known as pippies (small shellfish found when the tide is on the turn from high to low).

3.7.1 Ugheries Research Methods

I have named this research process Ugheries Research Methods. The gathering process is about digging in the sand which we call the pippy twist. My Bundjalung epistemology informs this process. As a child I had the privilege and luck to learn from my elders, to be 'growed' up by my grandmothers (grandmother and her sisters) and my mothers (mothers and her sisters). I recall being around younger and older cousins both male and female. Our Grannies would take us pippying also known as gathering Ugheries. The process was part of teachings; we would come together as one (clan groups – safety) and they would teach when and where to dig usually at the turn of the tide. The younger jarjums (jarjums = Children in Bundjalung) would be swimming and one of the older cousins would care for them and teach them about safety with rip tides (teachings about the ocean). Elders teachings by sharing stories.

Figure 2. Ugheries, teaching and gathering/digging

Taking ugheries home, leaving ugheries in bucket of fresh water for a few hours – to expel the sand (sharing information – teachings). Home to families sharing new information broadening horizons, developing responsibilities for respect, caring, sharing with connections We would prepare meal then cook up together. This was our epistemology, our ways of knowing, our ontology – our ways of being and our axiology – our ways of doing. The importance of listening and watching and learning. The essence of trust and hope being developed through connections, listening and teachings. This was my epistemology of sharing information.

Research Ceremony provides participants with safety and security to share their sacred knowledge. The Ceremony needed to be prepared and the following practical steps were taken to set up for each Yarning Circle.

- Research Country in which the Yarning Circle is being held.
- Setting the scene for ceremony

- Reflexive practice
- Discussing Cultural Safety
- Explain research processes
- Finalise the yarning process
- Cultural Protocols, including gathering for a meal and gift giving

3.7.1 Research Country

Prior to each yarning circle and each individual yarn up, I would research the name the traditional name of each country. This process included contacting and consulting the Local Aboriginal Land Council for each area. I would also contact Aboriginal community and Health Workers with the intention of validating this following up on correct pronunciation.

3.7.2 Setting the Scene

This involved preparing the venue with decorative First Nations cultural tools, arts and crafts. At each Yarning Circle I prepared snacks as a way of maintaining reciprocity. It was really important that the Research Participants felt honoured and welcomed. For each Yarning Circle I prepared thank you cards and gift vouchers. This was part of our ontological process where relationships are maintained and tribal reciprocal responsibilities are validated.

Figure 3. Image of 'circle' artefacts used in Yarning Circles

The Yarns (whether in circles or individual) were very fluid, responding to the Research Participants' comments, but broadly asked about: practice experience (can you begin by introducing yourselves, this will help us to understand the context in which you work with victims/survivors of institutional and interpersonal trauma); work with clients/service users; what informed their practice (what are some words that best describes your understandings and feelings about the Aboriginal Healing Framework?); and what they would improve support to First Nations people who have experienced institutional and interpersonal trauma.

3.7.3 Reflexive Practice

Prior to each yarning circle and yarn up interview I undertook one to two hours Reflexive Practice. This involved practicing the art of Dadirri (Baumann & Wells, 2007), deep breathing and quiet stillness. This encompassed deep listening to self: who I was and what power and privilege I bring to the room. Dadirri is a meditative process that embraced quiet and stillness (Terare & Rawsthorne, 2019). This process allowed me to maintain a sense of peace and calmness; separate from the group and become autonomous a researcher who identified as Bundjalung and not as a Bundjalung Woman (I used this strategy to unpack subjectivity). This process also allowed me to reaffirm my privileges and power as an educated Bundjalung woman who has access to ways of knowing, being and doing. This process allowed me to validate Research Participants' individual worldview without seeking the participants to validate my worldviews. Through Dadirri I was able to be present and in the moment which validated participants sacred messages or practice and hope.

3.7.4 Cultural safety

Developing 'Cultural Safety' agreements between all parties was used as a method that supports First Nations people to express their stories especially those who have experienced racism in all its forms/definitions. Cultural safety explicitly outlines safety and security for all:

> an environment which is safe for people; where there is no assault, challenge or denial of their identity, of who they are and what they need. It is about shared respect, shared meaning, shared knowledge and experience, of learning

together with dignity, and truly listening (Williams, 1999, p. 213).

Culturally safe definitions and understandings are developed and committed too by all participants in the Yarning Circle, including the researcher. This practice can also be compared to the traditional ceremony of the Prun – conflict management – where First Nations Peoples came together to discuss and emotionally release critical elements affecting their lives (Kelly & Behrendt, 2006). This traditional practice could be considered rambunctious and unconventional if witnesses were novices or unaware of the relevant Aboriginal Worldviews, creating the risk that witnesses pass judgement from within Western or colonised context.

Facilitating Cultural Safety in this specific research study with First Nations people was absolutely critical to foster open dialogue on individual opinions and views. This becomes even more relevant as Research Participants talked about spiritual connections. Kovach (2009) affirms these ontological First Nation views as spiritual ways of knowing and doing and that they provide guidance to researchers and in this context research participants.

Cultural safety is especially important to ensure dialogue is open given the sensitive nature of institutional and interpersonal trauma and the historical and often oppressive experiences of being researched to develop an environment where safety and security is discussed and consensus is reached with regard to the definition. It is paramount to maintain humanity with regard to research with marginalized groups like First Nations Peoples. Cultural safety provides a framework to ensure the research process was delivered in a humane and empowering way with the long term objective to "ensure human rights are adhered to and thus move towards empowering rights based practice that develops individual and community capacity" (Calma & Priday, 2011). In the interest of maintaining cultural safety and ensuring aspect of human rights whilst privileging marginalised voices it was decided to collectively maintain confidentiality. All participants' personal details were not to be disclosed therefore their confidentiality in context of name and agency would not be used. This practice further supports their anonymity and ensures participant's freedom to express their views without fear of judgement.

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In each Yarning Circle I provided theoretical background outlining cultural safety. Cultural safety then was determined and defined by the participants. The aim was to encourage open dialogue allowing the participants to discuss and define what cultural safety looked like and what it felt like, and what it meant to them. I believe the extent of participation amongst the participants both in the Yarning circle and individual Yarn Ups indicated their understanding of and commitment to cultural safety in the research domain. The empowering process of reminding them that cultural safety is dynamic and organic and reflective of those who are defining and outlining the parameters supported active participation among all those involved in the research. In this way, cultural safety relies on the commitment of every individual who participates. The outcome was that Research Participants were able to gauge whether they felt safe enough to share their story and safe that the sacred stories they shared would be honoured and privileged.

3.8 Data Analysis

All Yarning Circles and Yarning Ups were recorded (with permission) and were transcribed verbatim. Initially analysis was undertaken with the qualitative data tool NVivo. I found this software difficult and did not support my 'making sense' of the data. Instead, I created a mindmap of the threads I was seeing in the Research Participants' experiences, identifying connections and interactions between the different Yarning Circles and Yarn Ups.

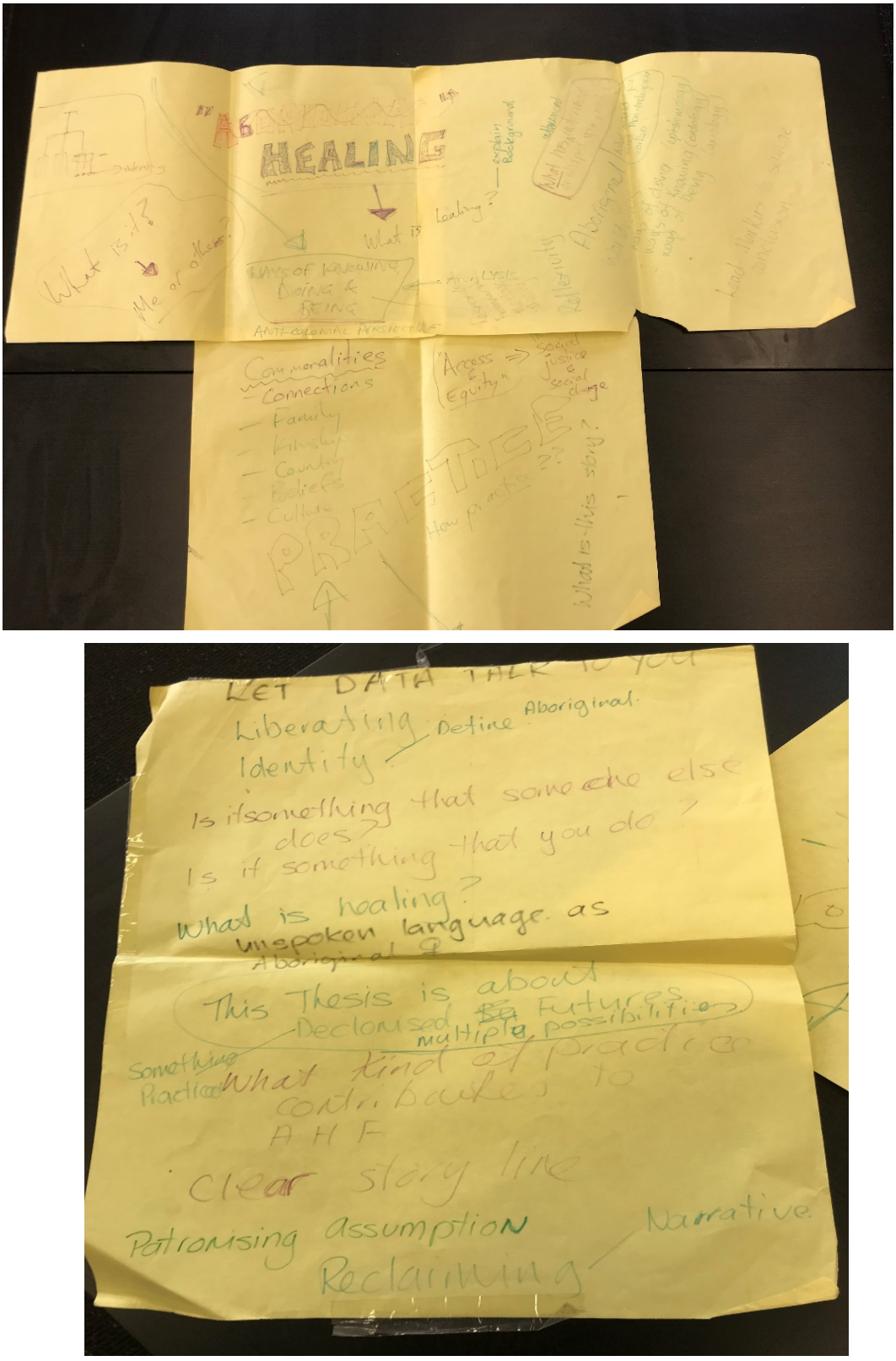

Figure 4. Part of the mindmap clarifying themes

This visual mapping process was much more fluid and insightful, creating a greater sense of meaning. This guided the themes that are presented in Chapter 4 and was returned to repeatedly through the writing

process. This approach involved thematic analysis which is suited to a wide range of research interests and provides practical guidance to novice researchers (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Using thematic analysis I identified patterns and common words within the data. This process of immersion in the 'data' involved reading the transcripts repeatedly as well as re-listening to the audio recordings. Five themes were identified using an analysis framework that explored participants' practice in relation to ways of knowing, ways of being and ways of doing. These themes were:

1. Belonging
2. Connections
3. Always Political – Therapy
4. Sharing knowledge with non-Aboriginal colleagues
5. Challenging Western Theories

The themes arose from the words used by the Research Participants, such as connections: "understanding connections to family, understanding connections to country. how you identify it's important. they're the most important things. It's who you are, your connection".

Through the reading and re-reading of the transcripts it became clear that the Research Participants used similar language across all the different Yarning Circles. The repetition of these words and ideas were interpreted as indicating the centrality of these ideas the Research Practitioners.

Whilst the thematic analysis provided a way forward it did not overcome the sense of frustration in the 'data analysis' process as traditionally understood in the Western research paradigm. In thinking about the identified themes, I was frustrated about the loss of the wholistic threads – participants Worldviews – of the Yarning. Drawing on Indigenous Research Methodologies and Reflexivity in the analysis process provided the rationale for the analysis to focus on the knowledge making shaped by First Nations' epistemological, ontological and axiological ways of professional practice (which is presented in Chapter 5). Again, I returned to the transcripts and voice files from the Yarning Circles and Yarn ups. The Research Participants' comments were then coded again against the three components on Worldview: as ways of knowing, being and doing. The quote below highlights the interconnections and interdependencies of individual Worldviews:

> "My essence as being a [redacted] woman, is part of how I work. It's being able to identify myself and stand strong in who I am and where I come from, but I have that privilege" (Participant #12)

The reality of these interconnections and interdependencies is illustrated in the following graphic. This holistic frame assisted me to think about the information collected for this study through the Yarning Circles and Yarn Ups in their totality, rather than divided through themes.

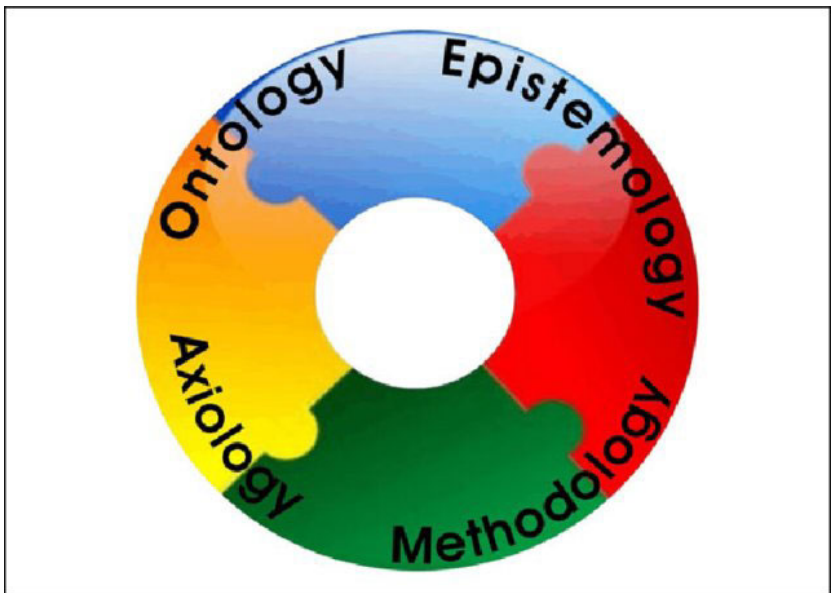

Figure 5. Elements of an indigenous research paradigm (Wilson, 2008 cited in Peltier, 2018, p. 3).

3.9 Research Process and Timeframe

The project started as mentioned earlier in the introduction this research a tiny seed of frustration, I often reflect on that thinking as 'the bane of my professional existence' . I started this research journey in 2017, where I started to plan the overall project the different to this time then previously, was that I was successful in gaining full time employment with Sydney University. Where, I had access to likeminded people, and regular access to professional mentor and most importantly my regular meetings supervisor.

I was granted ethics approval for 'Yarning Circles' late 2017 and implemented these in 2017. My 2nd ethics approval took place in June 2018

and phone and face to face 'Yarn Up' interviews took place over a three month period starting august and finishing September 2018. From the first yarning circle to the completion of data collection took approximately 13 months from September 2017 – November 2018. Overall Data Analysis took up to January – August 2019 and 8 months of solid writing followed. Submission of thesis occurred in March 2020.

The next two chapters detail the findings from my analysis. Chapter 4 includes the five key themes from the Yarning Circles and Yarn Ups. Chapter 5 presents the data within an Aboriginal Worldview framework to highlight the interconnections and interdependencies evident in the Research Participants' experiences. I have done this deliberately (often using the same quotes from individual research participants) to demonstrate the different analysis frame results in different insights.

This chapter has outlined the study's methodology as well as its practical implementation. The demands of the research saw the adaption of both Indigenous Research Methodology and Reflexivity. The chapter tells of the use of ceremony in the gathering of data. It also tells of my ethical obligations as a researcher understood as responsibility through connections. The final section of the chapter sought to make transparent the analysis process. The next chapter reports on the themes identified in the Yarning Circles and Yarn Ups.

Chapter 4. Privileging First Nations Voices: Part A – Data Analysis – Themes

This thesis sought to unpack, how individual workers approached the task of supporting First Nations individuals who had experienced trauma and violence. Through yarning with Aboriginal workers (family violence counsellors, men and women business yarning circle facilitators, advocacy and community development workers and educators). This was operationalised through a qualitative inquiry based on the following research questions:

1. How do First Nations workers in the trauma field understand their practice?
2. In what ways are these practices shaped by First Nations Worldviews (epistemology, axiology and ontology)?
3. How might practice in the field of trauma and interpersonal violence be improved?

Indigenous Methodologies provided the rationale for the analysis to focus on the themes shaped by First Nations' epistemological, ontological and axiological ways of professional practice.

Five themes were identified using an analysis framework that explored participants' practice in relation to ways of knowing, ways of being and ways of doing. These themes were:

1. Belonging
2. Connections
3. Always Political
4. Sharing knowledge with non-Aboriginal colleagues
5. Challenging Western Theories

Each of these themes will be discussed separately for ease of presentation however the components of First Nation's Worldview are not separate but holistic. It will be in Chapter 5: Privileging First Nations Voices – Part B Worldviews, where I will endeavour to apply themes into First Nations' Worldview; their epistemology – ways of knowing, ontology – ways of being and axiology – ways of doing.

First Nation's Worldviews are embedded within people, communities and Country. They are not competencies or a list of boxes to be ticked off. In this way, the research participants' practice is an expression of and embedded in their Worldview.

4.1. Belonging

For First Nation's people, the sense of belonging is paramount to the interconnectedness of epistemology, axiology and ontology (Martin, 2009). Belonging ensures the foundation for a sense of meaning and guidance for purpose. A sense of belonging is strongly associated with spiritual connections for First Nations people. Identity is a significant concept within belonging. The reciprocal responsibility for caring for others and country forms part of this process. Spiritual connections were identified by all participants as contributing to their sense of belonging. Along with language belonging also defines tribal identity, roles and responsibilities. There are clear and transparent processes to privileging and being guided by elders, whilst loving and supporting children and young people. This notion of belonging was identified as important by participants' in informing their trauma related practice, as is evident in the following statement:

> "Because we used to do that as a community, not as an individual. That's part of our job in our community is looking after each other, and we don't do that real well in a lot of places. So whereas you look at our elders, they don't do that so much. Well, not here, not the ones that I have a lot to do with. I find them so loving and so willing to talk about mob, so willing to say, "Yes, I knew your grandfather. I remember when you were little." Now, that gives me identity". (Participant #9).

Participant #2 stated, "That gives me belonging".

Participants also considered a deep understanding of 'who you are' and 'knowing where you belong' as key knowledge for working with clients. This process ensured participants could engage with clients about experiences of systemic and interpersonal oppression. Research Participants defined connections as an emancipating processes towards empowerment, which enhanced their practice to better support their clients to reclaim and explore their cultural identity. This was especially critical and

an integral component of practice framework when providing support to First Nation's men groups.

> Connection – understanding connections to family, understanding connections to country. how you identify it's important. they're the most important things. It's who you are, your connection (Participant # 8).

Discussion regarding identity weaved its way through a lot of the yarning. Identity of self is key component to providing a service to First Nations peoples. Identity is a significant aspect First Nation's epistemology that informs one's ontology and axiology. Identity is key to our existence. Identity was discussed in broad context. One specific context is when First Nations' identity is Questioned. The underlying message is that their First Nations identity is being questioned this then locates them as victims of ongoing dispossession. All Research Participants found this type of questioning challenging irrespective if it was personal or professional. questions.

This process is also known a lateral violence. The hubris and often oppressive practice of people challenging and, or defining one's identity as not Aboriginal or not First Nations. Participants discussed and expressed their concerns about the oppressive nature of this type of questioning. One research participant reflected on the occasions when this happened to her. The positive aspects that supported her when this oppressive act took place was her strong family and country connections. Being raised on country with family was considered empowering, grounding and gave her a sense of privilege. Privilege in this context relates to the legacy and implications of Stolen Generation Policies, where children may not have been reconnected back to family and country. Given the extent and commonality of stolen First Nations children, Research Participants considered to not have this done to you and your family locates you with a sense of privilege. The most disturbing thing here is that First Nations' children are further marginalised because they don't have contact with country and family. This is another layer of oppression that is often not considered and sets up a problematic dynamic within Aboriginal families and communities:

> Everyone is the identity police and my thing on that as a fair-skinned Aboriginal woman, I look like a white woman, let's not

> pretend I don't but I'm grounded in who I am and where I come from because I've had the privilege of growing up in my family. I know what the struggle is that my mother had, my grandmother had, my great grandmother had and that I had. Growing up in a big Aboriginal house and a big Aboriginal family and Aboriginal community (Participant #12).

Spiritual connections were identified by all participants as contributing to their sense of belonging. Participants identified a spiritual domain within the context of connections to ancestors as significant belief, which informed them of who they were and therefore how they practice. They identified their spiritual belief as something that provides them with a sense of being, personal guidance and support. Spirituality is key to their ontology their ways of knowing and their sense of belonging to others with same spirit teachings:

> The essence of tribal women has supported me as a [redacted] woman. I'd be nothing without my grandmother especially. My grandmother, I'm guided by her. Even though she's no longer on this earth I'm guided by her and I feel it and I know it (Participant # 10).

In the Yarning Circle, I asked this participant to explain more about this connection, asking: How do you know that it is her guidance that is getting you through? The Participant answered:

> If I'm confused or anything, I'll just centre myself and I'll just say, 'Nan, tell me, show me. What am I doing? Let me know.' Then a couple of days later something will come up and I'll go, 'Okay, that's what I have to do. I just put that out there and then I allow it to come into whatever form it is. It's not so much that she – although sometimes I've heard her voice (Participant # 10).
>
> [This participant is an author and has written her autobiography] You've read my book. That voice was her. There were times that I heard that voice like 'Ashley, wake up to yourself.' That was my grandmother's firm voice that I heard in my head to snap out of it, get up and get on with it. I hear that when I'm at my lowest. My connection to my ancestors is

> part of my framework. The strength and sense of empowerment then supports me to provide the similar connections to your classrooms and client groups (Participant #12).

Research Participants identified transparency as key, especially around who you are in terms of your identity about your Aboriginality. All Research Participants affirmed and stated, that knowledge of tribal epistemologies, ontologies and axiologies was a critical component to delivery of support services to First Nations peoples:

> Important to be transparent and clients know who they are talking to. They need to know who you are in terms of where you're from and what you believe etc. The trust that you just get, knowing that you're on the phone to someone else who's Aboriginal (Research Participant # 3).

> Yeah. And you know, our people are with us all the time (Research Participant # 1).

> We have big responsibilities when we go through ceremonies (Research Participant # 2).

Holistic approaches underpin Aboriginal knowledges. Another research participant related to her values and knowledge of lores of respect for others, and deep appreciation of what was right to maintain humanity and respect of and for the messages from our ancestors.

> And just around, you know rules and laws and stuff like that, like we come from a mob of people that didn't need law enforcement like there is today because there was a respect for rules and there was a respect for law. I feel blessed that we've come from that gene pool. That's our genes that we come from that, that's royalty as far as I'm concerned. but when I'm talking from that space that I think it's a message from my ancestors, it is so spot on, it is so clear, it's really strong and defined message, and then I sit back and I think that was my ancestors (Participant # 6).

Participants defined their spiritual beliefs as believing and connection with their ancestors. This belief provides them with a purpose

on both a personal and professional levels. Most participants spoke of making their ancestors proud. They connect this sense of pride with the capacity to provide services within the context of deep humanity and love. Making ancestors proud interconnects with reciprocity. Their awareness of the spiritual powerfulness of Ancestors is a constant guidance in the way they do their personal and professional practice:

> Make ancestors proud (Participant # 7).

> We have responsibilities to make them proud, honour their ways because it connects me to her (grandmother). Being on country connects me to ancestors. It is uplifting…the energy in that ceremony went throughout every part of my body. And it was like you were in a bit of a trance. And then the next morning, my brother walks up the hill with the cockatoo further for me. And no one knew I wanted that for my own smoking. And I believe my grandfather knew that, of course, and presented that to me because it was of country, through my brother. The ancestors do speak to us in different ways (Participant # 10).

> Ancestors provide me with guidance – It's just, I am not – my ancestors are a part of my decision making and moving forward in my own life. When you're not honouring, yep. When you know you're not honouring, you know it? Things don't feel real. Yeah. I love being Aboriginal (Participant # 6).

Deep connection to collective or tribal ways of being allowed for a First Nations people a sense of humility provided a sense of love and direction to overall purpose. Participants explained this as a sense of deep gratitude to feelings and being in the moment with thoughts and ultimately guidance. Participant # 6 response to defining their best practice related the following reflection;

> A lot of brothers and sisters we come from a mob of people who had that down pat. It allowed for collective or tribal ways of being. there was a respect to be humble, to be a humble person. You know there was all of that really beautiful human behaviour.

> I really, really strongly believe that especially with some of the thoughts or some of the concepts that I've had in my mind, I know that that's not mine alone. I can't take credit for that. And it's ancient, it feels ancient, it feels like it, and it feels right. – Medium for their voice. A deep spiritual connection that comes from the core and it feels right (Participant # 6).

This sense of Belonging informs how the Research Participants' practice, highlighting how this approach differs from western practice which often makes claims to expertise that can increase distance and power between the worker and client:

> Mother Earth, spirituality and dreaming and dreamtime. So we've got all those responsibilities and obligations that non-Aboriginal people have no idea about, so we have to incorporate them with what they expect. Mother Earth, Father Sun. We work within these. Our obligations as an Aboriginal person (Participant # 10).

> So in terms of my Yaegal and Gumbainnggir connections, it's important for me to behave in a certain way. Smoking Ceremony makes you responsible (Participant # 10).

Whilst Research Participants maintained a dialogue of relationality with spiritual guidance, within this context there is also a commitment to reciprocal relationships. This relationality clearly locates their axiology – their belief into and beyond a spiritual domain. All the participants discussed their obligations based on their epistemologies, ontologies and axiologies. The absolute pride of being connected also linked their love for their tribal identity. Their commitment to maintain tribal responsibilities are evident in their commitment to maintain a reciprocal relationship with their ancestors.

Ceremony is acknowledged as especially important way to maintain a sense of belonging and support of reciprocal relationships (Martin, 2009). Ceremony provides opportunity to re-connect with, and care for others and mother earth. Therefore, smoking ceremonies are considered an essential process and reinforces those connections to country/mother earth as it provides opportunity to appreciate relatedness with all entities:

> I would like to see a smoking to bring us all together and experience that in a way that we can all connect with and be a part of.' It's responsible to yourself, other people, the Earth, how you interact, and how you care for country. And I don't know whether – about how other people would have that as a meaning. I think, for me, it connects me with everyone that's been a part of that (Participant # 8).

Participants knowledge about their tribal lore was clear in their mind and they understood what their tribal and clan responsibilities and obligations were. Lore in essence is knowledge about how you interact with others and country/mother earth. Tribal Lore establishes personal and in a worker sense professional boundaries:

> We had our own – back home, had our own clan groups, had our own family obligations, our own clan obligations. We had beautiful tribal law – and can't even touch on that because it's just so big. But we had ways of being that was respectful, that worked together, that didn't take away from anybody else. And we cared for each other and our space. And we had obligations to each other in our – and that was then back at us. So we were all. So it was reciprocal (Participant # 4).

Ceremony is embedded into tribal ways. Ceremony is an expression of arts and dance to celebrate significant events. This includes changes to individual and collective/tribal milestones, opportunities to welcome others, to say goodbye and also those life changing events like births and deaths (Kelly & Behrendt, 2008). Ceremony provides meaningful acknowledgment and therefore a way to say you are important and we need to ensure that you and others are aware of this importance. Sharing information is also part of this process rites of passage for each significant stage of Lifespan development.

The research participants' spoke of ceremony as an important element of their practice, encompassing belief in mother earth as carer and giver and showing deep respect to ancestors and their ancient wisdoms. This is an example of decolonising practice:

> Smoking is a big part of service delivery and is intrinsic in one participants service provision. I think – see, it's really hard to talk about this because you don't think of it. It's just your natural

> way of being. So, I would respond in saying then – we are then saying we are going to be respectful on this country. We are going to look after all elements of where we are on this land (Participant # 9).

> My achievement and what I strive for is for myself, to better opportunities for my kids. But at the same time, honouring my ancestors and my family. And that's a process that smoking does, doesn't it? There is a responsibility. I think it's a part of that, but I remember – I don't know, a memory come up when you were saying that, in knowing my grandmother just come through there in (Participant # 7).

Practice and connections to ceremony were identified as spiritual processes and key to understanding self, improving self and kinship and providing a service to First Nations people. Some participants spoke of smoking as a key aspect of connecting to ceremony and spirituality. Childhood memories of ceremony were mentioned by participants as creating validation for the self and worldviews as well as deep love for ancestors and family. Participants believed this spiritual connection is beyond western constructs. It is the love of ancestors that transcends, embedded in every aspect of inter- and trans-generational love and resilience. Participants felt that the love of ancestors are enacted through their role as Family Violence and Trauma workers:

> My memory relates to a Ceremony: seeing myself and my sisters as little girls and looking at my sisters with white faces. And it takes me back to when we've had a death in the family. And my Nan would put flour over our face when we were just go to sleep so that then the spirit wouldn't come and it would be scared and it wouldn't take us. So that story just come back to me then when you were talking. So it's that – that stuff. I live my Nan every day, you know? (Participant # 9).

Smoking Ceremony makes participants real and therefore responsible. They relate to smoking ceremony as maintaining their tribal ways of knowing being and doing. It is at these moments where ceremony grounds them within their tribal identity and defines their responsibility to maintain their worldview:

> So in terms of my [redacted] and [redacted] connections, it's important for me to behave in a certain way. Smoking makes you responsible (Participant # 5).

> We have big responsibilities when we go through ceremonies (Participant # 12).

Participants identified their tribal groups and cultural practices that provided the foundation for their practice. They reflected on childhood development, where prominent, illuminating and loving messages from significant family members who had responsibilities of their care, control and protection were sown to guide and protect:

> My identity is important and it establishes empowerment. I was lucky enough to be reared by three extremely strong, staunch Aboriginal Dhungutti women. They were Dunghutti women; my mother, my grandmother, my great grandmother and so my connection to that and to them allows me to do what I do today because they've paved that way for me. There's things that I do that my grandmother had done and I'm now seeing my daughter do it because that's been passed down. I've got a 'blood memory'. (Participant # 12).

> Practice is linked to framework? Oh definitely, definitely linked to the framework. Like [redacted] said before it's a path, it's a walk that you walk, it's a walk that I walked long before I knew I was walking it. And when I heard about the Aboriginal healing framework, like it was, it's like yes, I've got language for it, I've got words for how I feel. I've got words on how I identify as an Aboriginal person. So yeah it was articulating those feelings that I'd had for as long as I can remember being Aboriginal person anyway. It was giving it words (Participant # 6).

> You're always going to connect with something that feels familiar though. You can't just have – that's the core thing about identity, is that you can still be an Aboriginal person (Participant # 7).

4.2 Connections

Participants identified their ways of knowing – their epistemology – as key knowledge that supports them with developing practice frameworks to work with First Nations People who have experienced systemic abuse and interpersonal trauma. Embedded within this notion is knowledge of their tribal background. They declared an understanding of Tribal connections provided them with resilience to work in this sector. Knowledge of these connections also provided strengths when Research Participants were away from family and country. They see this as a sense of their essence and relationality that supports them to develop engagement opportunities with clients. The use of familial titles like aunties and uncles, enhances the sense connection and relatedness. The title aunty and or uncle is a sign of respect and reflects a sense of trust and support for those often older people. The responsibility for Aunties and Uncles are profound as they need to lead with eldership and emulate love and support of humanity. It is often seen as a huge responsibility to be an Aunty and/or Uncle.

> It's similar. Like tribes are more, families are more together whereas tribes I think might move away and might separate and that sort of stuff and you're still a part of that tribe, but family you're together. You engage, you're more connected. A lot of aunties (Participant # 5).

Within the Yarning Circles and interviews, Research Participants returned continually to the notion of connection as central to their practice with First Nations People who have experienced systemic abuse and interpersonal trauma. First Nations peoples' worldviews are immersed in connections. Connections are considered and spoken about where a sense of wholeness and completeness of body, mind and soul.

Appreciation of diversity and difference are considered by Research Participants as normal process embedded within epistemology. The Research Participants argued that their awareness of the importance of connections and identity enabled them to be more supportive in their work with others. If clients are unable to demonstrate their tribal connections and identity within initial engagement periods with research participants, this gave the research participant an understanding of the extent of dispossession as it relates to colonisation, systemic trauma and may also

highlight issues relating to the extent of interpersonal trauma. Whilst these, at this early stage, are hunches based on practice, Research Participants maintain support and guidance based on developing trust and rapport, the focus of their attention on working with clients to develop a client-driven, culturally safe environment:

> Towards the fact that Aboriginal people come from different countries and we may not necessarily agree on everything because our connections in life tell a different story. You know, connection to family, to mob, and to community. Knowing who you belong to. Knowing where I am from, because it was hard for me to put the jigsaw pieces together, especially with my mother, because as much as [redacted] identifies, [redacted] also doesn't identify (Participant # 11).

Connections to groups of First Nations people are key to maintaining worldview. Participants used specific terms to define groups of First Nations peoples. The term 'mob' was used to define how participants referred to family and kinship connections and it was also used to define other First Nations groups of people. In this context the term 'mob', has a sense of unity and solidarity as one group. This term is also used in an inclusive way e.g. 'us mob'. Individuals locate themselves with other groups in a collective way.

> Mob? When I say mob, I suppose, I'm not just talking about my own family, my own clan, my own community, but Aboriginal (Participant # 4).

The participants argued concepts and or entities are best explained by an individual's connection their ways of knowing, being and doing, this is demonstrated with participants and clients ability to dialogue their connections. Connections in this context could be entities, which relate to flora and fauna. The 'good' component of this statement related to the client knowing the worker through kinship ties or through other forms of connectedness. The 'not so good' notion related more to whether the client and worker where connections were yet to be established. In this instance, the worker had to reinforce knowledge of the service and practice integrity. The development of cultural safety was identified as a strategy to open up communication between client and worker. The research participants' argued that developing and establishing connections with the ultimate aim

of enhancing capacity to trust was an essential component of best practice:

> Clients need to have a connection to workers. Connection could mean being kinship related to the clients. This can sometimes be good and not so good (Participant # 6).

> Developing connections; questions like who your mob, where you are from. This is reciprocal. Developing trust and rapport. It is an automatic connection process that First Nations people go through. This links individuals with; country, family, and culture (ways of being doing and knowing). (Participant # 9).

Another example of how First Nation's Worldview shaped Research Participants' practice was the introduction processes between First Nations' individuals and groups which is a way of knowing (epistemology). First Nations peoples will usually introduce themselves and relate to their connections; to country and family. The other person (the introducee) will also do the same introduction. They will then follow up with common connections. An example is: Do you know the Brown family? An exchange of pleasantries will occur and they may even be more specific and name certain members from the Brown or Johns families. Once new knowledge is processed connections are then made. It is not only common process across all Research Participants, it was also considered normal process that was deeply entrenched in their worldviews epistemology, ontology and axiology. The ultimate aim is to find a connection with each other; or to develop a new connection.

In the statement noted below, this participant clearly locates their epistemology, ontology and axiology to their practice. This is demonstrated through acknowledgement of connections; critical to this is knowledge of their history – where you have come from and to their future – where you are going. Further to this; their sense of tribal connections are their strengths. It becomes obvious through this process that Research Participants understand their history and connections and this knowledge, provides them with confidence and guidance to continue on their journey of providing trauma support to survivors of interpersonal and systemic abuse and oppression.

> Acknowledge that we have different ways irrespective of where we come from.

> My experiences of being a [redacted] woman helps me with my practice. My essence as a [redacted] woman provides me with that opportunity to get a sense of the room, the energy in the room? I present myself in work as me, as who I am, in my values and my worldview being an Aboriginal person. Maintaining my practice with both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people, (Participant # 12).

Participants defined their connections in other ways describing epistemologies as an underpinning philosophy that supported the development of individual practice frameworks. This acknowledges, affirms, and validates diversity amongst Aboriginal tribal groups. It defies the ongoing colonial impact of denigrating, subjugating and denying First Nations worldviews. This is about reclaiming epistemology, ontology and axiology as a way forward for First Nations clients.

> Aboriginal healing framework in the context that I work, acknowledges the diversity in our mob. It acknowledges the importance of our mob and the connections to place and space. It acknowledges us as Aboriginal people in the context of where we've come from within the political history of Australia (Participant # 12).

The practice of working from worldviews is the way the participants are reconnecting, reclaiming and maintaining an ongoing process of decolonising western ways:

> identity, again connecting to culture and that culture being whatever your cultural practice is because we all have different ways. That's a big misconception that people make that Aboriginal people are all the same (Participant # 7).

In the Yarning Circles, research participants' argued that knowledge of your country and kinship connections are essential processes when establishing relationships. First Nations protocol is to establish relationships with people and groups that you meet. This is considered tribal/traditional way. As noted previously, the process of introduction is an important process and will clearly locate who you are and your connections – this then allows those whom you are meeting to 'culturally' place or locate you. Sharing your knowledge about self, connections and identify; is telling

your story, your creation story. Irrespective if the listener does not think this is relevant, it is cultural protocols, therefore an essential part of who you are. Also, connecting with Elders and respecting their knowledge are considered an integral component of one's creation story. The following statement locates first Nation's person diversity within their tribal area. An example of this process is noted below.

> Yeah, well, I'm Bundjalung, so that's north side of Grafton, and Gumbainnggir, which is south side of the river. My grandfather was born Gumbainnggir and he's got both sides with him, and I know that I've also got a relationship and connection to the Yaegal mob (Participant # 9).
>
> I was born Bundjalung. I was actually born just up on the veranda of the old Runnymede Hospital (Participant # 9).
>
> My mother and her brother were born up at the foot of McKee's Spur, which is the Great Dividing Range here as you go up towards Glen Innes, and actually been named the foot of McKee's Spur, and they were born to my grandmother, who was with my Aboriginal grandfather (Participant # 9).
>
> But after a little while – I gather they were together three or four years and then my grandmother married a white man and my grandfather, Claudie, went on to marry May, who I know and she's got seven children. Yeah, so we're one huge family, and I'm really finding out a whole heap of stuff that I actually didn't know through my elders here in Grafton (Participant # 9).

All participants clearly defined connections as meaningful; and therefore linked to ongoing development of life purpose and ultimately to survival. Participants were insistent when discussing connections and the importance this has on healing capacity for clients and communities.

> Understanding our ways of knowing doing and being. Always important to have that understanding because, without that, we can't connect and understand and provide that empathy and be passionate about our work we do with each other (Participant # 2)

Discussions within the Yarning Circles left no doubt that when working in the field of trauma and practicing within a trauma-informed lens that connections is critical and part of one's epistemologies, ontologies and axiologies.

Research Participants related to other responsibilities that are deeply rooted in epistemology and ontology – connections and relatedness to mother earth, which informs spirituality and the dreaming. Discussions in the Yarning Circles suggests Research Participants see this as responsibilities and obligations – which in essences defines reciprocity.

> Mother Earth, spirituality and dreaming and dreamtime. So we've got all those responsibilities and obligations that non-Aboriginal people have no idea about, so we have to incorporate them with what they expect. Mother Earth, Father Sun. Yeah, we work within these. Our obligations as an Aboriginal person (Participant # 5).

Culture in this context transforms ones understanding of self to be soulful and unbreakable. This is an overall holistic presence that is viewed as strong and emancipating. This is something that I have not seen or heard in western worldview yarns about identity. The common theme here is a sense and feeling of unity and solidarity – which liberated participants to speak about their ways of working from their worldview.

> I feel like the long time, like we never lost that, it's just been tucked in us (Participant # 6).

4.2.1 Kinships

Participants considered familial connections as significant in their practice framework. Familial connections is discussed with clients. This is based on Research Participants being as one with family. This is considered one of the most important factors relating to one's way of being – their ontology.

> More connected, as family you're more connected. Because in an Aboriginal healing framework is you go, you might have a lot of mothers, you know. (Participant # 12)

> A lot of brothers and sisters we come from a mob of people who had that down pat. It allowed for collective or tribal ways

> of being. there was a respect to be humble, to be a humble person. You know there was all of that really beautiful human behaviour.
>
> Yeah I really, really strongly believe that especially with some of the thoughts or some of the concepts that I've had in my mind, I know that that's not mine alone. I can't take credit for that. And it's ancient, it feels ancient, it feels like it, and it feels right. – Medium for their voice. A deep spiritual connection that comes from the core and it feels right (Participant # 10).

Familial, Kinship and tribal connections were also identified in the Yarning Circles as crucial to working in this sector. Research Participants identified re-connecting with family, kinship and tribal connections as a grounding and humbling experience.

> It's an honour to be here because we're not promised tomorrow and we need to move forward with our own integrities in that. And I think a part of that integrity is honouring my grandmother and my mother, my father, my siblings, the energies from the Earth and the energies from the sky, you know? Because I'm not just here on my own. I'm a part of a bigger thing (Participant # 5).
>
> And they do bring you back to earth, hey? Your mob (Participant # 5).

4.2.2 Reciprocity

Reciprocity was considered by the Research Participants in the Yarning Circles to be an ethical starting place for individuals to fulfil their tribal responsibilities. They considered respect and sharing knowledge as critical component of their practice. Key skills and knowledge that required to maintain a commitment to reciprocity is maintaining observation and attentive with listening and learning. In Bundjalung language we learnt about Ningenah – 'shoosh and listen'.

> We have responsibilities to make them proud, honour their ways because it connects me to her (grandmother). Being on country connects me to ancestors. It is uplifting…the energy in that ceremony went throughout every part of my body. And it

> was like you were in a bit of a trance. And then the next morning, my brother walks up the hill with the cockatoo feather for me. And no one knew I wanted that for my own smoking. And I believe my grandfather knew that, of course, and presented that to me because it was of country, through my brother. The ancestors do speak to us in different ways. Ancestors provide me with guidance – It's just, I am not – my ancestors are a part of my decision making and moving forward in my own life. When you're not honouring, yep. When you know you're not honouring, you know it? Things don't feel real. Yeah. I love being Aboriginal (Participant # 9).

Sharing self and knowledge is an important and integral responsibility identified by all participants. They identified sharing their epistemology – ways of doing, axiology their ways of being and ontology ways of knowing with clients. They identified sharing their ideas and passions about challenging abusive behaviours. demonstrated their passion

> Sharing a part of me. My knowledge of nature, extent, definition and characteristics of sexual assault and domestic violence. This is seen as validation of experiences and knowledge that I have skills and knowledge to support them around these issues. Demonstrate that I walk the walk and talk the talk (Participant # 6).

This is very clear in the following statement articulated by one participant. Sharing information with clients, their families and communities provided participants with opportunities to define their context, explore what that reciprocal experience felt like and knowing where it comes from; gave them a sense of connection and purpose based on their tribal links and obligations.

> Obligations based on tribal epistemology: My role in the interaction is always active and two-way. It's not a one-way thing. And getting other people to – I suppose, we lead by example in our practice and people watch us and learn from that. But articulating that sometimes is sometimes needed. Being obligated to your tribal back – it's – is that critical?

[redacted] and [redacted] woman's, framework. And that has evolved from practice (Participant # 9).

Participants were consistent and clear that their worldview was identified within the Yarning Circles and also within their practice framework. This participant defined their identity as a dimension of knowledge that informed their framework with philosophy and principles based on their worldview and included in their epistemology is knowledge of sharing and caring and this then informed their ontological process. The process of appreciating respecting others and their difference; where clients voices are reiterated after cultural introduction and exchange and then permission is sought.

> I wanted to honour that, so I needed to make that declaration. Yeah, I am here – I am here as [redacted] I am here as my world view and what that looks like in the context of where I am and what I want to share. Acceptance and appreciation of difference is critical component to providing appropriate services. As participants noted 'at the same time, I can't do that and represent and speak for another Aboriginal person in that way. (Participant # 9).

Participants identified that clients, workers and agencies are at different levels of awareness around the meaning of reciprocity and therefore difference stages of capacity to practice reciprocity through ceremony. A consistent view held by Research Participants was that, as First Nations worker they have responsibilities to share and care.

> And we know what we haven't got the capacity for, but how can we still have a level of that? In the way that – you know, I've got to provide a service as a [redacted] and [redacted] woman (Participant # 9).

Reinforcing ways of knowing about history before Cook (BC) was viewed by participants in the Yarning Circle as a re-empowering and decolonising process and critical approach to support First Nations people presenting with systemic and interpersonal trauma issues. For participants this knowledge reinforced pride of self, family and tribe. Acknowledgment of and reconnecting to ancestors was also considered key to practice. The knowledge of being a descendent of ancestors who belong to the longest

living culture in the world – some would say since time immemorial provides a sense of wholeness, pride and strength. These beliefs like our lands were never ceded.

> And just around, you know rules and laws and stuff like that, like we come from a 'mob' of people that didn't need law enforcement like there is today because there was a respect for rules and there was a respect for law (Participant # 6).

> I feel blessed that we've come from that gene pool. That's our genes that we come from that, that's royalty as far as I'm concerned. but when I'm talking from that space that I think it's a message from my ancestors, it is so spot on, it is so clear, it's really strong and defined message, and then I sit back and I think that was my ancestors (Participant # 6).

Developing safe spaces was identified as critical component to working with 'mob'; checking with clients on how you can make the environment more safe and secure for their individual needs. The term 'mob', in this context relates to specific groups of First Nations peoples. Mobs are best defined by First Nations individuals who have common themes; e.g. work or study together, same tribal area or same social club etc., who identified as being from same tribal area. This demonstrates understanding of difference of epistemology, ontology and axiology. Participants articulated that you needed to be very clear about who you are; your connections and your service role, your capacities as a worker whilst identifying your limitations:

> Defining and being clear about your practice and how you are going to work. It is important to be safe in the way that I respond to mob and acknowledge mob in the way that I'm comfortable in myself as an Aboriginal person and what I'm about (Participant # 5).

Developing safe environments to ensure reasonable access to First Nations peoples is critical and a big part of the challenge for human services today. Lifting the shroud of silence and shame for First Nations people to access services and then discuss their experience with interpersonal trauma is very challenging for human services and as important challenging for First Nations workers. It is those workers that have

the responsibility to ensure their services self and agency are accessible and that their reputations as prominent, safe and secure for First Nations/Indigenous/Aboriginal people to access are intact. Participants argued that it is those Agencies that provide strength based services from structural macro, meso and micro perspectives that can anticipate and proactively plan the needs of groups. Planning services where clients are likely to find their 'big voice' indicates that the service structure from micro – macro is safe and responsive to those clients' individual needs.

> Creating safe yarning circles because a lot of my work involves talking. If I run groups, if I'm running training my first thing is to engage with all participants and make them all know that the space that we're in is safe because regardless, I've always got to be ready for disclosure and I have to be prepared if somebody is going to disclose some things to me because it always happens. I have to make sure that I'm in the right mindset too to be able to take that on because some disclosures are horrific. (Participant # 7).

Trauma-informed practice requires safety practice within the workplace is an essential component of best practice for all Participants specialists interviewed. Developing Safety with clients and colleagues is an expected and standardised value of their workplace conditions. Participants argued that privileging First Nations peoples ways of being, doing and knowing underpins the very essence of security and safety.

> If people feel safe enough to share that with you in the groups that you're doing you have to be prepared to handle that and know how to deal with it. I think we've got to let women cry. If they're hurting they've got to be able to feel that pain and let that out. If we tell them to stop then they're just swallowing that and tucking it down further deeper in them. So you got to allow it to come out and that only can happen if a safe space is set up in the first instance. It is imperative to ensure that the space is safe (Participant # 12).

4.3 Always Political – Therapy

All Research Participants identified knowledge and understanding of colonial history post 1778, as essential knowledge to have when working with First Nations peoples who have experienced violence and trauma.

> Yes, absolutely [for an] Aboriginal healing framework you need to have understanding of history. The impact of those things that have happened since 1788 and that is around colonisation and genocide. (Participant # 2).

All participants have extensive knowledge of the colonial history post Terra Nullius doctrine. The implications and effects of this declaration were viewed as core and critical to the development of a practice Framework to support First Nations individuals and their communities in relation to experiences of trauma and violence. Most Research Participants have acquired this information informally through familial narratives, yarning and storytelling and formally through education and training.

> Aboriginal people have a – our net, the net for Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people goes so much further than any other nationality around. Anything that we do and that is because of past injustices and everything that's gone along with it since 1788. (Participant # 6).

The reference to the 'net' is also known as the 'Koorie/Murri/Goorie Grapevine (KMG). The KMG Grapevine is commonly known in the First Nations communities as a phenomenal way to spread relevant news between people. This is where information about specific events, usually tragic, are shared. An example of such an event is a massacre and this is known in most if not all First Nations Communities. Knowledge of massacres have been passed down from one generation to the next. Practical evidence of this knowledge is avoidance by First Nations people from specific area where the massacres took place. Community people see this as sacred place and as a result unacknowledged grief, sorrow and loss are shared. Records of these events are also known or acknowledged as local First Nations knowledge and may not be known or acknowledged by western or white systems local histories.

The establishing of relationships with clients is considered a sense of validation as well. Awareness of your own identity supports this process.

Following is an example of a client and research participant initial engagement, which followed cultural protocols by telling his and their creation story of their connection to country and family. This process locates self to country and informs identity.

> The first thing he did was identify that he was [redacted]. First thing he did. So straight away what does that tell you? Well he related to me as an First Nations person. (Participant # 9).

> It is important to acknowledge, too, who I am. Because if I like myself and I believe in myself, I can work with myself and, if I can work with myself, I can definitely work with other people. (Participant # 11).

Experiences of racism for First Nations people in the private and public sectors of society was discussed by participants as “so very common”. Racism is often assumed and seen as normal practice of non-Aboriginal workers and managers and for most participants some level racism was expected. The very nature of racism especially direct and visible, was often seen by mainstream service providers as repulsive behaviour. However the act of racism was not critiqued and discussed within context of worldviews. The challenge is not privilege one worldview over another.

When racism occurs participants try to make sense of it, by providing a rationale on why others behave this way. The frustration for First Nations workers creating strategic ways to name, define and manage it in the workplace was discussed in the Yarning Circles. This was a common experience and it was usually the First Nations worker that struggled and ultimately internalised the social and emotional pain and trauma associated with these acts of oppression and violence. The following statements explain the level of frustration and sense of helplessness and cognitive processes that play out in Participants’ minds when dealing with unsafe work colleagues and places.

> he's extremely racist, and he's very obviously in the job for financial gain, and anyone will tell you that. That's the problem is the whole of [redacted] knows this. So it's not even like it's a hidden thing. It's not. So I get to the point where this is what I want to bang my head against the wall because, if it's so well-

known, why is there nothing being done about it (Participant # 9)?

I think that's another thing when – I don't know what the word is but when you're dealing with other workers and clients or other partners with the organisation or something, you – they say, "Don't make judgements when you first meet," but you do and your intuition will also tell you if you can trust that person or any of that (Participant # 9).

I've had lots of challenges around it but again, you got to pick your battles. The stuff that I do is figuring what. It can trigger people. It can be lots of things. The conflict can be so widespread that I choose to pick my battles (Participant # 9).

Research Participants maintained their commitment to ongoing social justice as a process of reciprocity to their ancestors. The epistemology and ontological ways are clearly located in their belief of ancestors being with them during high emotive times like when they are advocating for social justice – they note they are extremely surprised at the calmness in which they respond and articulate their human rights and needs. This allows descendants to develop their tribal purpose of honour, respect and protect and educate. Spiritual relationships with country can emerge during deep meaningful occasions where reconnection and deep ceded memories emerge. Participants believed the human body is miraculous where the body remembers when it is safe to do so. This is a reconnection that may not be able to be explained through a dialogue based on Western worldviews.

I'll share something because this is what I feel, around my political stance more than other stances, but I know when it's my ancestors talking through me and I always acknowledge it every time because I don't fumble a word, I don't and that does, I do.

Because we're listening to those voices that we don't hear and waiting to come out, yeah. That's right. waiting for it to happen. have other difference from other peoples (Participant # 6).

> Tribal existence – Yeah definitely. And I think the more we, sorry I'll just say this quickly. I think the more we use it the more it comes to us (Participant # 6).

> Story Telling; It is so important, because I don't have stuff written down. Yeah, very, very different. There is nothing more spiritual, more beautiful, more inclusive than storytelling. It's being – I liken it to cabbage leaves. You know, like you can just imagine being cocooned up and feeling safe, because story time is a safety issue. (Participant # 8).

Research Participants felt strongly about what theories needed to be included in practice frameworks especially in the context of human rights. They defined and provided a political context on why these need to be included into a practice framework. The following statement includes a holistic approach which is strength-based and client-centred.

> Holistic approach is critical – it's like if someone, say, loses a leg, yes, you bandage it up, you stop the bleeding, but that's only part of the support. Then there's the crutches to walk with and then there's the prosthesis to get back to life with. It's about everything that impacts on that person's wellbeing. We need to consider the same thing for our families. Always remember that the specific issue does not define us. They may bind us but definitely don't define us (Participant # 9).

4.3.1 Human Rights

Participants believed deep appreciation of humanity is closely linked to supporting people who have experienced trauma and interpersonal violence. Participants considered this as being on par to our ancient way and identity. They felt this sense of humanity is deeply embedded in our psyche – it is what we know. Participants talked about using this as core knowledge within their practice framework. This practice framework locates this practice within social justice; within a context of equity and rights. Participants linked this knowledge to their links to traditional ways of knowing – they related to "our ancient way and identity".

> I had this thought once and not long ago actually, it's still fresh, that we were the first people and we're going to be the last as

> well it's beyond human rights, it's about humanity. That's our ancient, our ancient way and identity (Participant # 10).

Participants believe to work with First Nations People who have experienced interpersonal trauma you need to have deep understanding and knowledge of human rights. They believe it is essential that our values are based on the understanding of equality. We must ensure that our knowledge and understanding of socio political and historical nature of First nation peoples and the legacies of this time are carried by First Nations peoples. This is also known as inter- and trans-generational trauma (Atkinson, 2002).

> Because people say, you know, oh why should we say sorry because it didn't happen in my time. But they don't realise that that stuff, it still impacts us today. And it's why, you know. It's all about the why, really. understand the full context of grief and loss. And what it encompasses (Participant # 3).

The Participants insisted historical knowledge is essential and must underpin the development and application of practice Framework. This included an extensive understanding and knowledge of the destructive and adverse events that took place post 1788 by colonialists, including the declaration of Terra Nullius, to ensure colonisation of Australian First Nations people and their nations. Participants stated unequivocally:

> You've got to go back – for us to be able to come through everything you have to pinpoint where the trauma started. (Participant # 2).

Participants' families and their clients have similar experiences of racism and institutional trauma. The intergenerational traumatic experiences are known and are carried to current generations. This is critical information. If an agency's practice has been racist, it is this practice that is remembered as unsafe place. Not one participant said that their clients would knowingly use a trauma service that has been known to be racist. Clients avoid these services. Research Participants have worked with services to ensure inhumane practice is identified and whilst Research Participants work with services suggesting they adopt humane practice frameworks; it is acknowledged that this process is broader than an actual initial engagement to more ongoing connections with those agencies to

develop relationships. Participants linked their practice, with their essence by accessing knowledge around connections and identity and sharing, caring and respect. They saw their practice as strongly linked to human rights and equality for all First Nations Peoples; that is, their practice was political.

> Understanding Aboriginal people within the context of human rights and equity by understanding the histories (Participant # 12).

Most participants were determined to empower and or re-empower service users to redefine their future through maintaining a proactive and innovative approach to their practice. Their practice consisted of counselling, facilitation of women and men's yarning circles and participating in proactive and collaborative community development projects – where clients share their needs and issues in a culturally safe environment. They created a clear path and optimism for the future, by defining their responsibilities and roles to empower.

> We've got to stop thinking that government can help us be and do all that we need to be (Participant #4).

The reflection on "see where we come from", links to identity prior to colonisation. This relates to their connections, and

> Unless we see where we come from how are we going to move forward? All of our mobs need to have that understanding, to move on. (Participant # 5).

Most participants explored their practice more closely. Their practice consisted of empowering strategies, reinforcing rights and healing to move past their current issues. They articulated their thoughts on what was important to them when applying a practice Framework for First Nations people;

> We have to be able to do that [empower mob to move on]. It all starts with us. We have the capacity to make our houses, our families as safe as we want it. We have that power. No one else has that power so therefore if we start at home and then create that ripple effect it can only get better because if we wait

> on the powers that be we're going to be wasting another 200-odd years. You know what I mean? (Participant #)

In the yarning circles a reclaiming of personal autonomy, power and self-determination were continual themes. The participants' practice in supporting First Nations people who had experienced violence and trauma included a declaration for community empowerment and self-determination and social justice. Also, considered critical to work in this sector Knowledge of human rights generally; what it is and what it means was considered by some participants as key to working in this sector. They identified good understanding of the rights of the world Indigenous peoples as are significant knowledge.

> It is linked to human rights. Regardless of difference – Everybody has a right to be treated equally and with respect (Participant #).

Participants defined their practice as working toward equality for all. This process therefore recognises equity and social justice as key practice and must be incorporated in policy development. This is especially crucial when working with Australian First Nations' people, and especially those women, men and children who are experiencing interpersonal violence.

> We would absolutely include equality and equity, social justice? We all want to believe that that's what Australia is but we know it's not. I want to believe that there's no racism in Australia but I know very well that there is (Participant # 2).

Emphasis on the status of Aboriginal women was also identified by this participant in the Yarning Circle and compared to other Australian women e.g. white women. This participant works primarily with Aboriginal women who are experiencing interpersonal trauma; domestic violence and sexual assault. She argued that racism and sexism need to be considered in this trauma context. The reality for Aboriginal women are profound in this context and are often highly represented as victims within the data around domestic violence and sexual assault. The shocking high rates of imprisonment for First Nations women is cause of great concern.

> We want to believe that all women are equal or women are equal to men but that's all good and well for people to argue that back but the reality is Aboriginal women aren't even equal

> to non-aboriginal women in Australia so how the hell are they going to have equality with white men? (Participant # 12).

Ngangkari are Anangu traditional healers healing practice is Ancestral knowledge being passed from elders to elders. Their country is located in NPY lands. All Research Participants at different times acknowledge Ancestral knowledge as a key practice. They related to connections and commitments to the memory of their with grandmothers and the struggles those ancestors had with maintaining their survival and the survival of their offspring. The powerfulness of this knowledge demonstrates the commitment to maintaining blood values. The idea here is blood values are demonstrated with keeping epistemology and ontology current through naming and practice:

> It's their struggles and their determination that I carry on my shoulders that makes me want to make the world a better place for my daughter and my granddaughters. It's just keeping that blood values alive and well (Participant # 4).

Participants in the Yarning Circles argued that First Nations groups are marginalised and as a result have had their human rights in every aspect violated. Working towards maintaining the rights of First Nations women, men and children, we need to hear their voices to get better understanding of their trauma experience, their resilience and their survival. It is time for truth telling.

> But that doesn't mean that I don't believe everyone needs to be treated equally. the back culture of this country is still preventing that because they're not telling the truth. If the truth about what happened in the first instance was taught in schools and everywhere else, I don't think that there would be as much, "All these Aboriginals get all this for free. They get all that for free" and whatnot. If they learnt the truth from the start and that's not taught in our schools (Participant # 2).

They maintain and focus on their strengths which is fundamental to their epistemology and ontology. Resistance to colonial ways is evident in this layer of resilience. They acknowledge this within equity and social justice framework by reclaiming their tribal strengths from over 65000 years of living in the moment. This is another example of resilience, Research

Participants are reclaiming epistemology and ontology, by re-empowering tribal ways and finding their big voice and resisting ongoing colonialism:

> The difference is not about the oppression that we've experienced, the difference is about the way we are. Yeah because a lot of the dialogue or the common beliefs about Aboriginal was around the deficits, what's seen as a deficit, where we're actually saying no, that there's strengths in the Aboriginal ways (Participant # 6).

4.4. Sharing skills and knowledge with non-Aboriginal colleagues

> Truth is an important part of practice; truth to self and truth to clients (Participant # 2).

4.4.1 Oppressive Communication skills – Inappropriate communication, body language and barriers to access and equity

Research Participants were unwavering about the challenges they see within their agencies regarding access and equity for First Nations clients and support for First Nations colleagues. They strongly argued that service managers and colleagues are unclear and uncertain about diversity amongst First Nations, more specifically First Nations' worldviews; epistemology, ontology and axiology. They identified issues like common beliefs and stereotypes as communication blockers and the maintenance of colonial structures, e.g. opening hours, waiting lists, access to services, inflexibility with delivery of services venue etc which makes for cultural unsafe practice and service delivery.

> Services need to make sure that all of their staff, non-Aboriginal, Aboriginal, or whatever, that all of their staff have that same understanding about diversity within Aboriginal groups (Participant # 1).

> Truth is an important part of practice; truth to self and truth to clients (Participant # 3).

Examples of lack of understanding is evident with the way managers and colleagues have limited to no understanding or knowledge of

Aboriginal kinship connections. This proved to be a significant barrier with Research Participants to feel completely safe in the workforce. The Western understanding of family is so very different to First Nations views on family. Family is not just the western definition of a nuclear family consisting of mum, dad and children. The definition of family within a First Nations context is different and as diverse and can include grandparents, aunties, uncles and cousins. Participants argued that cousins are not removed by their connections and they are not defined as 1st or 2nd or even 3rd cousins – in most instances cousins are usually defined as sister/cousin or brother/cousin, discussion about the definition of this familial structure is not offered as it is expected that people will know by the term the closeness of the familial connection. The nature of sister/cousin or brother/cousin is about the connection and that connection is close. This familial belonging and connection is not usually understood within a western discourse.

> They haven't really understood the extended family, they haven't understood that it's not just the nuclear family and there are other important people in different communities and sometimes people may have been excluded when they should have been included (Participant # 1).

The following statement also affirms the limited to lack of understanding of First Nations worldview. Research Participants posed the following brief statement and question as a way of trying to understand and make sense of mainstreams lack of understanding about First Nations' worldviews.

> No understanding of how we work. Maybe they don't believe it because they don't have it (Participant # 7).

With this statement and question, this articulates the cognitive process of Research Participants with trying to make sense of mainstream inability to understand and connect with First Nations colleagues and ultimately their First Nations target group. Their reasoning concludes a humanistic approach and understanding about mainstream colleagues focus area or weakness, by the statement "they don't have it", in one perspective this Research Participant sees that there are aspects of adequate professional development opportunities for their colleagues. This statement may also imply that Research Participants' practice is

embedded within their tribal worldviews and they see their colleagues inability to connect or understand their ways as a deficit.

Another Research Participant reflected on their current workplace and identified that non-Aboriginal or mainstream staff have limited to no understanding of connections and belonging. The fact that you don't have to be blood related to use titles like Aunty or Uncle, sister or brother. These are titles used by people as a demonstration of respect and love.

> I have in the past had problems where I've been questioned as to why I'm including people in certain things, that it's a mum dad thing and I don't need grandma and Aunty Jane and Uncle Burt and they haven't understood that that we have this extended network of people, that we may not even be blood related to but they're people that are really important to us because they're part of our network. But I don't think – I think if I had to come across that in this role, they will get it (Participant # 9).

The limited lack of understanding about the importance of sorry business (when someone dies) ceremony and processes is evident in the following statement.

> Our practice framework, acknowledges the importance of ceremony and connection to country and mob and celebration of who we are as an Aboriginal person. The other framework does not acknowledge Sorry Business. They are very opposite in how we work with each other. Very different (Participant # 9).

This lack of acknowledgment and understanding about grieving processes was identified by participants as both challenging and oppressive to First Nations people and demonstrates limited or no understanding about the First Nations worldviews. Frequent and premature deaths in Aboriginal communities are common and the rates of suicide are high, some communities have compounded grieving processes. Participants indicated this was often disregarded by mainstream colleagues and workers and enacted with an aggressive critique of time taken and overt and often disbelieving questioning about familial linage and connections. This type of questioning undermines the level solidarity and unity that each First Nations community members have with each other.

Research Participants identified challenging and oppressive body language and statements made by from their mainstream colleagues when referring to the identity of First Nations people. As mentioned previously First Nations identity underpins their epistemology in fact, it is key to their First Nations connections their reality and purpose. Therefore it is not surprising that the following statement proved to be quite distressing for Research Participants. This statement demonstrated their colleagues' lack of knowledge about Aboriginal worldview and as a result capacity to communicate sensitivity around Identity. Mainstream colleagues appeared to have pre-conceived ideas of Aboriginal identity which do not fit with a First Nations worldview. Participants believed this hubris approach demonstrated mainstream workers' inability to deconstruct their historical oppressive contexts about Identity. The fact that Aboriginal people's identity is defined as homogenous without question and appreciation of nations and difference is challenging, and reflects those workers' oppressive practice. This Research Participant questioned this and articulated the reasons why this process is oppressive.

> Some non-Aboriginal workers will go, "Oh they're supposed to be Aboriginal," and might raise the eyebrow, but I will always support the client and I will have words with the worker that said that, that they've got no right to do that (Participant # 9).

The lack of understandings about First Nations Worldview included exploring participants' understandings and use of an Aboriginal worldview in their practice. Interestingly, participants adopted a questioning stance and were reluctant to make a definitive statement about the meaning of an Aboriginal Practice Framework based on their identity as First Nations people. Research Participants chose to critique the idea of a generic Aboriginal Healing Framework and apply ideas from their clients' needs. They refuted the prescriptive and didactic definition an Aboriginal Healing Framework. For example, participants questioned:

> Everyone talks about Aboriginal healing framework but what is the basis of it? (Participant #5).

> Who determines that framework is the only framework and that you can't work out of it? (Participant #6).

It is possible that the lack of consensus or firm definition of an Aboriginal Healing Framework, may reflect the cultural preference in Australia First Nations peoples to their collective ontology. Culturally Australia's First Peoples have engaged collectively with making meaning, leading to a partial or cautious approach to 'definitions'.

All participants expressed a strong commitment to holistically supporting First Nations individuals and their communities in relation to experiences of trauma and violence. The quote below suggests that for some participants this arises from the failure of current and past approaches to healing. This is an example of a Participant expressing the responsibilities within their roles to meet the needs of First Nations people who are seeking support for their experiences of historical systemic and interpersonal trauma.

> The problem is, is that people look, I've just said it that they look with today's lens and that's not going to – that hasn't worked yet. It hasn't worked so we have to change what we're doing. It's not working how they're operating now. We have to be the change agents in that (Participant # 11).

One participant defined their practice when developing environments for clients to yarn or find their big voice. They related to this as constructive yarning. Whilst this participant had a set agenda the flexibility in terms of developing rapport and security with the group was established in their practice. The agenda as such was set but not rigid. The group developed rapport and safety before they felt confident to discuss the actual agenda item that was articulated.

> I will go in with a set agenda and whatnot. Not agenda. I call it constructive yarning. There can be a topic and we'll put it up on the board and this is what we're going to talk about. We may not even talk about that subject until the last half hour of the session because I'll let the conversation flow and flow until they're ready to talk about it and then once you open that up, you can't stop the talking. It's good. It's not direct. This way works wonders (Participant # 12).

Participants discussed certain capacities that supported their practice when working with first Nations people. These included the nature of flexibility and the ability to engage with what you are advocating for, e.g.

self-care, transparency. The appreciation of processes is relevant and needs to be articulated within the context of service provision and client expectations. Allowing for an organic process you are committed to listening and being there for clients' questions and comments.

> Another good thing I do especially with the young girls is I'll take them and we'll all get pedicures together. They're all lined up with their feet in water and we'll talk about that. It's not that driving counselling thing where there's no real eye contact. There's enough closeness that we can open up and talk and they can't go anywhere (Participant # 12).

> You have to be flexible and go with the flow. The type of group in your case, your groups and clients are actually the ones that are dictating how you express the support that you're providing, all the education (Participant # 12).

> try to make people feel better at the end of a session than they did walking in, in anything that I do. I'm a real energy person so I'll go off the energy and I'll try and shift the energy by doing different kind of activities. If there's one person that's talking too much, you break them in groups so you create an energy where the energy flows (Participant # 12).

> One incident comes to mind when I was speaking at [redacted] too. I was speaking about – 'You don't want to listen to it and I respect that you don't want to listen to it so maybe, do you want to go downstairs and grab a cuppa while I talk about this?' I wasn't going to stop the other girls learning because one girl didn't want to hear about it and I wasn't about to get into why she didn't want to hear about it because that wasn't the time and place. You know what I mean? (Participant # 12).

> I'm always very upfront about what I'm going to do. I love transparency. I like to be transparent straight up. This is my plan. This is what I want the outcomes to be but I'm grateful for everything that will come out after it. I like transparency and I like it to be organic (Participant # 12)

Initial engagement required participants to work with clients and groups to define safety. Some participants identified the challenges of

initiating and developing rapport with clients and groups. They articulated challenging moments when clients did not feel comfortable with discussing their personal and often traumatic issues. Developing and setting up the environment as a secure and safe place was identified as critical component to their workplace role and responsibility, including setting up a safe space that meets individual needs, like for example gender – in this regard women who are experiencing domestic and family violence.

This is something that I have not seen or heard in western worldview yarns about identity. Participants discussed setting up safe place with First Nations women who experienced domestic violence:

> which meant Coming together as one as a group of like-minded women. Women want a safe place to meet. So they can talk about trauma – Domestic Violence. Opportunity to set up a safe environment to talk about DV. Appreciating the great difficulty for women to talk about DV (Participant # 12).

4.5 Challenging western practices

Participant identified bureaucratic processes like policies and procedures as challenging. They viewed 'red tape' as limiting when working with 'our people', this is because of the rigour and limitations that apply with strict policies and rules. They discussed benefits around being flexible and gave examples of how they applied. They related to this process as 'our way' and most importantly our responsibility and obligations. This is an example of colonial constructs, where the development and implementation of services are not necessarily geared to First Nations peoples who have experienced compound and complex trauma. These colonial constructs do not take into account and consideration First Nations' worldviews. This is essentially a challenge to access and equity for First Nations' people. Participant needed to be creative with development and implementation of their service. Participants identified their practices around this as being flexible and client focused. They viewed it from a strength based trauma-informed perspective. This is the desired outcome to overcome the following structural issues that impact greatly on the effective service delivery to First Nation clients.

> This is where the boundaries come in, and the boundaries get squished. I always say red tape. You make the red tape into

> pink elastic when you're dealing with our people. That's what you have to do, because our responses and responsibilities and obligations are so much deeper. They involve so much more I don't think an Aboriginal person puts red tape on anything. Our boundaries – it's like disabilities (Participant # 9).
>
> Policies and procedures define red tape and they expect people to be bound by that, and we could do that (Participant # 9).
>
> We expect them to break them. We expect them to push them. If they don't push them and break them and pull and pull, they're not going to learn. So why can't companies do that? Why can't the government do that? If you're going to put red tape up there, expect us to push and pull. Bend it a bit. What does it hurt? And there's just so much that we need to stretch. Even so many corporations that they're not holistic. They'll go this far and then that's it. They're like timing. Like you look at Medicare and you look at the – they give 10 sessions, 10 one-hour sessions in 12 months (Participant # 9).

Participants raised another point of contention: an example of where colonial constructs or inappropriate service development is evident, which is in the timeframe set aside for counselling or yarning circle time. Participants identified this as the magic hour. Magic in that you are expected to connect with a client in that time. Magic as we know it is often unrealistic.

> The magic one hour. But in that one hour, you've got 10 minutes of introduction. Let's get to know this person. Then you've got maybe 20 minutes for a conversation. Then you have to start the wind-up, and the last 20 minutes is you've got to sign paperwork, you've got to finish up, you've got to make appointment for the next person (Participant # 9).

Participants identified unrealistic expectations from their hierarchy – service managers and team leaders. They expect Aboriginal staff to have certain western professional development to meet the needs of Aboriginal clients that access their services. Participant identified the difference in discourse as a challenging barrier.

> When non-Aboriginal people think we don't know – then they try to teach us by referring books or presenting at conferences. When you read documents that are coming forth from non-Aboriginal presenters and you go to workshops and things, they're presenting what we already know. They just word it differently but it's the same thing and it's just new to them whereas we know it. So whether they've picked it up through training or whether, I don't know, but it just seems to be more and more when I'm going to workshops, non-Aboriginal workshops, I'm hearing the same philosophies and the same things that Aboriginal people know. Have always known (Participant # 1).

> Some do. I don't like tick-a-box organisations. I don't want to just come in and they just say, 'Do this training' and that's it, not really care about the outcomes (Participant # 3).

Participants have identified challenging practice framework. Participant's work ethics are not acknowledged or honoured, and in some cases they work to standards that do not reaffirm their purpose of making a world a better place. Those standards are direct outcomes of unrealistic policies that does not include epistemologies and ontologies.

> with the western philosophy, is you have to work on your own. You have to be able to work here. You have to get your pay packet but you work to these standards. If you don't work to these standards, you're out. You have to consider the policies and procedures of the company you work for or the workplace definitely that's a western framework, definitely, but it's not inclusive, is it (Participant # 1).

Research Participants identified their role of protectors and nurturers of children and young people. This belief is embedded within their role as frontline worker, counsellor, group worker and community development workers. They see this part of the their role as significant and is linked to their tribal responsibility of protecting and nurturing children. They see this as a way of transforming their ways of doing around child rearing. The idea of it takes a community or tribe to raise a child resonated with their thinking about practice in the unpredictable and often confusing and overwhelming

area of child protection. Their links to children especially those children who are under the watchful observation of child protection interventions.

> A lot of nannies to help with family and children relying on each other for everything; from for caring children and gathering food and resources and ceremony. Tribal existence – Yeah definitely. And I think the more we, sorry I'll just say this quickly. I think the more we use it the more it comes to us (Participant # 6).

Research Participants identified the nature of their work as critical – the busyness of their work. The socio political and historical context of First Nation people, families and communities, has morphed into trans- and inter-generational trauma experiences and therefore a high extent of interpersonal abuse experiences. Participants identified that clients wont access agencies that have not proven their capacity to provide a cultural safe service and where historical oppressive experiences becomes their narrative. First Nations staff need collective support and guidance to support their advocacy work which emphasises tribal ways and purpose especially when ensuring their referral networks are culturally safe. They are employed for that, however there has not been much thought within context of worldviews. This needs to be embedded within the overall philosophy of the Agency.

> The challenges for us in our work space is busyness. There's so much to do and it's not having a good framework for saying no to that. It's the binary of the passion and the good thing. The downside of that is what do you choose to say no to? And that busyness then, because Aboriginal stuff is so busy and the Aboriginal team is so busy, you could kill everybody. So, we might kill ourselves with our kindness and our passion and our drive and our determination. It might be the end of us (Participant # 2).

Participant identified ongoing professional demands. Work expectations that First Nations staff be available to attend meetings and participate in committees, simply because they are Aboriginal. People that know their 'Aboriginal' identity, usually are aware of their tribal affiliations and have some understanding of First Nations worldviews for e.g. connections to country and family.

The challenging factor is that there are First Nations people who don't have those understandings and are employed in an identified position. This is to no fault of their own, the very nature of Australia's colonial history which was meant to wipe out the 'Aboriginal' race. The colonial governments implemented strategies likened to genocide. One such practice was the removal of over 50000 Aboriginal children from their homes. The children were dispossessed from family, country, language and culture. The abducted children are known as the 'Stolen Generations'. The expectation from services and community can be confronting and often challenging for those workers supporting victims of interpersonal violence. The challenge for workers who do not know their tribal epistemologies adds unnecessary pressure and this pressure could prove to be detrimental to those workers and their target groups:

> People that know they're Aboriginal but don't know anything about where they come from, that they struggle because of their identity (Participant # 2).

Chapter 5. Privileging First Nations Voices: Part B – Worldview

The nature of this research is to privilege First Nations people's voices about how they work to meet the cultural and the fundamental human rights needs of their First Nations clients and service users. This supports the idea of Rigney (1999) that Indigenous Research Methods maintain the principles that Indigenous voices are heard and privileged. It is through honouring the Research Participants' voices that this study aimed to create an emancipatory process allowing resistance of dominate epistemologies.

The previous chapter spoke to data themes, this chapter filter those themes into a First Nations' worldview more specifically their epistemology, ontology and axiology. In the methodology discussion (Chapter 3) I detailed the process that led to the decision to present the Research Participants' experiences from two different positions (Chapters 4 and 5). As discussed previously, some quotes are repeated across the two chapters, revealing the difference between a more Western analysis approach and a First Nations Worldview. My position is not that one is better than the other but that both have something important to contribute to knowledge building and practice/skills development.

5.1 Defining practice from a First Nations perspective – Worldview

Yarning circles and individual yarn ups provided participants with an opportunity to discuss and explore their ideas and practice when supporting First Nations individuals and their communities in relation to experiences of institutional and interpersonal trauma. Research Participants came to recognise and assert the importance of their cultural essence – their indigeneity or epistemology (ways of knowing), axiology (ways of being) and ontology (ways of doing). Indigeneity in this context relates to participants history post 1788 and this locates their voices as; voices of resistance and resilience. According to Feyo-King, "an indigenise ideology is developed as a result of the invasion of an indigenous nation or land mass by another nation" (Fejo-King, 2014, p. 59). An active form of

resistance to colonial constructs was evident within the practice of the participants. The participants were vigilant to ensure epistemologies are incorporated within practice. Worldviews in this context are a process of identifying and reconnecting with their client's epistemology – ways of knowing, ontology – ways of being and axiology – ways of doing, which makes their response receptive and proactive of their clients voices and their sacred stories.

After establishing cultural safety with Research Participants within the yarning circle or yarn ups, as noted earlier, each yarn commenced with a discussion of how participants understood and defined their practice. These included questions such as: how would you describe your practice to someone who hadn't heard of this approach? What does it look like? What does it feel like? What are some words that best describes your understandings and feelings about your practice?

Research participants are clearly defined the process that needs to occur to ensure First Nations rights are identified and upheld within context of service delivery. The idea of a practice framework, has to reflect the needs of particpants narratives about what they find as a supportive and empowering service delivery, which is based on their individual worldview.
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> The problem is, is that people look, I've just said it that they look with today's lens and that's not going to – that hasn't worked yet. It hasn't worked so we have to change what we're doing. It's not working how they're operating now. We have to be the change agents in that. (Participant # 11)

> Everyone talks about Aboriginal healing framework but what is the basis of it? (Participant #5)

> Who determines a framework as the only framework and that you can't work out of it? (Participant #6)

These comments by the Research Participants question the existence of a specific (or single) didactic and mono-directional framework. The Research Participants spoke more of what they thought was the nature of their own, unique, practice Framework. The data suggests the nature of practice Framework related to individual Indigeneity, their essence; their

epistemologies – ways of knowing, axiologies – ways of being, and ontologies – ways of doing (Wilson, 2003). Identity, most particularly their Indigenous cultural identity and Worldview, was identified by many participants as informing their practice in supporting First Nations people who have experienced institutional and interpersonal trauma. The Figure (framework) below draws on the experiences of the Research Participants to illustrate how Worldview is employed in their practice. It differs in important ways to Wilson's visual representation used in the analysis phase (Chapter 4), with ways of knowing, doing and being presented as embedded concentric circles.

The development of framework emerged from the yarning circles. The heart of First Nations communities is with children, elders and mother earth. They are the axis in which First Nations people develop and maintain their purpose. The purpose for First Nation people irrespective of their tribal affiliations are to nurture, care and protect epistemology, axiology and ontology of their tribes to ensure the growth of children and young people through the lifespan and thus the survival of the tribe. This is achieved through the teachings and guidance of Elders. Elders' wisdoms teach children the importance of mother earth and reinforces their responsibilities nurture, care and protect mother earth and all her entities. This life process is cyclic – Elders speak, children learn, and the tribe survives. This Framework emerged from Research Participants' exploration of their worldview, their tribal purpose and the core teachings of their elders and ancestors of how to best support First Nations people who have experienced institutional and interpersonal trauma.

Figure 6. Representation of how Participants' use Worldview in their practice (Designed by Rebekah Terare and Natai Terare 2018)

The following 3 sections directly speak to the emergence of Worldview; Epistemology – ways of knowing, Axiology – ways of doing and Ontology – ways of being. This image aims to illustrate how this Worldview protects and supports the wellbeing of those who have experienced institutional and interpersonal trauma, particularly Elders, Mother Earth and Children. The image clearly articulates the axis or central belief of First Nations are Elders, Children and mother earth. The links to mother earth via the wisdoms of elders to the teaching of children about survival, wellbeing, love and lore. All three coexist to create harmony through lores which are entwined within epistemology (our ways of knowing), axiology – our ways of doing and our ontology – our ways of being. The wellbeing and future of First Nations lays with our love and lore to protect, nurture and support our elders and children.

5.2 Epistemology – Ways of Knowing

Epistemology defines our knowledge. Epistemology in essence defines our knowledge and discusses the nature and characteristics. It assumes that knowledges are different. In essence, it is "the study of the nature of thinking or knowing. It involves the theory of how we come to have knowledge" (Wilson, 2008, p. 33). Often an epistemology is developed without conscious thought; it can be influenced by our standpoint (gender, economic position, ethnicity, culture, lived experience, religious background and/or political perspective) and is intrinsically connected to our ontology (Wilson, 2008).

Participants spoke of diverse ways of knowing, rather than a singular truth. These unique ways of knowing reflect individual cultural identities, informed by cultural values of relatedness, integrity, connection and responsibility. These ways of knowing informed their practice in supporting First Nations people who have experienced interpersonal and interpersonal trauma. A sense of belonging flows from these ways of knowing, shaping how Research Participants work with clients or service users. This idea concurs with Thayer-Bacon (1997) who refers to this process as relational epistemologies as "knowledge in relation to knowers" (p. 240). The concept of a relational epistemology highlights that we grow up as social beings (p. 241) maintaining connections and responsibilities.

Being mindful of one's relatedness, integrity, connection and responsibility to clients creates humility among human service workers. This contrasts with Western claims to expertise that can increase distance and power between worker and client. In the Yarning Circles, Research Participants identified their tribal groups and cultural practices that provided the foundation for their practice. They reflected on childhood development, with dominant influences from significant family members who had responsibilities of their care, nurturing, learning and protection.

> My identity is important and it establishes empowerment. I was lucky enough to be reared by three extremely strong, staunch Aboriginal Dhungutti women. They were Dunghutti women; my mother, my grandmother, my great grandmother and so my connection to that and to them allows me to do what I do today because they've paved that way for me. There's things that I do that my grandmother had done and I'm now seeing my

> daughter do it because that's been passed down. I've got a 'blood memory' (Participant # 12).

Epistemology – what you know about yourself and your tribal connections is key to providing a practice framework; the following quote from a research participant sets the scene and provides understanding of the importance of identity when providing support services to First Nations people. This statement reclaims Aboriginal people as not the problem. This Research Participant sums up their feelings about First Nations identity:

> [you] know what I'm fortunate, I am fortunate, I know it's not everyone's experience, but I seen and I put in in quote, that the deficits all around me growing up. Like a lot of us have, you know in the home and in the community. But for not one second did my soul ever allow me to believe that that was an Aboriginal issue. I've always as long as I can remember been as proud as fucking punch to be an Aboriginal person. So I never ever looked around at the issues and thought that they were ours alone, you know. Like I never, I always tell people that, I can't remember a time when I didn't know I was Aboriginal and wasn't extremely proud of that fact. So it just, that all wraps it up for me then (Participant # 7).

Epistemology (ways of knowing) plays a big part with connections. Connections in this context are broader than the locality of themes as noted in Chapter 4. Connection within the context of First Nations worldview is significant and presents as principle around the significance of humanity, self and belonging. The following quote explains this in greater detail.

> My identity is important and it establishes empowerment. I was lucky enough to be reared by three extremely strong, staunch Aboriginal Dhungutti women. They were Dunghutti women; my mother, my grandmother, my great grandmother and so my connection to that and to them allows me to do what I do today because they've paved that way for me. There's things that I do that my grandmother had done and I'm now seeing my daughter do it because that's been passed down. I've got a 'blood memory'. (Participant # 12)

Given the extent of historical and ongoing decolonisation with First Nations tribes this is a profound statement. The principle of Connections within tribal context has survived within this family and presents as a force of empowerment and self-determination. The strong sense of tribal connections explains story of resilience, strength and emancipation. The connection to blood memory explains the significant link to ancestors. Spirituality plays a profound role; the reflection on connections to Ancestors weaves it way throughout the data and thesis. Connection to ancestors is embedded in the psyche of research participants. This also explains this Research Participant's ability to maintain professional practice within the trauma sector. The ultimate responsibility is to make them proud and thus practice reciprocity with spirit world and within practice.

The following statement also reinforces the connection to the spirit world and the responsibility of reciprocity to make Ancestors proud:

> If I'm confused or anything, I'll just centre myself and I'll just say, 'Nan, tell me, show me. What am I doing? Let me know.' Then a couple of days later something will come up and I'll go, 'Okay, that's what I have to do. I just put that out there and then I allow it to come into whatever form it is. It's not so much that she – although sometimes I've heard her voice (Participant # 10).

Knowing epistemology, your ways of knowing, asserts your responsibilities to practice and maintain tribal ways that include reciprocity, connections, relatedness, integrity, belonging and identity. Research Participants articulated the importance of these principles to their standards of practices. The following statement links epistemological principles to connections and reconnections, which potentially in a western sense located the worker in vulnerable position where their voice needed to be silent, and deep listening needed to occur so that Elders' wisdom is received from position of absolute respect and humility. The Research Participant in this case encouraged the sharing of sacred knowledge without inferring a Western thought. They trusted the process which ultimately allowed the sharing of information that embraces connection and ultimately links belonging and identity:

> Because we used to do that as a community, not as an individual. That's part of our job in our community is looking

> after each other, and we don't do that real well in a lot of places. So whereas you look at our elders, they don't do that so much. Well, not here, not the ones that I have a lot to do with. I find them so loving and so willing to talk about mob, so willing to say, "Yes, I knew your grandfather. I remember when you were little." Now, that gives me identity (Participant # 9).

Integrity is key to one's epistemology – their ways of knowing. Maintaining open communication about what you do is a reflection of your integrity. Transparency in this case relates; open communication, telling your truth about your work and what you can and can't do. Establishing relationships through truth and awareness of responsibilities. The nature of this process is reaffirming and empowering. It allows Research Participants to establish clear boundaries about their capacities with clients.

> [It's] Important to be transparent and clients know who they are talking to. They need to know who you are in terms of where your from and what you believe etc. The trust that you just get, knowing that you're on the phone to someone else who's Aboriginal (Participant # 3).

> Truth is an important part of practice; truth to self and truth to clients (Participant # 1).

The nature of relatedness provides the Research Participants with intent to initiate a meaningful engagement with their client. This process is part of the epistemology their knowing that there needs to be deep appreciation to relate and connect to clients as part of the healing process and thus embedded within their professional practice. The realities of trauma experiences are challenging. One of the major implications are the experiences of disconnect. Therefore, when institutional and interpersonal trauma is perpetrated this creates a major disconnect for adults and children (Herman, 2015). The Research Participants practice their epistemology – their knowing of the importance of relatedness which ensures meaningful connections with clients and their non-offending families. Connections are then encouraged and supported with individual clients. Clients are supported and encouraged to explore the meaning of connectedness for them. The epistemology, knowing about the powerfulness of mother earth and the daily rising of grandfather sun,

reassure their connection and therefore their obligation to honour and support clients.

> Mother Earth, spirituality and dreaming and dreamtime. So we've got all those responsibilities and obligations that non-Aboriginal people have no idea about, so we have to incorporate them with what they expect. Mother Earth, Father Sun. Yeah, we work within these. Our obligations as an Aboriginal person (Participant # 7)

Within the healing process, Research Participants consider the meaningfulness of connections through a sense of belonging and ultimately identity. Their epistemology – their knowing allows for them to introduce ceremony their axiology their doing. Research Participants ensure clients are welcomed through a welcoming ceremony. Welcoming ceremony includes smoking process. The tribal epistemology the knowing is that ceremonial smoking process eliminates harmful restless energy and reinvigorates with meaningful restful energy. It is also known as a cleansing. Smoking will also allow for restless spirits to find peace. This significant process is to allow for beginning of new and meaningful relationships developed through connections with clients and their families by letting go. People who have had the pleasure of 'participating in a smoking ceremony', have been known to crave the cleansing process. The smoking ceremony is practiced through the initial meet and greet process – the aim is to connect and relate to each other. This will set a foundation based on trust, love and respect. Once this process is established then the process of introducing a deeper, more meaningful Dadirri circle work and support strategies can be introduced.

> Mother Earth, spirituality and dreaming and dreamtime. So we've got all those responsibilities and obligations that non-Aboriginal people have no idea about, so we have to incorporate them with what they expect. Mother Earth, Father Sun. We work within these. Our obligations as an Aboriginal person. (Participant # 7)

> So in terms of my [redacted] and [redacted] connections, it's important for me to behave in a certain way. Smoking Ceremony makes you responsible. (Participant # 9)

Connections are integral part of epistemology – knowing. The concentric journey of principles that underpin epistemological ways of knowing for Research Participants is key to their well-being and to their practice. Principles like belonging and identity are key components. One could debate the relevance of belonging to making connections or having an understanding of connections. In the context of working with First Nations children, adults and communities who institutional and interpersonal trauma within the human services sector, one does need to have knowledge of their belonging and therefore their connections. Research Participants clearly articulate the integral role this plays when working with First Nations people who have been oppressed by institutional (racism, oppression, dispossession and genocide) and interpersonal trauma (domestic and family violence, sexual assault and child maltreatment; physical & psychological abuse and neglect). They argue that you need to have knowledge of your tribal belongings and the connections that belonging brings.

> Connection – understanding connections to family, understanding connections to country. how you identify it's important. they're the most important things. It's who you are, your connection (Participant # 8)

> Everyone is the identity police and my thing on that as a fair-skinned Aboriginal woman, I look like a white woman, let's not pretend I don't but I'm grounded in who I am and where I come from because I've had the privilege of growing up in my family. I know what the struggle is that my mother had, my grandmother had, my great grandmother had and that I had. Growing up in a big Aboriginal house and a big Aboriginal family and Aboriginal community so I know that (Participant # 1).

The following Research Participants' statements regarding the empowering process their epistemological ways of knowing provides for them. The re-empowerment of Research Participants to reclaim and re-create their rightful epistemological – their knowing principals of belonging and identity. They use this process to support their trauma-informed practice with First Nations clients. These ways of knowing are embedded in their psyche – they know and they refer to it. They embrace the empowering and liberating transformation of feelings it brings. The

following statements provide reassurance that the essence of First Nations contemporary epistemological knowledge provides an emancipation platform to work from to overcome the long term effects of colonisation and land acquisition, which were the direct impact of the myth of Terra Nullius.

> My [redacted] essence supports me to appreciate others. Knowing that we have not lost our culture. Our Culture maybe done differently, it is still passed down to the next generation (Participant # 12).

> you know rules and laws and stuff like that, like we come from a 'mob' of people that didn't need law enforcement like there is today because there was a respect for rules and there was a respect for law (Participant # 6).

> I feel blessed that we've come from that gene pool. That's our genes that we come from that, that's royalty as far as I'm concerned. but when I'm talking from that space that I think it's a message from my ancestors, it is so spot on, it is so clear, it's really strong and defined message, and then I sit back and I think that was my ancestors (Participant # 6).

Spiritual knowledge plays a big role in this process of reclamation and self-determination. The reclaiming and self-determining nature of epistemology demonstrates First Nations people's understanding of the life giving and saving importance of knowing and reclaiming worldview and applying relevant knowledge to show their commitment to this change. An active form of resistance to colonial constructs is evident within practice. Participants are vigilant to ensure epistemologies are incorporated within practice. This process establishes and ensures the theory of privileging Indigenous voices (Rigney, 1999), an active form of support and resistance within their practice. Castellano concurs Aboriginal world views reinforces human action, to achieve social good, must be located in an ethical, spiritual context as well as its physical and social situation (Castellano, 2004). The following statement reaffirms the importance of Research Participants' connections to country and the responsibilities that go with that. They demonstrate their belonging and identity, and this then gives them opportunity to be inclusive to maintain tribal or collective approaches within practice:

> Yeah. So my clan is [redacted] from [redacted]. So that's [redacted] area of my mother's. But also, my father's [redacted] from the [redacted] area. Helps me connect with others as a group. Also, other Aboriginal people of other nations within the whole of Australia is probably as a collective – when I say mob (Participant # 9).

The reality of an Aboriginal Worldview (or in this of thesis First Nations Worldview) and the epistemological process is located within a human rights framework, that give them rights like connections to family and to country. These are their rights, this is known, this is lived which according to science is over 140000 years or according to First Nations since time immemorial or since the very first sunrise.

> When you start to acknowledge the fact that they're human being first and foremost, they have a beautiful culture and they do have a mob. Whether they belong to it still or not, they still have that mob (Participant # 9).

5.3 Axiology – Ways of Doing

All participants expressed strong commitment to holistically supporting First Nations individuals and their communities in relation to experiences of trauma and violence. There are two aspects that underpin Holistic support. They include Worldview which includes epistemology – ways of knowing, axiology – ways of doing, and ontology – ways of being. The 2nd aspect includes socio historical and political context post Terra Nullius, the impact of colonisation, genocide and oppression.

This section will highlight Research Participants' ways of doing their axiology or their practice which includes support, care and protection for their clients. The following statements are examples of Research Participants expressing their responsibilities within human service roles to meet the needs of First Nations people who are seeking support for their experiences of historical and current institutional and interpersonal trauma, whilst providing opportunities to develop safe and secure practice to create space for clients to participate.

Research Participants define their role as advocates for social change and social justice to start reclaiming their worldview, resulting in a

process of decolonising. This process ensures, responsibilities to create environments where clients feel safe to share their sacred stories. It is where Research Participants provide holistic services where systemic process are developed to support clients. Systemic process includes adaption of western processes to include axiology – ways of doing, which is ceremonial. This allows for storytelling where clients share their sacred stories of pain and trauma and develop capacities to recreate their future based on healing, connection and belonging. Justice and social justice is also a process to move forward.

As the following statement explains, support arises from the failure of current and past approaches to healing. Research Participants are locating their practice within an Indigenous ideology – as active agents of resistance.

> The problem is, is that people look, I've just said it that they look with today's lens and that's not going to – that hasn't worked yet. It hasn't worked so we have to change what we're doing. It's not working how they're operating now. We have to be the change agents in that (Participant # 11).

Establishing safety and security are key to providing human services to First Nations people who have been affected by institutional and interpersonal trauma. Research Participants are actioning practice to support change with clients. The way forward for this is to establish opportunities for change. Research Participants' discussed safety and security for clients as a way forward. Safety and security was developed within yarning circles, face to face and telephone yarn ups. This provided opportunity for participants to discuss their practice when initiating engagement with First Nations clients who have experienced institutional and interpersonal violence. They identified that privileging first Nations' ways of knowing, doing and being is the principal outcomes of their practice. Providing opportunity for First Nations peoples to identify and define their cultural ways is indicative of cultural focused practice with intent to reclaim worldviews. Given historical issues of invasion and colonisation this is key, to ensure safe and secure practice.

> You know that there's that there, there's that commitment there. Yeah. You can take it up straight away (Participant # 4)

Participants identified safety and trust as critical components to their practice. Participants identified safety within the initial engagement as a priority; once this is established, then ongoing development of trust becomes part of the process, where communications are open and the process of storytelling begins. This process ensures the establishment of connections and relationships.

> Once connections are established they/we trust – it is automatic. An interesting concept of borrowed trust when you know someone in the family and make that connection (Participant # 10).

The concept of borrowed trust was explored. This is linked to connections with kinships. Research Participants identified this as a positive process, where they highlight connections with their family members, or the clients family member/s and then the client assess their capacity to trust based on this connection.

> Borrowed trust helps us find safety. How do we honour the borrowed trust? What sort of things do you do to manage that? We honour – look, if we connected in that way, you didn't know me personally but you know a mob – a member of my mob. I would need to honour my family in our interaction. But you've actually borrowed trust from there (Participant # 10)

The Participant discussed this further and expanded on the underpinning knowledge of this process. Participants connect their axiology – their ways of doing to their epistemology and ontology. It is inherited trust. This way of doing clearly locates practice with kinship ties and sheds light on the importance of connections to ancestors. These connections become illuminated.

> Once you start making connections with families the trust becomes automatic. It is like you have borrowed trust because you know someone in the family. We are good at finding safety with each other. This then becomes cyclic – trust goes around. Respect is embedded into this whole process (Participant #12).

Participant reinforced the importance of developing respectful relationships as essential and key to practice when working with First

Nations people who have experienced institutional and interpersonal trauma. Participants defined respect as broad, they clearly outlined their practice standards with clients, with intent to connect and ensure that clients felt safe and secure.

> Respect all knowledges (Participant # 2).

> Treating each other with respect and kindness. You don't have like to someone to be able to respect them (Participant # 1).

The connection to epistemological understandings of reciprocity links axiology – ways of doing with ways of knowing. This knowledge underpins standard practice to ensure engagement is meaningful.

> Trust and Respect relate to us all; client and colleagues alike. Like you know you got to give respect to get respect. Respect covers a lot of things. Respecting. Be respectful. And just ability to be able to talk or express your thoughts (Participant # 7).

It is through the initial engagement that Research Participants explained their practice with clients. They talked to ways of empowering clients through establishing validation for their clients knowledge. They reassured clients that it was their opinion or their knowledge was ok and in their context. Their opinions were honoured and respected. Research Participants predicted certain outcomes and presented this to clients as a way of validating potential feelings.

> There is not wrong answers and if I say something that people disagree that is ok. (Participant # 5).

> There will be no comeback if you disagree. That is as far as it goes (Participant # 4).

Research Participants strategically planned circle processes to honour group dynamics. They developed strategies to support process and connections by eliminating potential for members to feel alienated. This gave circle members better understanding of each other and more specifically opportunity to respect differences. Research Participants discussed certain things that impacted on circle dynamics. Circles, like individual yarn ups, are sacred and circle members are given the

opportunity to discuss what this means for them. They get to define the processes with the understanding that it will maximise their participation. They suggested the following strategies supported the early circle development stages of the yarning circle. It is noteworthy that I refer and repeat quotes (as mention in the introduction and methodologies) the purpose is to reinforce the collective practice from a Western and First Nations Worldview.

> Not talking – one at a time. Not talking over each other. Respect our views (Participant # 3).

> There is not wrong answers and if I say something that people disagree that is ok. (Participant # 5).

> There will be no comeback if you disagree. That is as far as it goes (Participant # 4).

Research Participants measure their service based on clients outcomes. They identified key outcomes they looked for when supporting clients presenting with institutional and interpersonal trauma issues. Client-focused services consider practice that values and demonstrate appreciation of difference of each person; included in this are service users, workers and managers. Safe practice is clearly defined and promoted within services. In essence, it is about being able to create safety and security that is defined by each client based on their individual worldviews. Research Participants ensure clients opportunity to dialogue about what it is and how it feels to being safe and feeling safe in community. The following are examples of Research Participants' goals with regard to establishing client focused safe and secure approaches.

> Circle was identified as a key process to developing safe and secure environments (Participant # 6).

> Safety is held safe in a circle, because circle is circle of safety (Participant # 7).

> Systems in place to respond when you feel unsafe. If you are feeling unsafe. you can immediately fight about that (Participant # 6).

Research Participants were consistent and when defining their worldview and the worldview of clients utilizing their services. They linked their identity to their individual tribal nation and they demonstrated ability to apply this level of reclamation to their clients. They established respectful processes and opportunities for clients to identify and define their identity. They clearly articulated that identity was important. They consistently worked hard to establish a service that honoured clients ways of knowing, doing and being:

> The services must value difference and ensure culture is high priority (Participant # 9).

> Understand that we all come from different points of views, different experiences, different countries, different cultures and being respectful of each other's opinions (Participant # 12).

Research Participants talked about the importance of equality. In fact they develop their practice to ensure that each client believes and feels they are equal and that they are treated equally. Equality in a First Nations Worldview context means that every person is respected and treated as an equal; hence appreciation and acknowledgement of their individual worldview and their unique experiences of institutional and interpersonal trauma oppression. The following statements are indications of Research Participants creating safe environments to allow a process of sharing and caring.

> Equal cultural respect (Research Participant # 8).

> Validation and respect of personal knowledge – we are all equal (Research Participant # 7).

> Yeah, definitely acceptance (Research Participant # 6).

Developing support structures to support First Nations people who have experienced institutional and interpersonal violence can be very challenging. Research Participants also identified the challenging aspects and they have accommodated with strategies that ensure clear boundaries are maintained. The creation of sacred space is critical as it allows for clients to feel a sense of safety and security, with knowing that it is their sacred space. They define and decide which stories to share. The following

statements demonstrates Research Participants' commitment to developing safe spaces and circles:

> Safety means have your space and knowing your boundaries (Participant # 11).
>
> Having firm and clear boundaries, Safety is knowing your boundaries where they start and finish and sticking to that (Participant # 10).
>
> Keeping self-safe in work environments (Participant # 7)
>
> Standing firm with your beliefs (Participant # 11).
>
> You don't have to agree with someone to be kind to them (Participant # 7).
>
> Safety and security is about agreeing to disagree (Participant 1 #).

Research Participants demonstrated commitment to maintaining a decolonising process with clients. They achieved this by raising awareness and or consciousness raising ensuring clients about First Nations Worldviews. They noted Western frameworks as alien ways of knowing, doing and being. This way of thinking demonstrates Research Participants' ability to question process and adapt these to fit with individual clients needs and expectations. Within this context they maintain reflexivity too:

> Sometimes I question myself when I'm working here. Am I a good counsellor? Am I – they tell me at work I am but you question yourself because you think, 'Am I doing this right?' (Participant # 10)

Research Participants identified key strategies that Human Service Agencies can do to support their work. They stated that Agencies need to be clear about their service philosophy and if it is congruent with individual philosophies. The idea of 'white privilege' and 'class structures' and the significant role they play on how people holistic lives needs to be considered within this context. Research Participants indicated that services need to be aware of element of privileges for those accessing and those who are working in human services and develop strategies to combat

the oppressive and silencing outcomes that can infiltrate open, transparent and meaningful relationships.

> Agencies need to define their philosophy and its roots. Asking questions like are we middle class or are we upper class, what are the implications of this on people who don't identify as either (Participant # 9).

> The only thing is, when I've brought up Aboriginal issues with my boss and my team leader and my supervisor, it has – I've always been told that the organisation is more or less – the roots of it is white – I can't remember. They said middle class or upper class (Participant # 9).

Research Participants articulated Identity and belonging as an important component of safety. They stated that no one had the right to question or challenge one's identity. Identity is defined by the individual and no one else. It is expected a safe practice will accept individuals for who they say they are. It is not in anyone's best interest to question others identity. Participants had stated, the development of safe and secure space allowed their clients to explore, define and reclaim their identity– which is key to healing within First Nations worldview/s context. This is another indication of interconnectedness where axiology – ways of doing interconnects with epistemology – ways of knowing. This is another key component of First Nations worldviews that can provide guidance and validation to human service practice.

> You know you are safe and safe to be who you are (Participant # 1).

> Ability to form and share personal opinions (Participant # 2).

> You can voice your opinion. we all have different beliefs. the right to state beliefs (Participant # 3).

> We all don't think the same and it is okay not to agree with people (Participant # 5).

> Safety and security is big important. It is major factor of understanding who I am, where I am from and how I came to

be and it is all about Identity. It helps people to identify (Participant # 4).

Knowledge of Identity and belonging are therefore crucial when working within First Nations and trauma-informed sector. As critical as Identity and belonging is to human service practice, the challenging side or the dichotomy of dilemma of not knowing your connections remains. This can prove challenging as your identity is in most cases the passport to work in Identified positions. For those who don't have that information, which in most cases are due to the historical and socio political nature that impacted on First Nations peoples and their countries post-1788, like the stolen generations and dispossession policies, Identity and belonging in this case can be seen as a privilege and therefore come with elements of power:

Or questioning people in their roles. Questioning Around their identity (Participant # 11).

Identity needs to be explained more (Participant # 1).

Another example of difference within First Nations ideas of best practice or ways forward is the notion that we know, think and act the same way. This is not true; the fusion of other cultural and spiritual influences ensure our response to significant events are diverse and different. Safety and security in this context is part of who we are in terms of each of us defining who we are as a First Nation person, it is critical that these process always be respected. Therefore, it is suggested that people in the first instance maintain confidentiality and be respectful about identity until that individual is ready to share. The following participant statement deconstructs this process. Irrespective of people's view about the Northern Territory Intervention Response (NTIR) we need to be guided by safe and secure practice and appreciate that we all have an opinion and all have a right to voice it and we also committed to not judging this people who do not think the way you do. The challenge for people where the dialogue is profound and connections are being frayed or stopped due to this; then we all need to take a break and remember that there are number of strategic ways to reach the same end zone of ensuring community safety is maintained. These are not the views of the writer. The challenge here would be to ensure all voices are heard and that safe and secure spaces are made available where people directly impacted by the NTIR are privileged and heard.

> And I think about that stuff around the Northern Territory Intervention response where you've got one camp of people going, "We want the Intervention and we want." One camp of Aboriginal people going, "We need the Intervention," and one camp that's terribly impacted by the Intervention. Thinking about that because that's all viable in terms of an Aboriginal space. It doesn't make it less – doesn't make the person less Aboriginal because they've got a different – about things. That's what I think (Participant # 2).

Research Participants identified connection with clients as the key to a meaningful and relationships. They discussed ways in which they established client focused service provision. Through this process they defined establishing safety and security as critical point to work towards with their clients. They stated that safety is the key to developing connections with clients who had experience institutional and interpersonal trauma. They identified connections as a way forward to support clients who have had oppressive experience when their identity is questioned.

> Safe and secure services is where workers connect with clients (Participant # 7).

> Connection is important. If you don't connect with a service you are not going to utilise it. Ability to make links and relate (Participant # 11).

> Relatedness for me as an Aboriginal person creates part of the safety – with building trust and rapport to be able or allow open narrative and for those to feel safe enough to yarn (Participant # 6).

> Services need to feel warm and inviting (Participant # 1).

Research Participants unequivocally stated, decolonisation as fundamental to best practice with First Nations clients generally and more specifically those who have experience Institutional and Interpersonal trauma.

> you be as 'deadly' as you can be" (Participant # 6).

> "Services need to reflect Aboriginal ways of being (Participant # 7)
>
> Safety impacts on Physical appearance of services; Service has cultural relevant posters of Aboriginal people. (Participant # 11).
>
> Aboriginal artwork is evident. Circle mats are also a good way to show that services are thinking outside the box (Participant # 10).

Research Participants identified critical personal skills and knowledge as essential part of working with First Nations people. They identified key themes that locate their practice within a political nature – their Indigeneity. They identify personal, professional and service commitments as a process of practice development when defining, developing and providing human services to First Nations people. The key for non-First Nations Human Services is to accept that the prevalence of racism within Australian society against First Nations people is profoundly high and to develop policies and practice to combat this for both First Nations workers and clients. Employment of First Nations workers are considered a step in the right direction towards decolonising practice and maintaining safe and secure practice. Ensuring confidentiality is defined and clear for staff and clients, so that constructive feedback about workers and service provision is honoured and respected as a way forward. This is extremely important process of progressive and proactive service delivery. Their voices are honoured and acknowledge as a process of emancipatory process towards resistance of dominate epistemologies (Rigney, 1999).

Personal commitment

> Don't get identified jobs that advocate for Aboriginal people, when you don't know what it is like to grow up Aboriginal (Participant # 6).
>
> Identified positions need to look at working with mob through an Indigenous lens (Participant # 12).

Service commitments

Trust and Respect relate to us all; client and colleagues alike and trust (Participant # 8).

Confidentiality. I didn't feel like with the other one, I couldn't say I had a problem and it felt like I couldn't tell anyone else that I had a problem except for the other Aboriginal worker that is with me. I experience a racist act from a client. I felt safe enough to let management know and as soon as I told them, they stated, "You're not working with them" (Participant # 1).

[After a racist remark]: The manager came up and made sure I was okay. So, it was really good (Participant # 1).

They don't just – it's not tokenistic that you're employed there. They don't just do it because they need an Indigenous employee for a number, they do it because there's a need for it and they want to give that to the people who need it as well and they don't do it too well but they always ask us – they have an Aboriginal knowledge circle and they always ask us to give feedback on the parts of the reports that they do where it talks about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and the findings and even though I'm only [redacted], they really appreciate my feedback and they thank me for it which I think is important (Participant # 2).

Aboriginal identified positions, things like that – and policies and that, so I've got to go through those policies and terms of references and everything like that (Participants # 3).

They honour age and wisdom and your identity with all that (Participants # 4)

Participants overview - Safety occurs when clients, workers and managers are:

- Feeling safe when using service
- Feeling safe when working in service
- Feeling safe when managing service
- Feeling safe to share knowledges
- Validating knowledges that are different – we are all equal

- Feeling safe to create safe places

Participants primarily identified safety and security was key to their successful practice with First Nations. This is significant part of their axiology – their ways of doing. They reflect on the benefits a sense of safety and security brings for their target group. They are able to articulate their sacred stories, feel validated in doing this and reflect and connect with their worldview. Once this is established clients begin their healing journey through circles of connection by sharing stories, developing new rituals and ceremonies, gathering resources and new information about self and strengths, which liberates them to re-create meaning and purpose within their life.

The definition of safe and secure practice is broad and multi-dimensional. The following points were defined by participants as underpinning principles for Safety and Security practice with First Nations peoples around issues of Institutional and interpersonal trauma.

- Respect
- Trust
- Safety/Security
- Understanding of difference
- Equality
- Clear boundaries
- Identity
- Connection
- Decolonisation

Spirituality encompasses the essence of Indigenous peoples ways of being. Research Participants are practicing from their individual epistemological and ontological knowledge which links to spirituality and honourable connections to ancestors. Through this process they introduce First Nations Worldviews into the workplace and ultimately develop deeper understandings towards collective humility and cultural safe service delivery.

5.4 Ontology – Ways of Being

Definition of Ontology

Research Participants have articulated through this research their links to worldviews and more precisely linked their worldview to human service practice. Their ontology – ways of being; underpins their practice with clients. The ontological responsibilities of love, reciprocity, humility, respect, empathy, honour, truth and justice is evident in their practice. Research Participants spoke endearingly of the importance of supporting and nurturing clients with love, in its truest definition/sense, for humanity and mother earth.

They understand it as a way forward to reclaiming what they have known to be. The Research Participants acknowledge that this is part of their clients' worldview by making it a rite of passage. They reinforce ownership and support this with understandings around totem responsibilities. This process is nurtured with clients; in this context nurtured means definition and working through understandings by discussing their realities, according to the belief. Belief are in essence individual and in other contexts collective and or tribal. Exploring beliefs allows the client to define its existence, nature and characteristics; e.g. Where does it come from? What is it meaning? This is where creation stories are validated and defined to add meaning and purpose to clients' life.

The following statement explains the influences of ontology -ways of being that is unprecedented and at another profound level and example of Indigeneity is a staunch demonstration of decolonisation.

> They still have huge attachments to their homeland, regardless of whether they're welcome there or not. You can't take that away. It's down to her totems. It's down to her belief (Participant # 9).

> This is something that I have not seen or heard in western worldview yarns about identity (Participant # 4).

Beliefs systems are meaningful – they provide individuals with purpose and meaning, which in turn prepares them for life and capacity to manage the challenging aspect that normal part of everyday living. One's belief in themselves, familial and cultural and spiritual ways are therefore

very important and can be a source of an individual's emotional and psychological strength which in turns proves to be the hub of their sense of empowerment. The following statement explains the powerful nature of belief systems; and in this regard the belief in connections. This participant recalled their parent's capacity to identify as tribal which in this case was ad hoc. Their parent identified when they felt safe to do so, however the Research Participant made it very clear of their knowledge in their belief system that connection is especially important and therefore supported their meaning and purpose within their personal and professional practice.

> You know, connection to family, to mob, and to community. Knowing who you belong to. Knowing where I am from, because it was hard for me to put the jigsaw pieces together, especially with my mother, because as much as she identifies, she also doesn't identify (Participant # 10).

Research Participants identified key aspects of ontology – their belief system that supported and maintained their practice with First Nations' people experience with institutional and interpersonal trauma violations. Given that most First Nations workers have had experiences with institutional trauma and these experiences are complex. Their belief in their First Nations worldview acts as a source of positive aspects in their heavy work schedules. Their commitment to maintain worldviews is a source of strength, which is supported by tribal rituals like smoking ceremony.

> So in terms of my [redacted] and [redacted] connections, it's important for me to behave in a certain way. Smoking makes you responsible. Mother Earth, spirituality and dreaming and dreamtime. So we've got all those responsibilities and obligations that non-Aboriginal people have no idea about, so we have to incorporate them with what they expect. Mother Earth, Father Sun. Yeah, we work within these. Our obligations as an Aboriginal person is about honouring histories and ancestors (Participant # 10).

Participants identified and located their spiritual beliefs directly as connected to their ancestors. This relational aspects of this belief provides them with a purpose on both a personal and professional levels. As mentioned earlier most participants spoke of making their ancestors proud. The connection of these beliefs relates to their ontology relatedness and

thus their reciprocal responsibility enhances their sense of pride in self and their traditional histories and the struggle of their ancestors. This develops Research Participants capacities to provide services within the context of deep humanity and love. The awareness of their spiritual powerfulness of Ancestors is a provide purpose and guidance within their personal and professional relationships. The following statement of making ancestors proud, should never be underestimated. There is more to this statement than making someone proud. This level of commitment reinforces reflexivity to work better to ask questions of one's practice; questions that relate to how to make their practice better. The cognitive process is profound as it sets up opportunity to question practice with the intent to make changes that add value to their work with First Nations people and communities. This belief is so very profound: "Make ancestors proud" (Participant # 6).

Deep appreciation of self and tribal identity supports participants in providing effective services to First Nations clients. This allows for a process of de-colonising to occur. Constant re-scripting and re-claiming of old ways supports understanding of culture and beliefs, it ensures it is passed on in a process of sharing, caring and empowering.

> My [redacted] essence supports me to appreciate others. Knowing that we have not lost our culture. Our Culture maybe done differently, it is still passed down to the next generation (Participant # 2).

Maintaining Connections requires strong belief systems. Kinship are key principles that underpin Worldviews. Family in this context – the context of connections and kinship are the axis for all First Nations' children, adults and elders. It is family that establishes foundational values and principles for members to maintain lore and ceremony. Family is key to lifespan developmental stages of a child's growth. Unlike the common western family of two adults – First Nations families may have more than two adults caring, supporting and nurturing children and young people. Adults and young people play significant role in the children of the families' life. The mothering role is shared amongst adult and teenage women. The end result is that babies and children's needs are met by most of the family/clan. Family/clan is key to survival. The child forms attachment with all family/clan members and members provide love, care and protection. If we were to consider Maslow's hierarchy of needs, First Nations families and clans provided the self-actualisation, esteem, love and belonging, and

safety and physical needs were being met. This was considered significant in terms of understanding First Nations' people, children and adults who experienced systemic and interpersonal trauma. The implications are profound, which is why you need to approach from the perspective of collectiveness, together, 'no one gets left behind' attitude:

> I have in the past had problems where I've been questioned as to why I'm including people in certain things, that it's a mum dad thing and I don't need grandma and Aunty Jane and Uncle Burt and they haven't understood that that we have this extended network of people, that we may not even be blood related to but they're people that are really important to us because they're part of our network. But I don't think – I think if I had to come across that in this role, they will get it (Participant # 11).

> They haven't really understood the extended family, they haven't understood that it's not just the nuclear family and there are other important people in different communities and sometimes people may have been excluded when they should have been included (Participant # 2).

Research Participants reinforced and validate their tribal ways. They are proud of their culture and are constantly reclaiming their worldview in their contemporary sense. They maintain their commitment to their ancestors by appreciating the inter- and trans-generational nature of culture being passed to the next generations. This fits perfectly and defines the Framework of concentric circles and interconnectedness.

> Knowing that we have not lost our culture. Our Culture maybe done differently, it is still passed down to the next generation (Participant # 6).

The following statement from one of the participants sums up the overall sense of pride, empowerment and solidness that Research Participants identified when reflecting on their worldview in the context of who they are and what they wanted to achieve although not distinct, in their personal and professional lives. Their Worldview in essence sources them with foundational and fundamental of skills and knowledge to work within

the human services sector around institutional violence and interpersonal trauma.

> I love everything about our mob and our history. Because without that, I wouldn't be positioned where I am now (Participant # 5).

This level of pride demonstrates immeasurable strengths and resilience, of a group of people who are 3% of the national population. It also provides readers with glimpse of internal strengths that emerged for First Nations people in the face of complete violations of human rights, to overcome adverse conditions over current and historical generations. The following statement explains the solidness and resolve to maintain humanity while surviving the most atrocious breaches of human rights.

> The difference is not about the oppression that we've experienced, the difference is about the way we are. Yeah because a lot of the dialogue or the common beliefs about Aboriginal was around the deficits, what's seen as a deficit, where we're actually saying no, that there's strengths in the Aboriginal ways (Participant # 6).

The next chapter discusses the findings in the light of existing literature and this research.

Chapter 6. Discussion

> 'It hasn't worked so we have to change what we are doing' (Participant # 7)

This study set out to explore how to better support First Nations people who have experienced institutional trauma and interpersonal trauma. The study arose from my experience as a human service worker over 30 years as well as an educator. My interactions with other human services created frustration due to the lack of progress on better supporting First Nations people. As a First Nations worker mainstream services looked to me for the 'answer' to their inability to access and support First Nations people. This research arose from my desire to explore and to create understanding of the void between intent and reality. The overwhelming statistics on First Nations people continuing experiences of institutional trauma and interpersonal trauma documented the huge gap between policies and practice on the ground. This problem is made worse by the second-rate journalism in this country and not at all a reflection on telling truths. Workers often have little or no awareness of 'difference' in terms of cross-cultural needs. Most of mainstream Australian understandings are framed by racist hegemonic views, which are propagated by our social and media outlets. Often these views are fabricated and misleading and told through the discourse from the values and belief systems embedded within the ideas that form a western concept and system. State and National government reports provide the readers with clear updated information of the current problems within First Nations communities. There is plenty of information available to human service agencies to provide updated, proactive and innovative services where research informs policy and (in the best possible scenario) practice. Here lies the problem. Fundamental services are not accessing or supporting First Nations people who have complex problems as a result of unresolved trauma experiences from experiences of dispossession, ongoing racism and potentially interpersonal violence issues. I argue it is these issues and the lack of understanding of First Nations Worldviews that also contribute to limited access for and by First Nations people.

This chapter aims to provide new knowledge about the importance of First Nations Worldview in supporting people who have experienced institutional trauma and interpersonal trauma. The unique contribution of

this study is the application of Worldviews to human service provision. Most of the Research Participants identified with being from more than one tribe – they defined their identify based on two or three tribes. The fusion of worldviews appeared to enhance their belonging and extending their connections to other parts of the country. These connections brought solidarity and pride with those Research Participants.

It is therefore critical for Human Services who work with First Nations people and groups to develop and construct Trauma-informed services. It is critical that those services need to respond accordingly and consider First Nations experiences of trauma from a socio political context. Taking into account the complex and compounded nature of trauma, that has impacted so greatly on First Nations people and their communities. Including worldviews into their repertoire of practice skills. Cross's has provided seminal contribution to the ideas of difference and diversity as it relates to western and First Nations worldviews. He locates his work within a human rights framework, which clearly identifies the importance of cultural humility and respect. In fact his definition of cultural blindness is similar to the philosophical ideas underpinning the theories of 'White Privilege'. More specifically the participants identified key aspects of how damaging and oppressive cultural blindness is, when one of your roles is to ensure access and equity for First Nations people to your service. This is where human services' workers need to be acutely aware of other worldviews to ensure access to services is not hindered or arrested for those services users that are different.

Research Participants identified resistance to colonial ways as a significant tribal responsibility and this enabled them to maintain their resilience. The Research Participants' practice was framed by reclaiming their historical connections to 65,000 years of living in the moment where everything was perfect in its natural way (Randall, 2006). This reclaiming involved an awareness and ongoing exploration of their Worldviews. This awareness was likened by one participant to an 'opening of the window' allowing them to explore and reconnect with tribal connection and Worldview. This participant felt, now, it was safe time to explore beyond the window with the permission and support of their ancestors. This reclaiming of Worldview is supported by Western notions of equity and social justice in human services. Through reclaiming epistemology and ontology, by re-empowering tribal ways Research Participants found their 'big' voice and resisting ongoing colonialism. Big Voice in this context is where Research

Participants feel assertively confident to speak about their ways of doing, being and knowing, within the context of supporting and advocating for clients and their families and communities.

In yarning about their practice, participants came to recognise and assert the importance of their Cultural essence – their indigeneity or epistemology (ways of knowing), axiology (ways of being) and ontology (ways of doing). Indigeneity in this context relates to participants history post 1788 and this locates their voices as; voices of resistance and resilience. An active form of resistance to colonial constructs is evident within the practice of the participants. The participants are vigilant to ensure epistemologies are incorporated within practice. It locates worldviews as critical and therefore embeds a process of identifying and reconnecting with their worldviews, this then in turn makes their response more proactive and receptive of the clients' voices and sacred stories. This can be defined, or known, as active decolonisation of the mind and ultimately their practice.

If in 1788 had there been a meaningful engagement with First Nations people, based on humanity, humility, respect and dialogue, First Nations Worldview would not have been subjugated. In 2020 we would not be talking about reclaiming Worldview, it would be recognised equally as other Worldviews, including Western Worldviews. One of the oppressive impacts of our colonial history is the silence on Worldviews whereby the imposed Western paradigm is invisible and therefore not recognised. Whilst the recent move to acknowledge white privilege among the human services is helpful it falls short in building understandings and better ways of practicing. For human service workers, regardless of their identity, a responsibility to understand their own Worldview and to honour the Worldviews of the people they work with. This approach will ensure human service workers maintain humility based on our shared humanity. In this way we are equal with our differences. This is critical aspect of establishing safe and secure services. The powerfulness of Institutions needs to be considered within this context. The historical and ongoing of oppressive policies have to be named. They need to be critiqued and therefore heard, however this critique is often heard from non-First Nations people who have not yet defined white privilege. The result is that we end up hearing defensive responses based on this lack of understanding the term White Fragility explains this further. This ongoing defensive reaction from powerful and influential and usually white people then plays on the fears of

like-minded people. This then creates more insecurity for an oppressive group of people – this is the essence of institutional trauma. There appears to be a storm most weeks of the calendar year that First Nations people need to defend their ongoing struggle for emancipation.

As a Bundjalung Goenpul (the fusion of worldviews enhances my connections and responsibilities) woman I saw this research process as mirroring the process of working with people in human services. What I mean by this is that when I entered the yarning circles I did so with clarity and knowledge of my Worldview, with my spiritual connections holding and nurturing my essence, my soul. Despite many life-threatening struggles my honouring of the Research Participants and their Worldviews connected me with my reciprocal responsibilities for completing this thesis. Through this process it has become clear to me that having knowledge of my Worldview is empowering, a sense of being guided and trusting the process of the universe. I am grateful to the women, my mothers and grandmothers, who raised me to be a strong woman in the world with responsibilities through nurturing and unconditional love. They taught me to navigate the Western Worldview of colonialism through hard work, education and most importantly caring for others.

The Research Participants in this study have successfully completed the Education Centre Against Violence specialist education pathway. The ECAV pathway embeds human rights into the design and delivery training privileging First Nations voices. Many of the students who complete the ECAV pathway have negative or no educational histories, which was also the case for the Research Participants in this study. ECAV courses were the first opportunity for them to learn as adults. In the yarning circles Research Participants were able to use their 'Big Voice' to reflect on and critique practice in human services for First Nations people who have experienced institutional and interpersonal trauma. ECAV provides a model for others wishing to educate, train and nurture best practice in this field as well as engaging with policy development. Through the process of privileging First Nations voices ECAV has adopted a decolonisation process to consider First Nations Worldview. The ECAV model embeds, acknowledges and appreciates human rights, cultural safety and Worldviews as the foundations for practice. The desire for decolonisation and the relevance of these principles were implicitly supported by the Research Participants. Education and training like that provided by ECAV will build the capacity of the human services workforce.

I found that the participants draw on their cultural worldviews to inform their practice with First Nations people in relation to trauma. This extent of decolonisation is attributed to cohort's self-determined cultural safe processes with intent on empowering self and others. There is no doubt that the education process delivered by ECAV played a significant role in their re-empowerment journey. In the first instance, they created an environment that was safe to learn, which acknowledged historical experiences of western education and, secondly, the curriculum was embedded in privileging First Nations voices and histories. In essence ECAV provided learning that proved to be a Cultural empowering experience for participants.

Human rights are simultaneously individual and collective rights and reciprocal responsibilities. The findings of this research support the need for First Nations human service workers to define their practice and proactively develop strategies to meet the needs of clients/service users based on human rights. The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People affirms self-determination as an indication of human rights for Australian First Nations' Peoples. Articles 3 and 4 clearly articulate Self Determination as process of self-empowerment and human rights.

> Article 3: Indigenous peoples have the right to self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development.
>
> Article 4: Indigenous peoples, in exercising their right to self-determination, have the right to autonomy or self-government in matters relating to their internal and local affairs, as well as ways and means for financing their autonomous functions (United Nations, 2007, p. 4)

The very nature of this research was to privilege First Nations people's voices about how they work to meet the cultural and human rights needs of their clients and service users. In most research 'on' First Nations people Aboriginal people are positions as 'subjects' at best. This research was undertaken by a First Nations person with First Nations people as co-creators of knowledge. The methodology reflected a commitment to self-determination, with the yarning circles and yarn ups being established as

'safe' places for sharing sacred cultural knowledge and understandings. In this study only voices of First Nations people are heard deliberately: this study is about our ways of knowing, doing and being.

Whilst this study privileges the ways of knowing, doing and being of First Nations human service workers for many First Nations people who have experienced institutional and interpersonal violence they will be 'supported' by non-Indigenous workers. Many of these workers will be qualified social workers who commit to adhere to the Code of Ethics of the Australian Association of Social Work (AASW). Whilst the Code (2010) requires social workers to base their practice on human rights many mainstream services fail in their efforts to support First Nations people. This failure was the initial impetus for this study, and I hope it will be helpful for those non-Indigenous workers wishing to do better. The pioneering work of Terry Cross (1988) continues to guide human service agencies and workers. Cross demonstrates that it is critical that we consult, develop and implement practices that encompass the needs of people who do not fit into the dominant Western Worldview. It is in the best interest of human service agencies to consider other approaches, to think outside their Worldview: their values and beliefs hence practice will need to change to acknowledge and honour other worldviews. To continue along current human services delivery pathway it is highly likely, we will be looking at the 4th wave of colonization, where agencies and learning institutions present rhetoric that clearly articulates best practice whilst maintaining culturally blind service delivery. The intention is there we now need to capture this into good and safe practice.

The knowledge co-created through this study suggests that for human service workers enacting human rights in our practice means respecting difference, awareness of the historical and political context and transparency in relation to the privileges of gendered, cultural and economic power. All the Research Participants in this study identified respectful practice as the core to good practice particularly not reacting to your own judgements. Everyone has the right to be received as who they are in the context of their humanity and not on their class, race, gender and difference. Interestingly, more than half of the Research Participants declared that culture was never lost, it has always been part of who we are and lays dormant until it is safe to explore and express. This explains at some level the extent of cultural insecurity evident in many First Nations people in Australia, which can be directly connected to political and

historical contexts of colonisation and attempted genocide. The participants believed their humanity derived from their connections to their ancestors; their connection to their spirituality. In their practice the Research Participants sought to honour their ancestors through their humanity as a way of making them proud. The voices for change by First Nations peoples are in the first instance an indication of their ongoing commitment to reclaiming their identity, by advocating for change and social justice. Another challenging factor is that there are First Nations people who don't have those understandings and are employed in an identified position. This is to no fault of their own, the very nature of Australia's colonial history which was meant to wipe out the 'Aboriginal' race. The colonial governments implemented strategies likened to genocide. One such practice was the removal of over 50,000 Aboriginal children from their homes, creating intergenerational trauma. The abducted children are known the 'Stolen Generations' were dispossessed from family, country, language and culture. This means that for some First Nations human service workers carry trauma which is very similar to that of the people they work with as clients.

Whilst this research sought to understand how First Nations Worldview was embedded into practice, the Research Participants did not identify a specific singular framework in a didactic and directional way. This illustrates that the epistemology was more dynamic than I had initially anticipated. There is no simple 'tick box' framework for doing this work better. The Research Participants extended their framework beyond commonly identified principles such as belonging and connections. I was most surprised to learn of the importance of connections to ancestors on how the Research Participant's practiced when supporting First Nations people who had experienced institutional and interpersonal trauma. It was also clear that the organisational context and values shaped and interacted with individual practitioners (the Research Participants) Worldviews in an ongoing process of evolution. The Research Participants spoke of what they felt underpinned and built their practice framework, particularly respect for Tribal ways, cultural safety and knowledge of history.

In the yarning circles, participants indicated their Tribal ways are embedded in their practice. In supporting First Nations people who have experience violence and trauma, participants demonstrate knowledge, understanding and connections as a tribal person. Your Tribal ways, be they Dhungutti or Bundalung or others, is part of your essence, who you

are, and therefore supports and defines your identity. Knowledge of your tribal Identify then becomes significant to being able to provide support. Being aware of who you are, supports you to have better understanding of others and provides you with motivation to support. Belonging and identity were seen as key to the Research Participants' practice frameworks. Identity supported the Research Participants to practice with autonomy and a position of authority to reclaim and locate their epistemology and axiology within their practice with First Nations clients.

The common themes identified in this research of post 1788 doctrine Terra Nullius are the collective histories of human rights violations of dispossession, colonisation and genocide coupled with an appreciation of the deep connections or relationality to epistemologies and axiology. This is a sense of connection or reconnection to 'old' ways of epistemologies and axiology and reaffirms our responsibilities to the meaningfulness of these messages from ancestors that are embedded in one's psyche is powerful and provides a powerful sense of connection which enhances their empowerment to make a difference in their lives and the lives of those they come into contact with – in this case clients and service users. This process has ripple effect when they are working with clients; – they are able to provide loving support base on ancestral and blood knowledge. 'Blood Memory', the knowledge passed down from one generation to the next generation, was important to the Research Participants. Blood Memory is the transgenerational and intergenerational transference of epistemology, ontology and axiology. As First Nations peoples we are born into a system of knowledge keepers and knowledge sharers and our responsibilities with new knowledge is to protect and share in a way that 'knowledge', is respected and honoured for the next generations. This is critical integration of; epistemology – our knowing and our axiology – our being our belief systems and the ontology to ways of doing. Blood or borrowed trust is another concept that was defined and explored. Blood/borrowed trust is about connecting with family of friends whom you developed meaningful relationships within the past. This where the integrity of the family and tribe is so very important as it is this relationality that can have everlasting and meaningful connections with people from other families and tribes. The reputation of those members ensure the integrity of the whole family. This is tribal lore. However the challenge to this if one of your family members has done wrong or harm by that family, then you are likely to judged based on that adverse experience. We need to be mindful of this as most of our

families have experienced elements of dispossession and disconnection through institutional and interpersonal trauma that has ultimately impacted on their capacities maintain their humanity. It is those experiences and instance that we need to be mindful of when talking about trust capacities based on blood trust. I would encourage workers to avoid declaring blood/borrowed trust until you are able to develop rapport or until the client chooses to establish. In this instance you will need to be transparent and declare your allegiance to trauma-informed practice – which includes safe and secure practice and defining confidentiality.

The idea of cultural safety was also identified by Research Participants as core to their practice. In the Yarning Circles, the Research Participants discussed the cognitive processes that occurred when initiating connection with clients. In creating connections with clients/service users the Research Participants drew on traditional tribal knowing; as key to processing and knowing self. In this way, practice informed by one's own Worldview created safety for the people you work with and ensures you respect the Worldview of the clients/service users. There is an expectation that you become aware of cognitive processes that motivate what you do. Most participants defined their practice as one where they are required to reflect on their practice; what their purpose, what was motivational, their strengths and focus areas. It is interesting to note participants definition of practice included ongoing learning. This skill or practice underpins best practice frameworks. This practice allows participants to critically reflect what other learning needs to occur to ensure adequate support structures are developed.

Participants discussed opportunities for the development of cultural safety agreement in which service providers and users agreed on how they will communicate with each other from the onset. Confidentiality was often discussed and defined by the Research Participants in their practice with clients/service users. Confidentiality within First Nations people carries additional importance, given the importance of connections and relationships. Clients/service users need to be confident that human service workers, regardless of their connections, will honour and protect their sacred stories. Service user were cautious when meeting workers in the first instance. Participant put this down to relationships between participants in groups. Relationships in this context relates to previous connections and whether they have been supportive, caring and loving. They found that group members who dominate need to be gently

persuaded to consider their participation. Participants talked about the skill one needs to transform the group when this occurs. This process is usually approached in a gentle and supportive way; by going encouraging the client/service user to consider appropriate communication skills that enhance group empowerment. Participants also discussed situations where their personal connections to different clan groups could be seen as conflict of interest – depending on the relationships service users have with those connections and clan groups. Strategies they developed to overcome this included open and honest dialogue about who they were and what their roles were.

Cultural safety emancipates workers to reclaim their epistemology and axiology as critical to their practice frameworks. The cognitive process locates as sense of empowerment and provides opportunity to consider decolonising practice. It has capacity to support clients to reclaim their ways of knowing and being is an emancipatory process of reclaiming self within context of decolonising practice. Decolonising practice is a process and may take many years to feel completely unshackled.

Truth telling was (and is) noted as key strategy for improving support for First Nations people who have experienced institutional and intergenerational trauma. The Research Participants expected that human service workers have clear understandings and an honest account of the impacts of colonial history and the legacies of the Australian governments' attempts of genocide and the ongoing colonisation. They believed that truth telling will help other Australians understand First Nation peoples and challenge those racist common beliefs they have that are inaccurate and underpin negative stereotypes. As a fair and equitable processing, we have a humane responsibility to hear and privilege First Nations voices about what they endured, how they survived and what maintains their strength. We need to be able to hear and listen for the impact of colonialism in people's stories. Within a Western paradigm such stories may be dismissed but within First Nations ontology story telling is truth telling. Storytelling is part of our axiology – our ways of doing – as yarning or narratives have validity and allows us to share our humour, our poetry, our music and our creation stories whilst acknowledging the pain endured by colonial constructs (Tuhiwai-Smith, 1999). The ongoing marginalisation of First Nations peoples is linked to the extent of historical racism and discrimination and needs to be considered as a critical component of contemporary experiences of interpersonal and community violence

(Briskman, 2007). The Research Participants considered truth-telling as a way forward; where ultimately the burden of intergenerational racism can be challenged. This locates this study within the domain of decolonising practice by revisiting, reclaiming and reconnection to tribal epistemologies, ontologies and axiologies.

Family is the axis for all First Nations' children, adults and elders. It is family that establishes foundational values and principles for members to maintain lore and ceremony. Family is key to lifespan developmental stages of a child's growth. Unlike the common western family of two adults – First Nations families may have more than two adults caring, supporting and nurturing children and young people. Adults and young people play significant role in the children of the families' life. The mothering role is shared amongst adult and teenage women. The end result is that babies and children's needs are met by most of the family/clan. Family/clan is key to survival. The child forms attachment with all family/clan members and members provide love, care and protection. This was considered a significant in terms of understanding First Nations' people, children and adults who experienced institutional and interpersonal trauma.

This study and existing research suggest a sophisticated understanding and awareness of power as central to supporting First Nation people who have experienced institutional and interpersonal trauma. The Research Participants acknowledged that when working with survivors of interpersonal violence and abuse you need to be able to define and explain the nature of power, in this case personal and professional power. Personal power reflects privileges of education, economics and cultural knowledge. Personal power from clients are also considered within this context – this is especially relevant within support and therapy groups. Clients/service users presents in groups in different ways; they may be silent, or they may dominate the group with their energy examples of this could include being loud and speaking out of turn. This may indicate the person is participating in lateral violence or bullying over community members who are not present. A strategy identified by the Research Participants was the establishment of an initial cultural safety agreement for workers and clients/service users. In the Research Participants' experience, the group members themselves usually identify this behaviour as inappropriate and unacceptable. This requires the human service worker to trust clients/service users and not to employ their professional power to dominate. This is particularly important in terms of establishing

safety as the Research Participants were mindful that their roles are viewed as powerful by clients/service users, even when as an individual worker you may not feel so.

I was surprised that gendered power was not identified as a significant factor by the Research Participants in their practice given the extent of violence against women and children. Research indicates that women comprise around 90% of victims of violence. The responsibility of supporting, nurturing children into responsible young people rests with women, until the children get to a certain age. Women in the family play that significant role. This historical role that women played was noted by the Research Participants as significant roles that are not taken full advantage of in contemporary times. It seems likely that the extent of violence and oppression experienced by all First Nations people overwhelm the gendered nature of violence. The Research Participants clearly identified violence against First Nations people as flowing from colonialism which suggests notions of intersectionality have not been taken up by First Nations people in Australia. A risk of this single explanation of violence is that it excuses or permits violence perpetrated by men on women and children. It is my hope however that whilst activists for change journey may take different paths, they commit to the same end zone – communities free of a violence, which is also, the ultimate aim of Research Participants.

Through their practice the Research Participants introduce First Nations Worldviews into the workplace and ultimately develop deeper understandings towards cultural humility and cultural safe service delivery. The Research Participants are practicing from their individual epistemological knowledge which links to spirituality and honourable connections to ancestors. Spirituality encompasses the essence of First Nations people's ways of being. This essence informs skills that informs good practice with First Nations people, including flexibility, innovation and transparency. Core to their practice is being flexible in responding to clients' needs. Preparing and allowing clients to develop safety and security in the room is key. Participants talked about allowing clients to do things outside the general realm of the group. They offered opportunities for clients to tell them how to make the space safe, whilst predicting certain aspects that may trigger emotional responses. This allows clients to have a sense of security and to process strong emotions if they arise. A lack of flexible was identified as a problem with many mainstream human service

agencies who fail to meet the needs of First Nations people. Constructive yarning in this context relates to being flexible and transparent. It relies on human service workers to read the room and get a sense of where clients are at. Human service workers ideally will allow the process of reconnecting and grounding clients. This allows for the group process to be guided by the group. Clients will come outside their comfort zone when they feel secure, safe and heard.

First Nations peoples are different and diverse in many ways. An understanding of their ways of being and doing and knowing are therefore critical component of safety. Providing opportunity for First Nations peoples to identify and define their cultural ways is indicative of safe practice. Capacity to find their big voice enhances their ability to maintain transparency and Truth Telling. The use of social justice discourse like 'change agents' indicated Research Participants' commitment to maintain their advocacy responsibilities for the rights of their clients.

Supporting First Nations people who have experienced institutional and interpersonal trauma is challenged by historical and political contexts. Direct and indirect experiences of racism create barrier for First Nations people to access services. Racism in this context is where all First Nations people are judged as being the same and practice from professional are often noted as derogatory, or when non-Aboriginal staff and managers think they know what First Nations workers need and proceed to tell them. The practice can also be described as paternalistic. The overall implication or legacies of these practices are that Aboriginal colleagues and clients often struggle with trusting specific services and workers. Language or discourse in this context is also significant and could be a barrier. The way in which human service agencies and workspace are designed and decorated was also seen by Research Participants as very important. If the physical space is too clinical then it can become an access barrier.

The assumption that all Aboriginal people are simply the same and therefore have identical epistemologies, ontologies and axiologies. This expectation is reflective of historical practice that followed protective and assimilationist policies of locating First Nations peoples from different tribes into commonwealth and state reserves and missions and then calling them a homogenous group of Aborigines. These practices and policies are developed around exploitation to prove that they are sorting out the 'Aboriginal problem'. Likewise, appointment time limits does not take into consideration connection processes within First Nations epistemology;

connection is critical and is expected to be part of introduction – connection means sharing of information; like for example who you are; where you are from – tribal connections; your familial and tribal connections. This could also be an opportunity for service providers to establish relationship and developing rapport by deep listening.

Some Research Participants identified a commitment to personal self-care as critical part of their practice framework. Self-Care is clearly linked to best practice when providing social justice and therapeutic support to clients and communities who have experienced profound trauma. Participants link self-care to connections to epistemology. Feeling well and strong in this regard is being able to; identifying boundaries about your professional capacities, self-determining your role in clients support protocols, reflecting on self and role in their professional engagement with clients. Generally, self-care strategies are defined by individual Research Participants as personal, in fact; what works for one worker and may not work for another. Self-care also includes personal and professional support structures; like clinical supervision. Unfortunately clinical supervision, whilst appearing to be located in the 'trying to help category', if not managed in a culturally safe way it can backfire and be defined as another colonial oppressive practice, where First Nations staff burn out and have the potential to get very unwell.

Developing opportunities to define and feel trust and therefore maintain trust is key to the practice framework. Making it real and making it beautiful is the end result. Respectful and trusting practice also is part of supporting others. This allows for a process of de-colonising to commence. Constant re-scripting and re-claiming of old ways supports understanding of culture and ensures it is passed on in a process of sharing, caring and empowering. This sense of interconnectedness with one's epistemological responsibility to relatedness and reciprocity was evident. Through their reciprocity responsibilities their commitment to respecting the country they live on by raising their children with Worldview of that specific country. This reinforces their children's ways and connections by honouring their epistemological and ontological responsibilities to mother earth. This is an empowering process of demonstrating connection and tribal purpose.

Creativity was considered a practical aspect of service delivery. The Research Participants identified key practice approaches which involved being creative and providing services that are outside 'normal' practice domains. This type of practice might be thought of as a cultural broker

whose role is to break down barriers for both the service and their target group. Through creative service provision services can be promoted to First Nations people and critical feedback on how workers could enhance their practice be provided. The key role of this broker is to think outside the normal standards of delivering services. They are strategically located within the service and their roles are clearly defined. The roll of cultural broker is defined as an identified position, this means that one of the essential criteria is that the worker needs to identify as a First Nations person with local knowledge of target area. Their primary role is to provide communication channels for internal, external stakeholders and community people. Knowledge of the significance of First Nations people's epistemology, ontology and axiology is also critical and access to services are based on this knowledge.

Cultural days are considered an important process for connection to clients. Connections to country by hunting and gathering for bush tucker ensured ongoing process to discuss social issues impacting on community. The Research Participants considered hunting and gathering as fundamental to ensuring community members maintain their epistemology and ontological ways of being and doing. The collective process of hunting, gathering, food preparation and ensured a process of connecting and sharing their understandings of common issues that effected the community. The collective nature of this process is key to community and collaborative process that ensures this community's voice is heard by each other and the systems that are able to hear them. The sense of familial connections, liberation and sense of belonging is also identified.

The Research Participants understood their practice with clients, whether groups or individual support, as 'yarning'. Yarning allow for those clients/service users to find their confidence and articulate their needs – find their big voice. Big voice in this context relates to feeling empowered to identify and discuss their issues and articulate their needs. This is a practice process that maintains tribal axiology ways of doing for clients. The Research Participants believed that yarning circles or group work were successful, with their specific target group around institutional and interpersonal trauma. There is a common ground, common theme. Yarning circles ensure clients get the opportunity to feel a sense of belonging and connectedness with each other. They are there with common issues and ultimately have common needs. Their wellbeing is enhanced, and they

have a sense of empowerment once they are able to disclose their issues in a secure and safe environment. This environment does not threaten or harm them. They can choose to share, or they can choose to sit and listen. The essence of their presence is powerful and validating. The connections made through participating in 'Yarning Circles', provides essential knowledge and confidence to form strong foundation. That in its essence provides them with strong sense of self. The extent of this is immeasurable within a quantitative method and is best to be measured by qualitative processes. This allows for young people to provide information that defines their ways. Their appreciation for self, country, kinship and culture. They strongly argued that Aboriginal spirituality is critical to the overall support of Aboriginal families and communities. Knowledge of and connection to land, kinship is of great significance when working with First Nations communities.

Their understanding and support of their totems is also an empowering sense that takes thinking outside the western domain.

Ancestors are acknowledged with and by Ceremony. The nature of ceremony is to appreciate, welcome and acknowledge change; in this context change could be sad – sorry business or a happy event – celebration of changes in life passage. Ancestors are called upon to provide guidance and love. They remind us of their strength and the very belief in their spirits provides endearing support in times of great distress. The Research Participants' sense of humanity is guided by responsibility to maintain reciprocity. Their capacity to practice Dadirri as defined by Bauman, that deep inner listening is key to their overall human service practice thus, provides them with honouring and deep respectful approaches for their client. The skill of deep listening or Dadirri also empowers clients as they are being validated by workers who are validate and promotes their worldview. They have a deep commitment to fulfilling their Worldviews, developing reciprocal relationships with colleagues and clients. The emphasis on connection, belonging and belief of Ancestors is weaved throughout the Research Participants' narratives. This practice and belief have over 65,000 years of antecedents. Their epistemologies their ways of knowing are embedded into their psyche and is now emerging within their everyday practices.

The time has come, the ancestors have spoken. It is now time for the voices of participants to be heard. Their voices have the absolute right to be privileged – I have been given the trust, respect and honour to ensure

this information is utilised to inform better practice when working with First Nations peoples who have experienced interpersonal trauma. My commitment to this group is to ensure this happens through this research and thesis and also in the curriculum development and teachings and new research opportunities. First Nations human service workers who participated in this study are using their epistemologies, ontologies and axiology that has been their ancestral blessings since the very first sun rise. It is critical that First Nations voices are heard, privileged and acted on. This is not about whether this a good way – it is in actual fact the right way forward. They work with First nations people and acknowledge that there are over 600,500 First Nations peoples living in this country and through the ability to identify cultural blindness they know that there are over 600,500 ways of being First nations.

I have been privileged to hear their voices and the knowledge and wisdoms of their ancestors. The participants have been so very generous with sharing their time and their knowledge and wisdoms. My challenge is to ensure their voices, their sincerity, their passion, their ideas and their ways of being doing and knowing is articulated in this thesis. It has been my pleasure to reflect their knowledge and wisdoms with honour and integrity – offering opportunities to learn from these knowledges and wisdoms.

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THE UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY

Appendix 1

Incorporating Aboriginal Healing Frameworks into work with survivors of violence and abuse

Hi my name is Mareese Terare I am a PhD student at the University of Sydney. I am conducting research with students who have completed Education Centre's Against Violence education pathway which includes the 91562 NSW Certificate IV Aboriginal Family Health (Sexual Assault, Family Violence and Child Protection) and 91507 NSW Advanced Diploma of Aboriginal Specialist Trauma Counselling Advanced Diploma about the use of Aboriginal Healing Framework when supporting Aboriginal people experiencing interpersonal trauma.

Participation would involve attendance of a 'Yarning Circle' which will go for 2 and half hours.

Yarning Circles will be scheduled when your network meetings or for those that do not belong to a network, a time that suitsyou.

We will provide refreshments and small gift to show our appreciation.

If you are interested and/or would like more information please contact Mareese Terare 0422 365 773 or Mareese.Terare@sydney.edu.au

Appendix 2

THE UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY

Sydney School of Education & Social Work
Faculty of Arts & Social Sciences

ABN 15 211 513 464

CHIEF INVESTIGATOR
Associate Professor Lesley Laing

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University of Sydney NSW 2006
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Appendix 3

Title: Incorporating Aboriginal Healing Frameworks into work with survivors of violence and abuse

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION STATEMENT

(1) What is this study about?

You are invited to take part in a research study that explores the ways in which Aboriginal family violence counsellors bring Aboriginal Worldviews into their work with clients who have experienced interpersonal violence, such as family/domestic violence, sexual assault and child abuse. We are interested in finding out about the ways in which workers use and build on the specialist training that they have received on responding to trauma and Aboriginal healing frameworks.

You have been invited to participate in this study because you have successfully completed the Education Centre Against Violence specialist education pathway comprising the Certificate IV Aboriginal Family Health (Sexual Assault, Family Violence & Child Protection) and the Advanced Diploma of Aboriginal specialist trauma counselling, and are working in a job that deals with preventing and responding to violence and its traumatic impacts on Aboriginal families and communities.

Participation in this research study is voluntary.

This Participant Information Statement tells you about the research study. Knowing what is involved will help you decide if you want to take part in the research. Please read this sheet carefully and ask questions about anything that you don't understand or want to know more about.

By giving your consent to take part in this study you are telling us that you:

- ✓ Understand what you have read.

- ✓ Agree to take part in the research study as outlined below.
- ✓ Agree to the use of your personal information as described

You will be given a copy of this Participant Information Statement to keep.

(2) Who is running the study?

The study is being carried out by Mareese Terare as the basis for the Doctor of Philosophy degree (PhD) at the University of Sydney under the guidance and supervision of Associate Professor Lesley Laing primary supervisor and Dr Juanita Sherwood auxiliary supervisor. Mareese is a Bundjalung woman from the Northern Rivers of NSW.

The Education Centre Against Violence through their Aboriginal Community Matters Advisory Group (ACMAG) subcommittee and 2 Independents from Aboriginal Community Controlled Services and NSW Link UP will provide advice and support through the Research Project Reference Group.

(3) What will the study involve for me?

The study involves family violence workers participating in a 'Yarning Circle' of 6-8 participants facilitated by Mareese Terare. The interview will be audio taped to ensure that the information you provide is accurately recorded.

You will be given a detailed list of 'Yarning Circle', questions. Your information will be confidential and any personal details like name, address and date of birth will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in the Supervisors' office.

(4) How much of my time will the study take?

It is anticipated that the 'Yarning Circle' will take up to two hours. The Yarning Circle will be organised around the times of Network's bi-annual gatherings.

(5) Who can take part in the study?

Workers who have successfully completed the Education Centre Against Violence specialist education pathway: Certificate IV Aboriginal Family Health and the Advance Diploma of Aboriginal Specialist Trauma Counselling; and who are involved in a job addressing violence and its effects on Aboriginal people.

(6) Do I have to be in the study? Can I withdraw from the study once I've started?

Being in this study is completely voluntary and you do not have to take part. Your decision whether to participate will NOT affect your current or future relationship with the researchers or anyone else at the University of Sydney, Education Centre Against Violence and Aboriginal Communities Matters Advisory Group.

If you take part in the 'Yarning Circle', you are free to stop participating at any stage or to refuse to answer any of the questions. However, it will not be possible to withdraw your individual comments from our records once the group has started, as it is a group discussion.

If you decide to withdraw from the study, we will not collect any more information from you. Any information that we have already collected, however, will be kept in our study records and may be included in the study results.

(7) Are there any risks or costs associated with being in the study?

It is possible that some participants within the 'Yarning Circle' may experience psychological stress when discussing their work with Aboriginal people and communities experiencing violence.

The research is designed to minimise the possibility of psychological distress through the establishment of cultural safety at the beginning of the 'Yarning Circle'. You will be invited to identify the group processes that will provide culturally safe participation. Therefore, they approach knowing that they are in control of how much they participate and how much they contribute. There will be no pressure on them participate or contribute outside their culturally safe comfort zone.

Cultural safety is defined when one feels free from discrimination, judgment and prejudice for their difference. Where people feel liberated to articulate their understandings, feelings and needs without negative repercussions, where there is no question of their differences (Richardson, 2004).

At the conclusion of the interview, brief questions are asked about the participant's experience of the interview to 'debrief' the participant and to: 'to identify and ease potential emotional disturbance as a result of the interview' (Gondolf, 2000, p. 283). An understanding of traditional worldviews and cultural, and particularly those who work with Aboriginal clients, is an important step towards de-colonization and facilitation of empowerment (Poonwassie & Charter, 2001). Bin Salik reflects on processes of decolonizing the mind to ensure cultural safety (Salik, 2003).

(8) Are there any benefits associated with being in the study?

While participating in this study will not benefit you directly, the findings of the study will be used to inform the development of policies and inform relevant research and curriculum development on best practice when working with Aboriginal people who have experienced interpersonal trauma.

We will be providing light refreshments on the day. In line with the Indigenous research methodologies principles of respect and reciprocity it is the researcher's responsibility to demonstrate gratitude. Therefore, as a sign of respect and honour the researcher will provide each participant with a small gift that

represents gratitude and deep appreciation for the participant's sharing of sacred knowledge and the investment of time.

(9) What will happen to information about me that is collected during the study?

We will not be using any personal information at all in the thesis. Personal information such as your name and contact details will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in researcher's office. No other person will have access to this information. The researcher and primary and auxiliary supervisor are the only three people that will know of your participation.

The types of information we will be requesting from you will be about the practice framework you work from when supporting Aboriginal victims/survivors of interpersonal violence like family/domestic violence, sexual assault and child abuse. Our questions relate to the use in your practice of Aboriginal healing frameworks that draw on Aboriginal world views.

Study Results will be published by way of Student Thesis and if relevant presented via conference papers and journal articles. The data will not be utilised for any other purpose.

As required, the data will be retained in secure storage for 7 years after which time all electronic data will be erased and hard copies shredded.

By providing your consent, you are agreeing to us collecting personal information about you for the purposes of this research study. Your information will only be used for the purposes outlined in this Participant Information Statement, unless you consent otherwise.

Your information will be stored securely and your identity/information will only be disclosed with your permission, except as required by law. For example, mandatory reporting if a child is at significant risk of harm. In such an event, this will be discussed

with you at length and any action the researcher needs to take will be transparent.

Study findings may be published, but you will not be identified in these publications unless you agree to this using the tick box on the consent form.

(10) Can I tell other people about the study?

If you know of other workers that have completed NSW Education Centre Against Violence specialist education pathway who may like to participate in the study, you are welcome to provide them with Mareese Terare's contact details so that they can enquire and if interested participate in the study.

(11) What if I would like further information about the study?

When you have read this information, Mareese Terare will be available to discuss it with you further and answer any questions you may have. If you would like to know more at any stage during the study, please feel free to contact Mareese Terare 0422 365 773 or Mareese.Terare@sydney.edu.au

(12) Will I be told the results of the study?

You have a right to receive feedback about the overall results of this 'Yarning Circle' study. You can tell us that you wish to receive feedback by e.g. ticking the relevant box on the consent form. This feedback will be in the form of a short summary document. You will receive this feedback after the study is finalised.

(13) What if I have a complaint or any concerns about the study?

Research involving humans in Australia is reviewed by an independent group of people called a Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC). The ethical aspects of this study have been approved by the HREC of the University of Sydney [INSERT protocol number once approval is obtained]. As part of this process, we have agreed to carry out the study per the

National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007). This statement has been developed to protect people who agree to take part in research studies.

If you are concerned about the way this study is being conducted or you wish to make a complaint to someone independent from the study, please contact the university using the details outlined below. Please quote the study title and protocol number.

The Manager, Ethics Administration, University of Sydney:

- Telephone: +61 2 8627 8176
- Email: human.ethics@sydney.edu.au
- Fax: +61 2 8627 8177 (Facsimile)

And

The Chairperson, AH&MRC, Ethics Committee
P.O Box 175
Strawberry Hills NSW 2012
Ph: 02 92124777

This information sheet is for you to keep

Appendix 4

AHMRC Annual Report
Project: 1275/17 Incorporating Aboriginal Worldviews into work with survivors of violence and abuse.

Summary of Project
This research aims to explore the experiences of Aboriginal family violence workers in bringing Aboriginal healing frameworks into their work with victims/survivors of interpersonal violence.

The qualitative nature of the inquiry indicates that it is not based on a hypothesis, but rather on the following research questions:

How do Aboriginal workers incorporate Aboriginal healing frameworks into their work with clients experiencing violence and abuse?

Sub questions:

- What supports, and challenges do Aboriginal family violence counsellors experience in incorporating Aboriginal healing frameworks when working in 'mainstream' organisations
- What supports, and challenges do Aboriginal family violence counsellors experience in incorporating Aboriginal worldviews when working in Aboriginal community-controlled organisations
- How does the incorporation of Aboriginal worldviews shape healing frameworks?
- How do Aboriginal family violence counsellors understand the connections and disjunctions between Western models of counselling and Aboriginal healing frameworks based on Aboriginal worldviews?

Update

- The project is progressing along smoothly. We have held 3 Yarning Circles; Dharug Country (Parramatta), Wiradjuri Country (Dubbo) and Bundjalung Country (Tweed Heads). We have accessed nine (9) participants through this process.

- Researcher is currently undertaken chapter development and data analysis.

Proposal for change in Methodologies
Rationale for changes
The Yarning Circles have been popular however, participants have not been able to attend due to geographical distance, resources and work commitment issues. The yarning circles have been held in strategically planned areas.

The request for change in methodology to face to face interviews and/or phone interviews is a direct response to the needs of those potential participants who were unable to attend yarning circles. They are keen to participate and contribute their ideas. The level of inconvenience to participants will be limited due to individual telephone or face to face interview. Interviews will be held at a mutually agreeable place and/or time. They will be provided with the revised PIS and PCF.

FASS Human Ethics
Human Ethics have approved application for methodology changes.
Letter attached.

Appendix 5

YARNING CIRCLE GUIDE

Incorporating Aboriginal Healing Frameworks into work with survivors of violence and abuse.

1. Clarification of process, consent

   Answer any questions about the study and obtain written consent. Explain that the participants can stop and exit the Yarning Circle at any time as per the Participant Information Statement (PIS).

   Audiotaping as per the PIS

   Stress that there are no right or wrong answers in this, the idea is for the members of the Yarning Circle to talk together around the topics raised.

   If at any time you don't want to answer a question that I may ask you, that's fine — just let me know. From time to time I'll check with you about how you are finding the 'Yarning Circle'.

2. Developing a 'Cultural Safety' agreement.

   Discussion points: What is Cultural Safety? What does cultural safety look and feel like? Ask participants to define cultural safety for self and for 'Yarning Circle'.

3. Introduction of members

   As you know, I'm interested in hearing about your experiences of using principles and philosophies of Aboriginal Healing Framework in your work with victims of inter-personal abuse.

   Can you begin by each briefly introducing yourselves, this will help us to understand the context in which you work with victims/survivors of violence.

You are welcome to tell us anything about yourself e.g. where you are from, your tribal background, your connections etc. this is purely optional and you are welcome to share what ever makes you feel comfortable.

4. Let's yarn about the concept of an 'Aboriginal Healing Framework'.

   How would you describe this to someone who hadn't heard of this approach?

   Nature: What does it look like? What does it feel like?

   What are some words that best describes your understandings and feelings about Aboriginal Healing Framework?

5. Let's talk about the ways in which you use this framework in work

   E.g. In what ways does AHF contribute to your engagement with clients?

   Can anyone give me an example of how they have used AHF in their work? (Speaking to maintain the confidentiality of clients)

   How do you think clients/families respond to this approach? (Examples?)

6. Challenges and supports in using an Aboriginal healing framework

   What things about your workplace support you bringing AHF into your work?

   What things about your workplace present challenges in using AHF in your work?

7. How does an AHF approach fit – or not – with 'Western' approaches to working with violence such as trauma specific/trauma-informed approaches?

How do you manage the differences /similarities?

8. Windup

Any final comments they haven't had the chance to make

Thank group for their contributions – small gift

We will provide 'summary report' to those who requested feedback via the 'Consent Form'.

Appendix 6

AHMRC Annual Report
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Summary of Project
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FASS Human Ethics
Human Ethics have approved application for methodology changes.
Letter attached.

Appendix 7

THE UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY

Research Integrity & Ethics Administration
Human Research Ethics Committee

Wednesday, 6 June 2018

Dr Lesley Laing
Social Work; Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences
Email: lesley.laing@sydney.edu.au

Dear Lesley

Your request to modify this project, which was submitted on 19 April 2018, has been considered.

After consideration of your response to the comments raised the project has been approved to proceed with the proposed amendments.

Details of the approval are as follows:

Project Title: **Incorporating Aboriginal Healing Frameworks into work with survivors of violence and abuse.**

Project No.: **2017/396**

Next Annual Report due: 22 June 2018

New Approved Documents:

Date Uploaded	Type	Document Name
19/04/2018	Version 1	Face to Face and telephone Interview Guide
19/04/2018	Version 1	Face to face Participant Interview Guide
19/04/2018	Version 1	Individual Interview Guide/Questions
19/04/2018	Version 1	Telephone Interview Opening Script

Please contact the Ethics Office should you require further information or clarification.

Sincerely

[REDACTION]

Dr Clifton Chan
Chair
Modification Review Committee (MRC 2)

The University of Sydney HRECs are constituted and operate in accordance with the National Health and Medical Research Council's (NHMRC) National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007) and the NHMRC's Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research (2007).

Research Integrity & Ethics Administration
Research Portfolio
Level 2, Margaret Telfer Building (K07)
The University of Sydney
NSW 2006 Australia

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CRICOS 00026A

Appendix 8

YERIN
Aboriginal Health Services Inc.

CORPORATE SERVICES
Suites 8 & 9, Cnr Margaret St & Alison Rd
36 Alison Rd, Wyong NSW 2259
T. (02) 4351 1040
F. (02) 4351 1037

3rd April 2017

Research letter of Consent

Project:	Incorporating Aboriginal Health Frameworks into work with Survivors of violence and abuse
Principal Researcher:	Mareese Terare
Research Organisation:	The University of Sydney, The Education Centre Against Violence Yerin Aboriginal Health Services Inc.

I, Belinda Field can confirm that Yerin Aboriginal Health Services Inc. supports the research project and are willing to participate.

Signed on behalf of Yerin Aboriginal Health Services

Signature [REDACTION]

Position in the organisation (CEO) CEO.

Date 3.4.17

Witnessed by [REDACTION] *Date* 3/4/17

Appendix 9

GNIBI
Southern Cross University

8 September, 2016

Please accept this letter as confirmation that Mareese Terare attended weekly classes for the doctoral level unit CMM03189 Indigenous Research Theory and Practice at Gnibi College of Indigenous Australian peoples from July through September 2015.

One aspect of this unit also included a research Master class, which was a week-long intensive held in August 2015. Mareese attended and participated in this Master class. During the week, she also presented her proposed research to a panel of academics and community Elders.

[REDACTION]

Dr. Shawn Wilson

Director of Research
Gnibi College of Indigenous Australian Peoples
Ph +61 2 6626 9298
E: shawn.wilson@scu.edu.au

Appendix 10

8/12/2015

Ms Mareese Terare

Dear Mareese,

Thank you for your recent presentation to the Aboriginal Communities Matter Advisory Group (ACMAG) on 8Th October 2015.

As you are aware, ACMAG advises NSW Heath, Education Centre Against Violence, and New Street Services on their programs with a view to empowering individuals and families and communities, thus building on, strengthening and expanding, the capacities of Aboriginal communities to address and overcome interpersonal violence. Members of ACMAG bring knowledge, experience and understandings to the three agencies and can also act as advocates or advisors to other groups, including state and national government and non-government agencies and committees they appoint.

I refer specifically to your request to ACMAG to report back on the progress of your proposal on Aboriginal Worldviews/Philosophies, which has been support by Members. Further, ACMAG have nominated two representatives to comprise membership of your sub-committee. The nominations are Ms Sigrid Herring and Ms Julie Shelley. Both members have exceptional knowledge and experience in providing advice on these matters.

I look forward to hearing about the progress of your PHD and wish you all the best in finalising your thesis.

For further details of the recommended nominees or to discuss any other matter, please contact Ms Catharina Webb, Secretariat, ACMAG on #02 9840 3737.

Yours sincerely,

[REDACTION]

Rowena Lawrie
Chairperson
ACMAG

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