

Connecting Indigenous Cultural Safety and Addressing Racism in the Health Care System

with Harley Eagle

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10AM VIA ZOOM



a place of mind
THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Centre for Excellence in
Indigenous Health



First Nations Health Authority
Health through wellness





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More Acknowledgments

- Land and a word about Protocols
- Challenges of this Pandemic, War, Climate Crisis, Reconciliation Journey and current events, etc. & and the Virtual environment
- The Nature of this Talk can be difficult – please look after yourself
- TRC 94 Calls to Action & In Plain Sight Report
- 70 – 20 – 10 (%) model of learning & Development





Circles as a process that disrupts colonial processes

- **HUMILITY**
- **RESPECT**
- **INTEGRITY**
- **GENEROSITY**
- **COURAGE**
- **EMPATHY**
- **FORTITUDE**



The Role of Vulnerability in Indigenous Cultural Safety (ICS) work

- Story from Brené Brown that states shame is held in place by three things:
 - Secrets
 - Silence
 - Judgment
- Vulnerability is the antidote to shame & the gateway to creativity and innovation

Cultural Safety- Origins & defined

- **CULTURAL SAFETY** (FNHA)

is an *outcome* based on respectful engagement that recognizes and strives to address power imbalances inherent in the health care (or any) system. It results in an environment free of racism and discrimination, where people feel safe when receiving health care (or services).

- **CULTURAL HUMILITY** (FNHA)

is a *process* of self-reflection to understand personal and systemic biases and to develop and maintain respectful processes and relationships based on mutual trust. Cultural humility involves humbly acknowledging oneself as a learner when it comes to understanding another's experience.

CONNECTING INDIGENOUS CULTURAL SAFETY & ANTI-RACISM

Connection to our Culture & Worldview is important not because it ends oppression but because it keeps us connected to our humanity and ways of knowing and being; it is a source of Strength & Healing. Therefore to end oppression, we still need to do the work of disrupting the systems of oppression. Anti-racism is one such way of disrupting.

Harley Eagle

The Cultural Safety learning process

- *Pre-step element: an invitation to a process that sets the tone and builds a container and the capacity to hear & embrace the uncomfortable & to learn from each other*
- Learning from the past & current realities – *Knowledge (Secrets)*
- Navigating the past & present-day realities – *Skills (Silencing)*
- Moving forward together – *Collaborative Action (Judgement)*

Knowledge:

Impacts of Colonization Main Themes

- **For Time immemorial the genius and brilliance of Indigenous Nations**
- Epidemics- decimates populations by 90% overall AND no time to mourn, loss of knowledge keepers, connected to current Pandemic
- Policies – Royal Proclamation of 1763, Broken Treaties, BNA act (Fed responsibility), Indian Act 1876 (Wards of the state) - Reserves, Spirituality banned, Indian Residential Schools, Indian Hospitals, 60's Scoop, Day Schools, Illegal to hire lawyers, etc.
- **Resistance / Resiliency / Healing/ “Intergenerational Strength”**
Marlo Eagle

What our wise ones & Healers say about trauma:

Trauma is...

- An imbalance of body, mind, and spirit
- A spiritual disruption
- A depletion of life energy
- Interconnected- trauma affects the body/organs
- intergenerational.



What Is Trauma?

... damage to the mind that occurs as a result of a distressing event. Trauma is often the result of an overwhelming amount of stress that exceeds one's ability to cope or integrate the emotions involved.

- Judith Lewis Herman (Trauma & Recovery)

What Is Trauma?

Trauma originates as a response in the nervous system and does not originate in the event. Trauma is in the nervous system, not in the event.

-Peter Levine

A societal Response: (Skill example) **TRAUMA-INFORMED PRACTICE (TIP)**

- Trauma-informed practice is a **way of working** with people that recognizes the prevalence and impact of trauma on the lives of the people we work with. It means ensuring that we reflect **safety, trustworthiness, choice, collaboration, and empowerment** in each contact, physical space, relationship, activity and policy/guideline in our organization.

“Rather than saying something is wrong with someone, work from the understanding, that something has happened to them.”

DECOLONIZED UNDERSTANDINGS OF TRAUMA-INFORMED PRACTICE:

It is not only about an individual's experiences that produce unresolved trauma. We also must understand that we live in a colonial society that continues to inflict harm often in ways that have been normalized & hidden in plain sight. (*Colonial inflicted trauma*)

Another **skill** example **expanding our narratives**

- **Moving from “narrow narratives” to a “more complete narrative”**
- “Narrow narratives are built from & maintain stereotypes& they tend to pathologize
- A more complete understanding of the disparities, trauma and struggles of indigenous people includes the impact of colonization and the abuse of power found in colonial structures/institutions, that also shape behaviors, and attitudes.
 - **Witness not pathologies**
- Further: where should we start the story of Canadian colonialism?
 - The older, more complete story of colonization

By applying TIP understanding we notice...

- Jumping back 1000 years the Indigenous tribes of Europe were Colonized by the Holy Roman Empire (HRE)
- Once Indigenous tribes but over hundreds of years of living under oppression form their own Nations of Europe but in the image of the oppressor
- Rise and growth of European nations modeled after the HRE lead to the need for more resources and lands and the need to explore & expand. [“The once colonized became colonizers”](#)

**The Making of Europe: Conquest,
Colonization and Cultural Change
950-1350 Robert Bartlett**

.....Europe, the initiator of one of
the world's major processes of
conquest, colonization and
cultural transformation, *was also
the product of one.*



An example of how the colonization process becomes institutionalized and a part of the societal system

- It is not about human nature or survival of the fittest etc.
- Doctrine of discovery??
- Trc calls to action 45, 46, 47: *we call upon federal, provincial, territorial, and municipal governments to repudiate concepts used to justify European sovereignty over indigenous peoples and lands, such as the doctrine of discovery and terra nullius, and to reform those laws, government policies, and litigation strategies that continue to rely on such concepts.*
- *“A series of 14th century papal bulls (edicts from the catholic pope) that have become the moral and legal apparatus that has shaped colonization as we know it today”*
- *So, how does racism fit into all of this??*

...the rise of the Ideology of racism

- The Doctrine of Discovery “who is fully human” is disrupted by Indigenous People becoming Christians etc.
- Still need a reason to allow for dehumanizing
- Story of Carl Linnaeus 1707-1778
 - Joining with other scientists they first theorized that these were the primary *races* - Caucasian, Mongaloid, Australoid, and Negroid
 - Many other groupings by many scientists
 - Couldn't ever prove one is better than the other- “Race is a Myth but Racism is real”

What is Systemic Racism?

- More than just hateful interpersonal interactions and bigoted behaviors.
- Racism is the **Power** to design and maintain a system of complex social and political mechanisms that permeate, define and give purpose to laws and bureaucracies based on race prejudice that has been in place for hundreds of years across many generations.
- When we are brought up in such a system it shapes & normalizes our understandings of one another and self and allows our society to treat certain human beings and the environment around us as if they are of lesser or of more value than others.
- Adapted from Scott Woods & Roots of Justice

Anti-racism: isn't simply being not racist

“Anti-racism is the practice of identifying, challenging, and changing the values, structures, and behaviors that perpetuate systemic racism”
(Ontario Anti-Racism Secretariat).

The work is challenging and complex; it's internal work
and external

Anti-racism (a key to ICS & H) starts with

- Developing a shared analysis of systemic racism & the systemic nature of colonization (10%)
- **Developing processes (personal & organizationally) & an alive commitment to continued self-awareness/healing (70%)**
- Developing processes for journeying together-group learning & learning from others (supported by your organization) (20%)
- Developing processes for organizational accountability internally and externally

