Building on Indigenous healing traditions
body mind spirit - in response to developmental trauma in complex trauma environments

Leading Practice Conference “Holding the Risk”
6th and 7th February 2017

Emeritus Professor Judy Atkinson
Patron We Al-li
Healing People Sharing Culture Regenerating Communities
The Ancient University ... The Village. Where courses are offered in living.
Healthy Country - Healthy People

body spirit heart mind
I am? What is my inheritance

• Jiman
  – Eliza Shields

• Bundjalung
  – Henry Williams
  – I am who ... they were ... and are.

• They live within me .. Epigenetics.
The Power of Story

“We live storied lives. We organise experience into stories as we share life interactively with others. The plot, characters, and morals of the stories we hear influence our synatic connections, they change our brains. Stories also live through us. We are born into stories, those of our families, nations, religions and cultures.”

(Lewis Mehl-Madrona in Healing the Mind through the Power of Story)
“The Australian continent is criss-crossed with the tracks of the Dreamings: walking, slithering, crawling, flying, chasing, hunting, weeping, dying, giving birth. Performing rituals, distributing the plants, making the landforms and water, establishing things in their own places, making the relationships between one place and another. Leaving parts or essences of themselves, looking back in sorrow; and still travelling, changing languages, changing songs, changing skin. Where they travelled, where they stopped, where they lived the events of their lives, all these places are sources and sites of Law. ...
• “These tracks and sites, and the Dreamings associated with them, make up the sacred geography of Australia; they are visible in paintings and engravings; they are sung in the songs, depicted in body painting and sacred objects; they form the basis of a major dimension of the land tenure system for most Aboriginal people. To know the country is to know the story of how it came into being, and that story also carries the knowledge of how the human owners of that country came into being. Except in cases of succession, the relationship between the people and their country is understood to have existed from time immemorial to be part of the land itself.”

• Note: Dreamings – The Dreaming and its stories are linked to the creation process and spiritual ancestors, and still around today. Source: http://www.creativespirits.info/aboriginalculture/spirituality/what-is-the-dreamtime-or-the-dreaming#ixzz4Avd7UOYH
Body ... our relationship with country

Artwork Chris Edwards Haines
The Healing Story
... begins with an awakening
“Spirit”
Healthy Family and Social Systems hold children in loving embrace ‘A heart healing.’

Find a white family for Terry!
Moving through an Educaring process in Healing Trauma

1. Creating culturally safe places
   Ceremony creates the holding

2. Finding and telling the Stories
   – Play Art Dance Music

3. Making sense of our stories -
   Theatre - Dialogue

4. Feeling the feelings
   Theatre – Dance - Ceremony

5. Moving through layers of loss & grief .. ownership ... choices.

6. Strengthening Cultural and Spiritual Identities

Health and Wellbeing
Judy Atkinson 2002
Establish State Regulation
 Safe touch massage pressure points

Somato-Sensory Integration
 Movement & Yoga games
 Music
 Touch
 Nature Discover

Facilitate Emotional Regulation
- relationships
✓ Dance - play – art.

Encourage Abstract thought
✓ Story telling- writing
✓ Drama theatre
✓ Art and music

Resonance – growth, and physical wellness, vitality, meaningful life- evidenced by responsiveness & responsibility - curiosity and openness promote growth.

The Heart brain Resonance

Cortical

Limbic

Midbrain

Brain Stem

Vitality

Remember the four Brains.
Mind-Indigenous Healing Practices (Ecological social systems theory)
Models of Practice

• We Al-li proposes a transformational learning model designed to provide opportunities for us all to learn at our optimal levels, while receiving therapeutic care in the learning environment – Edu-caring.

The model is built on the 7 R’s of educaring.

RESPECT RIGHTS RESPONSIBILITY
RECIPROCITY RELATEDNESS
RESILIENCE RESONANCE

And honouring the 3 Human Rights determinations

The Rights of the Child, Human Rights, Indigenous Rights
• respect for
Each human as an unique being with unlimited potential
The Right to be safe, protected, allowed to grow and learn at our optimal levels within cultural and spiritual ways of being in the world, at home, within the school, in our communities, and in the world.
Learning responsibility for life choices and behaviours
embodied within the principles of reciprocity
Relatedness

- relatedness, how the we engage in the world in which we live and learn – a world of relationships.
Resilience

flexibility

hardiness
Resonance
the language of the heart

Resonance - empathy - character - moral fibre – the language of the heart brain.

To unit hearts and establish order
“Examination of the known beliefs, rituals, and healing practices for loss and trauma [by Indigenous peoples]... reveal some remarkable principles.

Healing rituals converge into a set of core elements related to adaption and healing following trauma.

These core elements include an overarching belief system – a rationale, a reason for the pain, injury, loss; a retelling or re-enactment of the trauma in words, dance, or song – all provided in intensely relational experience(s) with family and clan participating in the ritual. ...
Perry continued

- retell the story,
- hold each other,
- massage, dance, sing,
- creating images of the battle in literature, sculpture and drama,
- reconnecting to loved one and to community,
- celebrate,
- eat and share together
Perry is clear that these Indigenous healing practices work because they are:

- ‘repetitive, rhythmic, relevant, relational, respectful and rewarding’,
- “While these therapeutic practices may not at first seem “biological”: be assured that they are not only likely to change the brain, but they will assuredly provide the patterned, repetitive stimuli required to specifically influence and modify the impact of trauma, neglect, and maltreatment on key neural systems” (Perry, B ibid).
the Coolman holds the stories,

Self Care

you hold the space.