

Healing, Cultural Safety and the Criminal Justice System

Gregory Phillips
ABSTARR Consulting

3rd National Indigenous Justice CEO Forum
Brisbane
21 November 2007

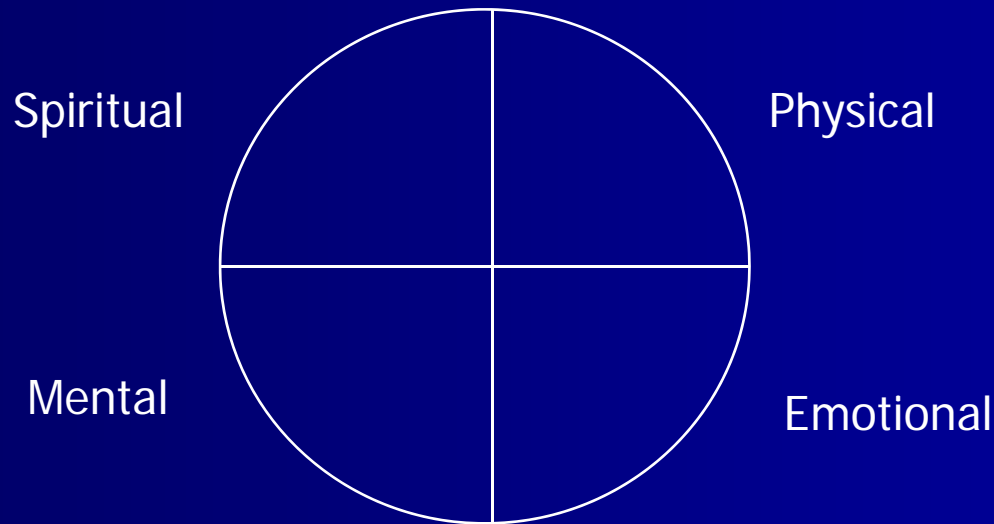
Overview

- Background
- What is healing?
 - case study: Big River
 - addiction and trauma
- What is cultural safety?
 - case study: Australian medical schools
- What are the implications for the criminal justice system?



What is Healing?

- It is personal, it means different things to different people
- It is necessarily wholistic (Willie, 1989; Wilson and Wilson, 1998)



Some Types of Healing

- Nangkari healing and bush medicine (NPY Women's Council, 2003)
- First Nations' concept of healing – recovery from alcohol and other addictions; dealing with underlying traumatic pain (Hodgson, 1991)
- Other types of healing: new age, reiki, massage etc
- 'Social and emotional well-being' and 'mental health' are related to healing, but are not the same (Phillips, 2003)

Aunty Lilla's Story

"Aboriginal people believe that the spirit child comes from the earth... I haven't seen this belief about the spirit child in any other culture, even Indigenous ones. We come from this earth, we are born from the earth. We believe that the whole of life is a spiritual experience and that we as Aboriginal people are actually more spirit than matter... I really believe that emotions can create chemical reactions in the body. If we don't face those emotions, it can create sicknesses... So for Aboriginal people, the whole of life is a spiritual experience, and so the whole of sickness is a spiritual process. The spirit can not be in balance if it is out of balance with the body. If you're spiritually unwell, you can't help but affect the whole of your being... See, the impact of colonialism has been huge... we Aboriginal people are spiritual people and we are still recovering because of colonialism... There's not a lot of understanding about the part of white Australia because they have this misguided belief that colonialism doesn't affect the,. Of course it does! It's made them into the people they are today, which means they cannot hear what Aboriginal people are telling them... Many are trying to run away from their own history... As they get older and more mature [chuckles], hopefully they'll have a better understanding... You see, that mouth of the snake... our people have retreated into the belly of the snake. It's our consolidation of our Aboriginality, a renewing of our identity. Only recently have we begun emerging from the mouth of the snake with renewal and consolidation of who we are... You see, it's the white terms of reference, it's their misinterpretations that have given definition to Aboriginal illnesses."

Aunty Lilla Watson (in Phillips, 2003)

The Story of Big River

- First alcohol brought in in early 1900s, but only largely used from 1967; missionaries controlled life until 1980s
- Controlled marriages, forced removals, sedentism, change in hunting and male roles, coercion to mission/state control in return for food.

| What? | Who? | When? |
|------------------------|------------------------------------|--|
| Alcohol (‘grog’) | Young to older men; young women | Wednesday to Sunday |
| Marijuana (‘jikan’) | Young men and some women | Most days, especially when no grog available |
| Gambling | Young to old women and some men | Most days, especially after welfare benefits received. |

- Children and teenagers copy older siblings and adults

Why do people in Big River use?

- ❖ Being taken off the land
- ❖ Relaxation and fun / sociability
- ❖ Personal trauma
- ❖ History (forced removals etc)
- ❖ Family reasons (peer pressure and distress, funerals)
- ❖ Economics (poverty and unemployment)
- ❖ Spiritual issues
- ❖ Boredom
- ❖ Lack of Transport

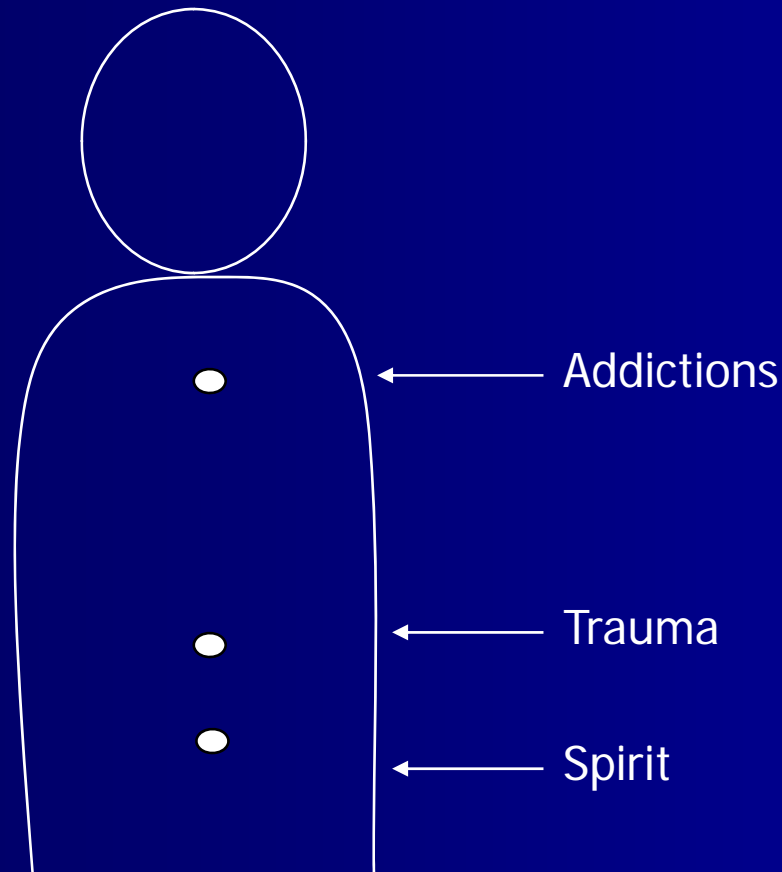
ISSUES:

- ❖ A history of control
- ❖ Effects of trauma
- ❖ Turning inwards
- ❖ Turning on those closest

Addictions and Trauma

- Addiction: any substance or process used to numb emotional feelings (Middleton-Moz, 1986)
- Dysfunctional family dynamics – the addiction affects the whole family, rather than just the user
- 'Dry drunk' – where the substance or process stops, but the 'stinkin thinkin' and insane behaviour continue (Nechi, 1999)
- Trauma can be situational, cumulative, inter-generational (Phillips, 2003)

Maya's Process of Healing



Definition of Healing

- A spiritual process that includes therapeutic change and cultural renewal (Phillips, 2007)
- A spiritual process...
- Includes therapeutic change...
- And cultural renewal

What is Cultural Safety?

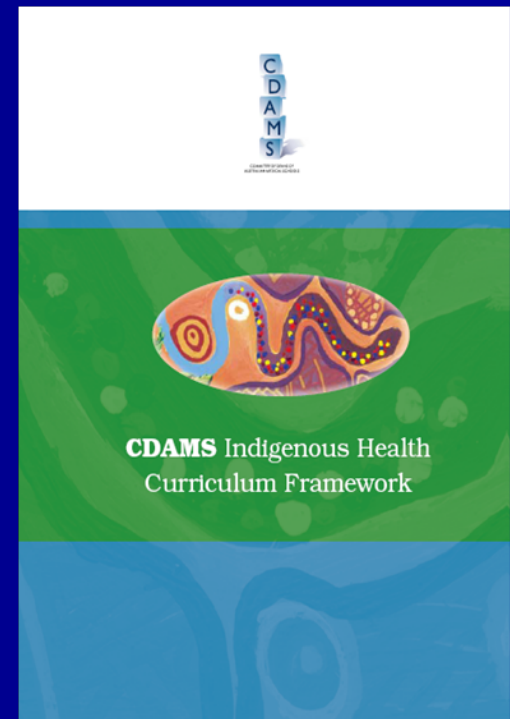
- The term was first used in New Zealand nursing schools by Maori nurses (Ramsden, 1990)
- Health services had to be culturally sensitive
- In Australia: a working definition...

Cultural safety... is the need to be recognised within the health care system and to be assured that the system reflects something of you – of your culture, your language, your customs, attitudes, beliefs and preferred ways of doing things. (Eckermann et al, 1992: 215)

- Key point: systemic change too, not just individual actions

Case Study: Medical Schools

- CDAMS Indigenous Health Curriculum Project
- Audit (2003): found wide range of content and issues among schools, mostly poor
- Curriculum Framework (content & context)
- Includes basic principles, key subject areas and student outcomes, pedagogical principles, assessment, resource and infrastructure guidelines
- The LIME Network – Leaders in Indigenous Medical Education
- www.limenetwork.net.au
- Accreditation: worked with the Australian Medical Council to change their standards



Definition of Cultural Safety

- Moving from 'cultural awareness' to 'cultural safety'
- Moving from 'othering' (*Moreton-Robinson, 2000*) to reflexivity (*Phillips, 2003*)
- Moving from individual actions to system-wide responsibility
- WARNING: Cultural safety and Indigenous health are not the same thing!!!! (*Pitama, 2007*)

DEFINITION:

- A client feels that their cultural, social and human values are respected, and that an organisation providing services to that client re-orient its institutional practices, values, resource and governance arrangements accordingly.

Lessons for Organisational Reform

- Staff development as important as content
- Decision-making structures and funding arrangements need to be re-oriented
- Process as important as the content or product
- Indigenous leadership and non-Indigenous/institutional responsibility critical
- Truly productive partnerships require trust, respect and trial and error

Criminal Justice System: Case Studies of Healing Success

STAN DANIELS CORRECTIONAL FACILITY, Canada:

- Totally Indigenous managed
- Meets all national correctional guidelines
- Staff model the behaviour they wish to see – committed to recovery, trained in addictions and trauma counselling
- Sober Elders lead cultural ceremonies and healing
- Clients access psychotherapy, AA and other services
- Clients get to learn who they are
- Follow-up support and referrals are offered

More Case Studies

- **YARRABAH:** have reduced suicide rates because the community led change, redefined social norms and took action using principles of healing and recovery as a guide. (Tsey and Every, 2000)
- **HOLLOW WATER, Ontario, Canada:** have recovered from a crisis of sexual abuse by community action, redefining social norms, sending perpetrators to treatment (not just jail), asking for help, and dealing with issues locally. (Aboriginal Healing Foundation, 2006)

Research Excellence

- Noritta Morseu-Diop: phd research into Healing in Justice – comparative study of Aotearoa's approach
- Co-operative Research Centre for Aboriginal Health holding a Prison Health Roundtable in late November www.crcah.org.au
- Indigenous Men's and Sexual Health in Prisons Project – Victoria LaTrobe and Melbourne University in conjunction with VACCHO www.onemda.unimelb.edu.au

Lessons so far...

- Start with attitudes and beliefs of public, staff and administrators – why do we believe locking traumatised and angry people up will make a difference?
- Healing of the staff is critical (prevent countertransference, enmeshment and denial) (Wilson and Lindy, 1994)
- Must do something about addictions – Stan Daniels have detox and treatment available in-house)
- Culture and spirituality is central
- Elders and community must be engaged

Work Being Done Now

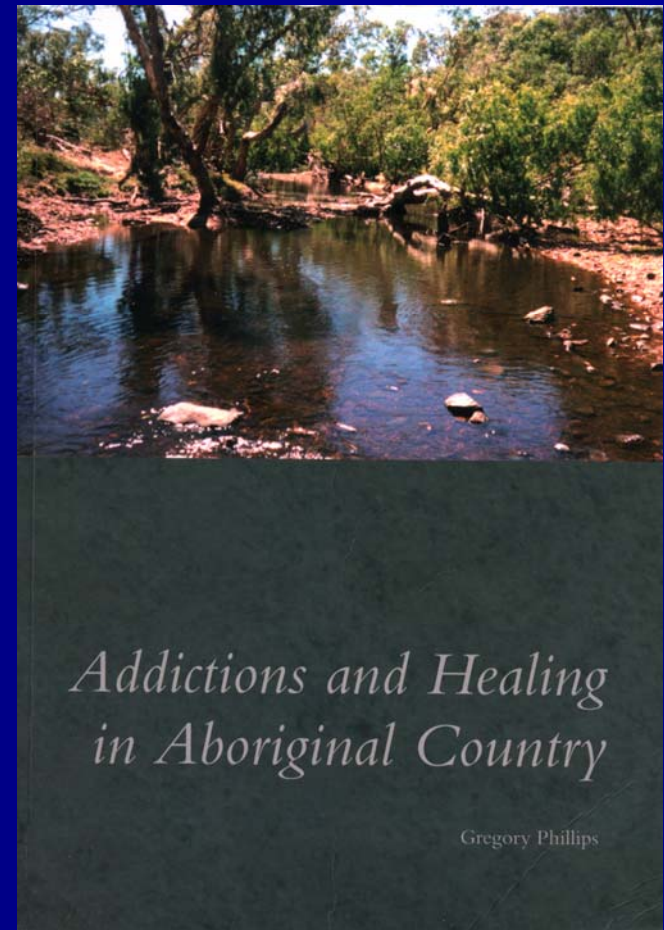
- Testing the definition of healing – a spiritual process that includes therapeutic change and cultural renewal
- Implementation: developing trial programs
- Evaluation: developing 'measurement' tools

Moving Forward

- Criminal justice system and health sectors can work much more closely to understand trauma, its impact on clients and staff, and its implications for healing, prevention, sentencing and after-care
- Process of reform will be as important as the new services themselves
- Reform will require changes to the culture and organisational arrangements of the correctional institution, not just the individual actions of staff
- Want to see Indigenous leadership and non-Indigenous responsibility

Addictions and Healing in Aboriginal Country

- Phillips, G. 2003. Canberra: Aboriginal Studies Press.
- Order from book stores or
- Email: sales@aiatsis.gov.au



References

- Aboriginal Healing Foundation. 2006. *Final Report*. Ottawa: Aboriginal Healing Foundation.
- Australian Medical Council. 2006. *Assessment and Accreditation of Medical Schools: Standards and Procedures*. Canberra: Australian Medical Council.
- Eckermann, A, Toni Dowd, Mary Martin, Lynette Dixon, Roy Gray and Ena Chong. 1992. *Binan Goonj: Bridging Cultures in Aboriginal Health*. Armidale: Department of Aboriginal and Multicultural Studies, University of New England.
- Hodgson, 1991. *"Spirituality vs Religion And First Nations' Response to Healing of a Government's Decision to Set Social Policy to Dictate Christianity as the Solution to Assimilate Our People"*. Edmonton: Nechi Institute on Alcohol and Drug Education.
- Maya Living Free Healing Centre. 2007. *Maya's Process of Healing*. (unpublished paper) Thornbury: Maya.
- Middleton-Moz, J. and Dwinell, L. 1986. *After the Tears: Reclaiming the Personal Losses of Childhood*. Deerfield Beach: Health Communications Inc.
- Moreton-Robinson, A. 2000. *Talkin' up to the white woman: Aboriginal women and feminism*. St Lucia: University Of Queensland Press.
- Nechi Institute for Training, Research and Health Promotion. 1999. Personal Communication in Addictions Training Module.
- Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjarra Yankunytatjarra Women's Council Aboriginal Corporation. *Ngangkari Work – Anangu Way: Traditional Healers of Central Australia*. Alice Springs: NPY Women's Council.
- Phillips, G. 2003. *Addictions and Healing in Aboriginal Country*. Canberra: Aboriginal Studies Press.

...continued...

References continued

- Phillips, G. 2004. *CDAMS Indigenous Health Curriculum Framework*. Melbourne: VicHealth Koori Health Research and Community Development Unit, The University of Melbourne.
- Phillips, G. 2004. *National Audit and Consultations Report*. Melbourne: VicHealth Koori Health Research and Community Development Unit, The University of Melbourne.
- Phillips, G. 2007. Healing and Public Policy. In Altman, J. and Hinkson, M. *Coercive Reconciliation: Stabilise, Normalise, Exit Aboriginal Australia*. North Carlton, Arena Publications. pp 141-150.
- Pitama, S. 2007. *Lessons from Aotearoa on Cultural Safety*. Presentation to The LIME Connection II, UNSW, Sydney, September.
- Ramsden, I. (1990). *Whakarururhau: Cultural Safety in Nursing Education in Aotearoa*. A Report for the Maori Health and Nursing Committee. Wellington: New Zealand Ministry of Education.
- Tsey, Komla and Every, Anne. 2000. Evaluating Aboriginal Empowerment Programs: the Case of Family Well-Being. *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health*, 24(5), 509-514.
- Willie, E. 1989. The Story of Alkali Lake: Anomaly of Community Recovery or National Trend in Indian Country? *Alcoholism Treatment Quarterly*, 6(3/4), 167-174.
- Wilson, J. and Lindy, J. 1994. *Countertransference in the Treatment of PTSD*. New York: The Guildford Press.
- Wilson, S. and Wilson, P. 1998. Relational accountability to all our relations. *Canadian Journal of Native Education*, 22(2), 155.

Further Reading

- Kahn, M. and Fua, C. 1992. Counselor Training as a Treatment for Alcoholism: the Helper Therapy Principle in Action. *The International Journal of Social Psychiatry*, 38(3), 208-214.
- Morrisseau, C. 1998. *Into the Daylight: A Wholistic Approach to Healing*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- O'Neil, John, Jeffrey Reading and Audrey Leader. 1998. Changing the Relations of Surveillance: The Development of a Discourse of Resistance in Aboriginal Epidemiology. *Human Organization*, 57(2), 230-237.
- Raphael, B, P. Swan and D, Martinek. 1996. Inter-generational Aspects of Trauma for Australian Aboriginal People. In Danieli, Y. *International Handbook of Multigenerational Legacies of Trauma*. New York: Plenum Press, 327-339.
- Watts, R. and de L Horne, D. 1994. *Coping With Trauma: the Victim and the Helper*. Brisbane: Australian Academic Press.