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**how can mental health service providers best serve iyiniwak & communities?**

- ✧ deconstructing
- ✧ reconstructing
- ✧ action!

restor(y)ing: the medicines we need to transform our services  
transformations  
what's not working  
how we make these

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## decolonizing practice

- ✧ deconstructing colonial narratives of “mental health”
  - ✦ deficit focus, problem-centered, reactive
  - ✦ pathologizing individual – blame & shame
- ✧ cages, cages, and more cages!
  - ✦ good/bad, either/or, victim/perpetrator
  - ✦ reduced to I, me, mine – focus on individual
- ✧ patronizing & pathologizing
- ✧ box up experiences/“symptoms” in packages rooted in Euro-colonial paradigms

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## holistic wellness in-relation



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## counter-stories: the collective

- ✧ it's not only you, it's all of us – shared felt sense
- ✧ collective spiritual injury – the soul wound (Duran, 2006), historical trauma (Brave Heart, 1998)
- ✧ experiences are personal and collective through the generations, in relationship with life and land
  - ✦ conversations with our ancestors through our bodies
  - ✦ intergenerational and epigenetics
- ✧ trauma normalized with natural ways of surviving – orders of attachment vs. attachment disorders

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## the collective whole

- ✧ we soak up others' traumas – help take on that load, minimize harm – it becomes part of our wisdom, knowledge-keepers
  - ✦ we all enter the world whole and perfect (contrast: western patronization of children)
  - ✦ “it is not just my neurobiology, it's the neurobiology of my father and my mother, the very land around me and the animals” (Turcotte, 2012)
- ✧ strength, resilience, survival/survivance, transformation (e.g., cat & mouse)

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## living wellness in-relation

- ✧ sharing our stories – collective connectedness is restor(y)ing
  - ✧ our bodies share emotional story, energy story – conversations with the world toward social change and justice
- \*\*the world needs this knowledge\*\***
- ✧ these sensations become our knowledge, our wisdom, part of our medicine bundles
  - ✧ we will continue to survive most effectively with the whole, the body, the land, the language

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## counter-stories

“Survivance is an active sense of presence, the continuance of native stories, not a mere reaction, or a survivable name. Native survivance stories are renunciations of dominance, tragedy and victimry.”

(Vizenor, *White Earth Anishinaabe*, 1999, p. vii)

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## counter-stories: survivance!

- ✧ âhkamêyih tamowin
- ✧ **honouring our trauma wisdom – personal and collective medicine bundles**
- ✧ liberation discourse (Duran): transcending colonial cages
- ✧ we've survived over 500 years of attempted genocide – now *that's* living resilience!
  - ✦ culturally rooted, community-based response
- ✧ relationships, all our relations

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## Indigenizing: restor(y)ing perspectives



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## restor(y)ing our practice

- ✧ individual ~ collective
- ✧ linear time ~ spiral: pastpresentfuture
- ✧ pathologizing "symptoms" ~ listening to & engaging wisdom, knowledge, medicine
  - ✦ deficit ~ survivance & resilience
- ✧ silencing ~ listening & engaging
- ✧ patronizing ~ honouring
- ✧ in the box ~ fluid, contextual, relational
- ✧ reactive ~ miyo pimâtisiwin

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## land-based tools for wellness in clinical practice

- ✧ water
- ✧ facial tissue/face cloth
- ✧ smudge/local medicines
- ✧ stones, shells, sea glass, etc.
- ✧ plant medicines
- ✧ land – in the space & out!

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