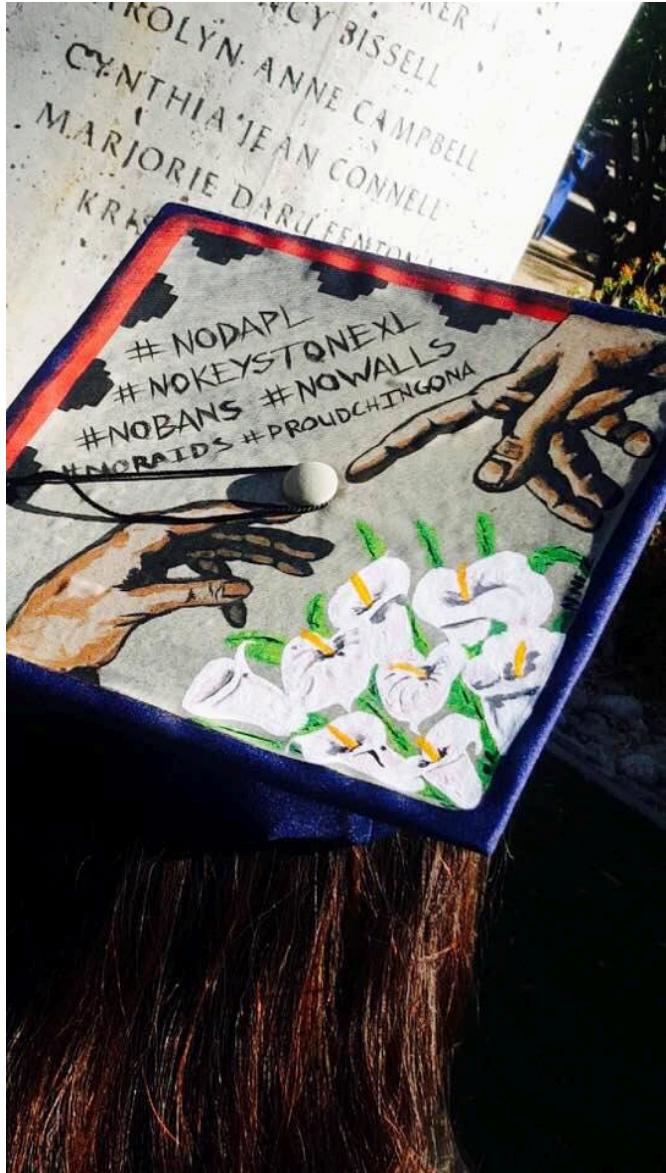


# INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE, DECOLONIZATION, & HEALTH SOVEREIGNTY

GLOBAL AND LOCAL  
CONTEXT

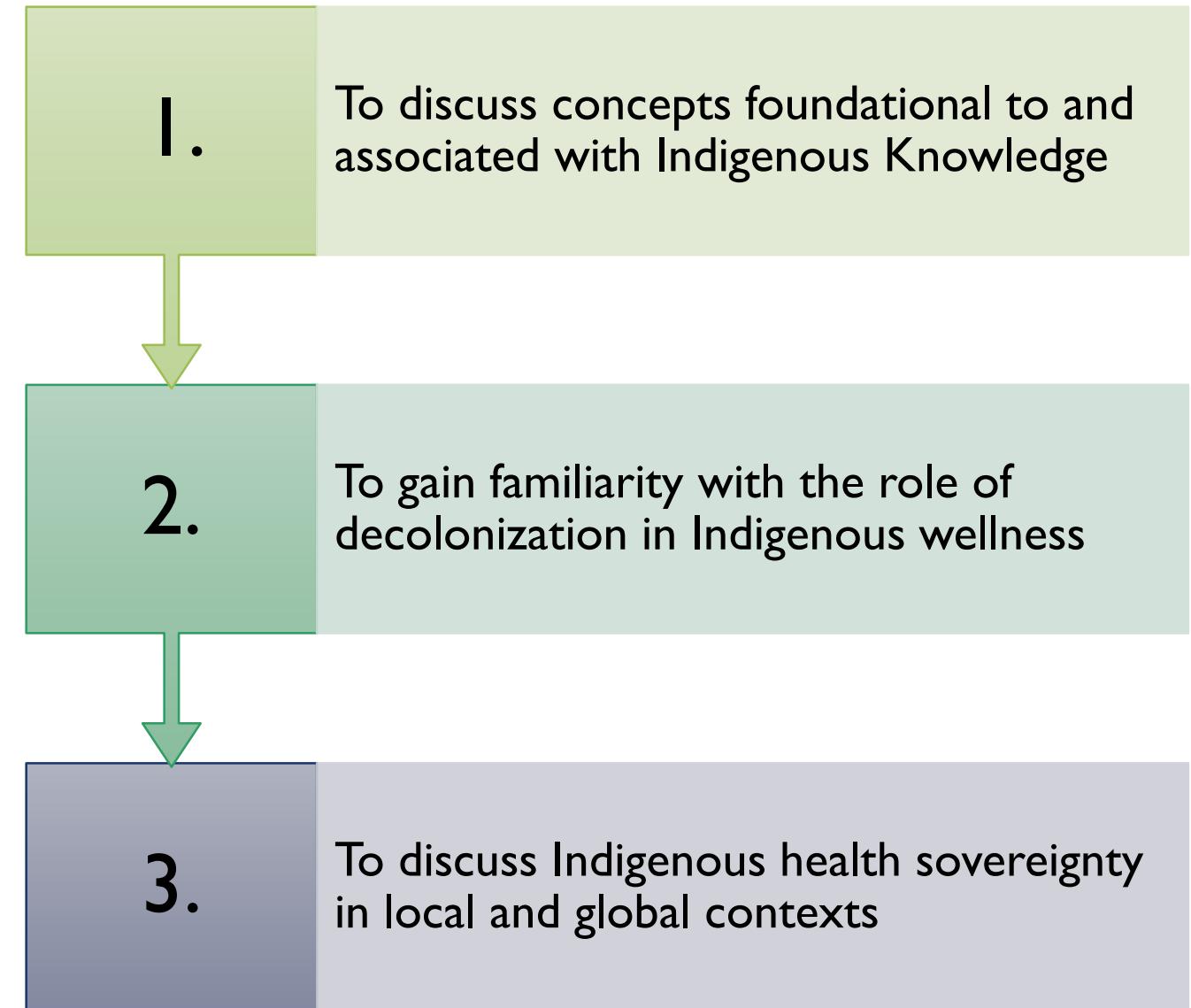
CRISTINA RIVERA  
CARPENTER, MSN, RN-BC

ROBERT WOOD JOHNSON  
FOUNDATION FUTURE OF  
NURSING SCHOLAR



# INTRO & POSITIONALITY

# OBJECTIVES



1. To discuss concepts foundational to and associated with Indigenous Knowledge
2. To gain familiarity with the role of decolonization in Indigenous wellness
3. To discuss Indigenous health sovereignty in local and global contexts

# RELEVANCE, OR THE “WHY?”



Local and global healthy inequity



Relevance of professional ethics



Personal & professional  
involvement/investment in  
systems

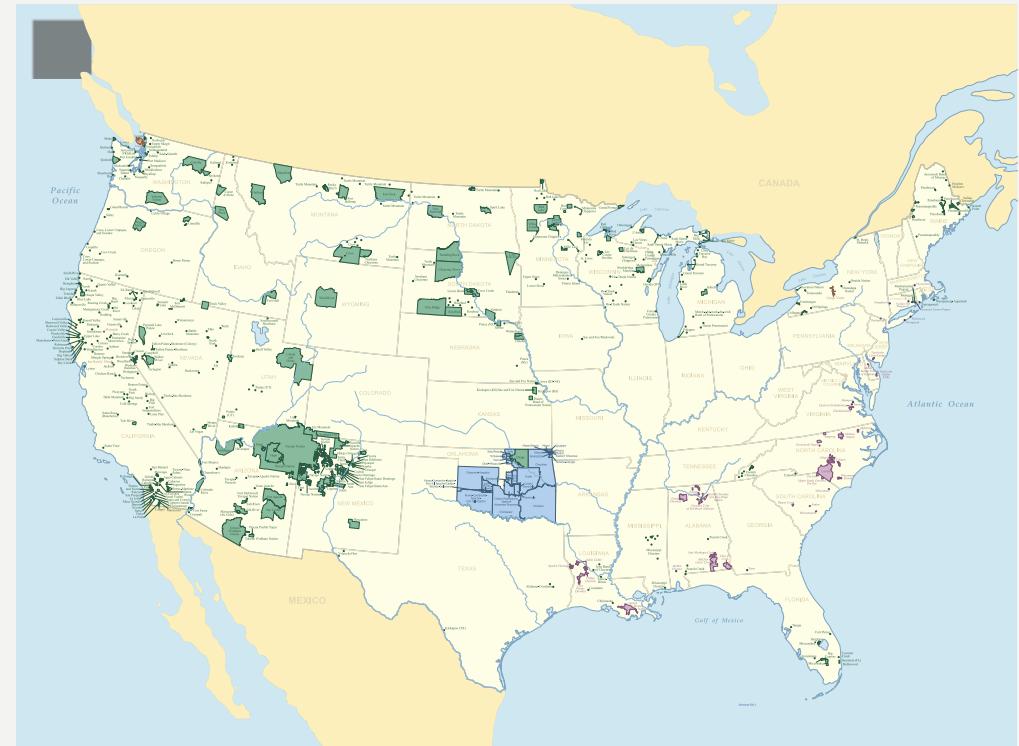
# INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

- Local
- Global
- Native American, American Indian or Alaskan Native, specific Tribal or band names
- Indigenous
  - Descendants of original inhabitants of the Americas prior to European colonization (Burnette & Figley, 2016)
  - Collective term
- Growing population & cultural resurgence/revitalization
  - Not “still” (Gonzalez, 2016)



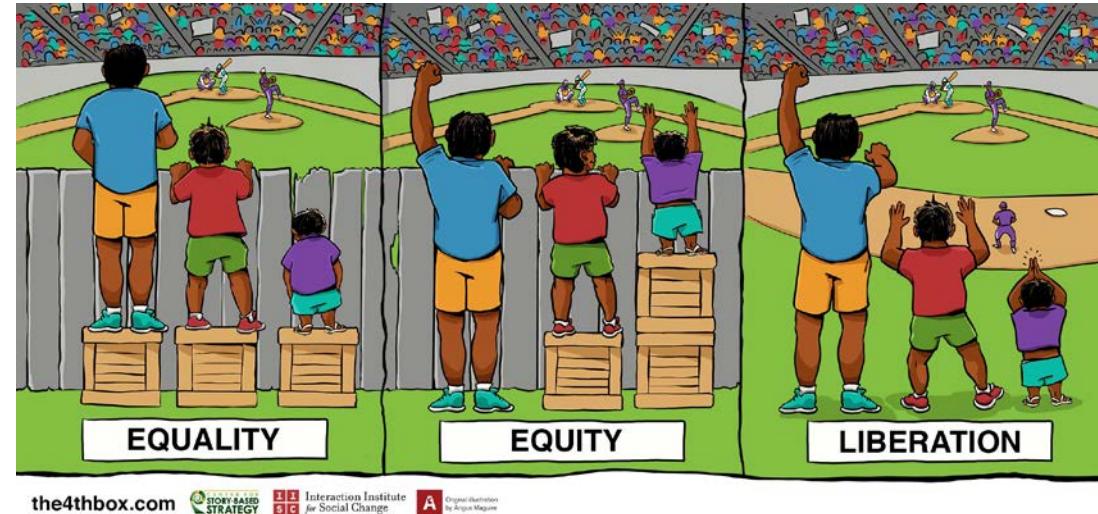
# INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

- Within the United States
  - Non-homogenous
  - >5.2 million individuals
  - 573 federally recognized tribes
  - Approx. 100 state-recognized tribes
  - Urban > rural (Office of Minority Health, 2018)
  - Does not account for all IP
  - Continued role of colonization in defining population
  - Prevailing principles of IK within diverse cultures



# HEALTH INEQUITY

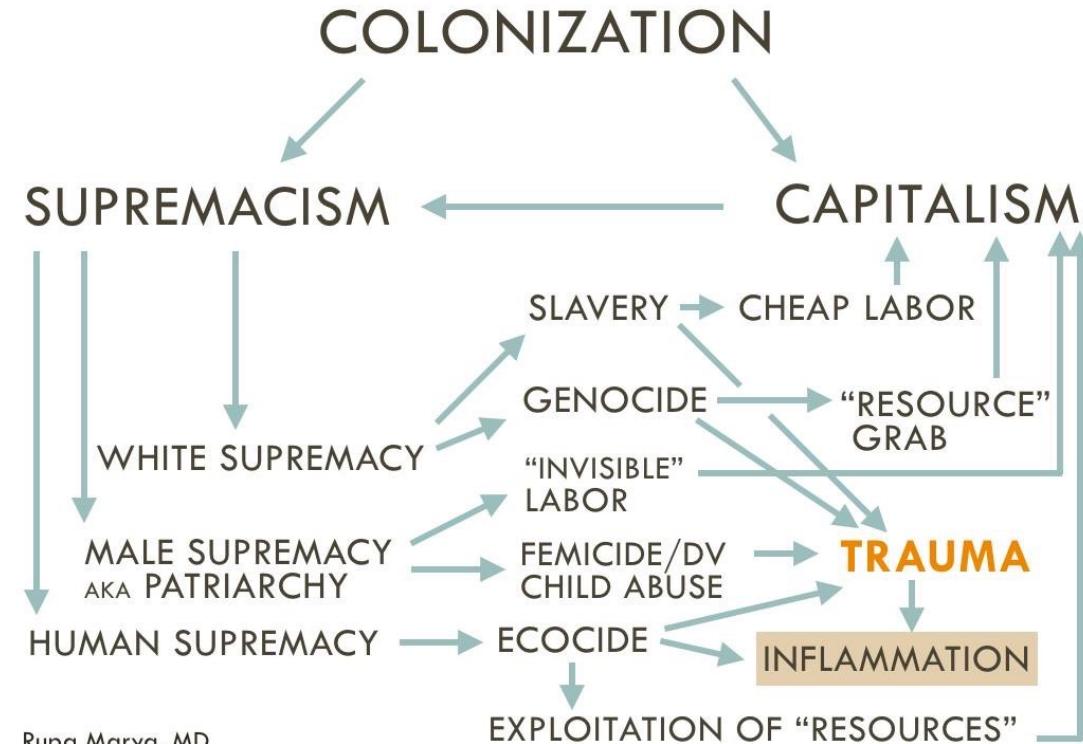
- Extant inequity
  - Higher than those experienced by any other racial or ethnic group in the US
  - Variable
- Local and global
- Socioeconomic, sociopolitical and health-related
- Inequities are not unintentional consequences of past policy and practice but planned approached with the goal of assimilation, removal, and termination (Lucero, 2011)



the4thbox.com   

# PATHWAYS

- Multiple & complex roots
- Social determinants of health
- Historical trauma & loss
  - Causal factor
  - Imperialism
  - Colonialism
  - Ongoing oppression and racism
- Intergenerational trauma
  - Intentionally, federal policy & practice



# DEFICIT VS STRENGTHS & ASSETS

Historically, health inequities among IP have been addressed via deficit-based approaches (Rogoff et al, 2017), potentiating paternalistic intervention & may cause further harm (Fast & Collin-Vezina, 2010)

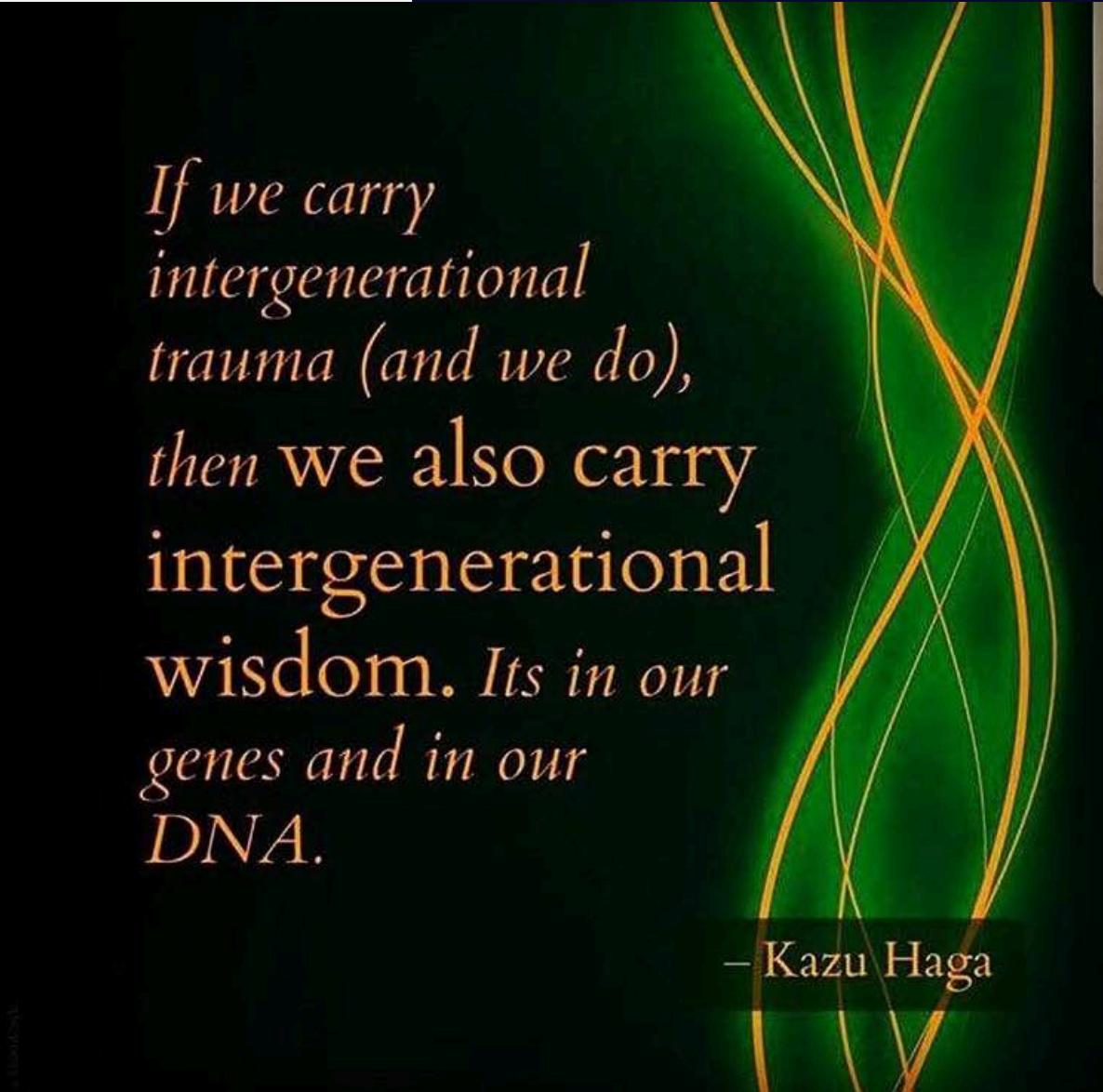
It is important to recognize disparity, but deficit-based approaches overlook inherent strengths and prevailing assets

This approach may even unintentionally, shame or focus on what one has done “wrong” (Linklater, 2014)

Often presented without context

Strength-based cultural determinants of health (CDH) (Ngiare Brown, 2013) (Lowitja Institute, 2018)

A story...



*If we carry  
intergenerational  
trauma (and we do),  
then we also carry  
intergenerational  
wisdom. Its in our  
genes and in our  
DNA.*

– Kazu Haga

# EXAMPLE



## CDH & ASSET BASED APPROACHES

- Indigenous culture is health/wellness-protective, health/wellness-promotive, and inclusive of Indigenous Knowledge (IK) as a science and as evidence-based
- Pre-existing strengths and resources
- Challenges the traditional medical model (Swartz, 2017)
- What keeps people healthy (Marshall & Easton, 2018)
- Respectful
- Avoids paternalism & continued colonialism where only outside entities bring solutions
- Draw on and support resilience
- Center on Indigenous value systems, norms and standards
  - Humor, family networks, intergenerational relationships, shared collective histories, spiritual & cultural resources, and community-based support systems (Linklater, 2014)

# HEALTH VS WELLNESS

YOUR THOUGHTS?



# WESTERN CONCEPT OF HEALTH

- Evolving concept of health  
(Pender & Murdaugh, 2015)
- Western model
  - Biomedical
  - Dualistic (Saylor, 2004)
  - Reductionist (Lawrence et al, 2016)
- Individual focus
- Direct and indirect

ON THE ONE HAND I HAVE A CLEAR AND DISTINCT IDEA OF MYSELF, IN SO FAR AS I AM A THINKING, NON-EXTENDED THING; AND ON THE OTHER HAND I HAVE A DISTINCT IDEA OF BODY, IN SO FAR A THIS IS SIMPLY AN EXTENDED, NON-THINKING THING. AND, ACCORDINGLY, IT IS CERTAIN THAT I AM REALLY DISTINCT FROM MY BODY, AND EXIST WITHOUT IT.

- RENÉ DESCARTES -

LIBQUOTES.COM

# DIVERGENCE OF WORLDVIEWS

- Western worldview: Health model
  - Separation/fragmentation
  - Separate entities
  - Body and mind
  - Self from living world
  - Cartesian bifurcation
    - remains (Saylor, 2004)
  - World as inert object rather than living entity (Deloria, 1997)
  - Evolution of modern medicine from these tenets, and resultant application in practice
- Indigenous worldview: Wellness model
  - Did not experience the Cartesian split
  - Self as complex (w)holistic being
  - Balance
    - Self
    - Self and others (Linklater, 2014)
    - Self and others and the living world (Cajete, 2000)
  - Individual, collective, community-centered and reciprocal
    - One who has achieved wellness or experienced healing may then assist community (Bassett, Tsosie, & Nannaauk, 2012)

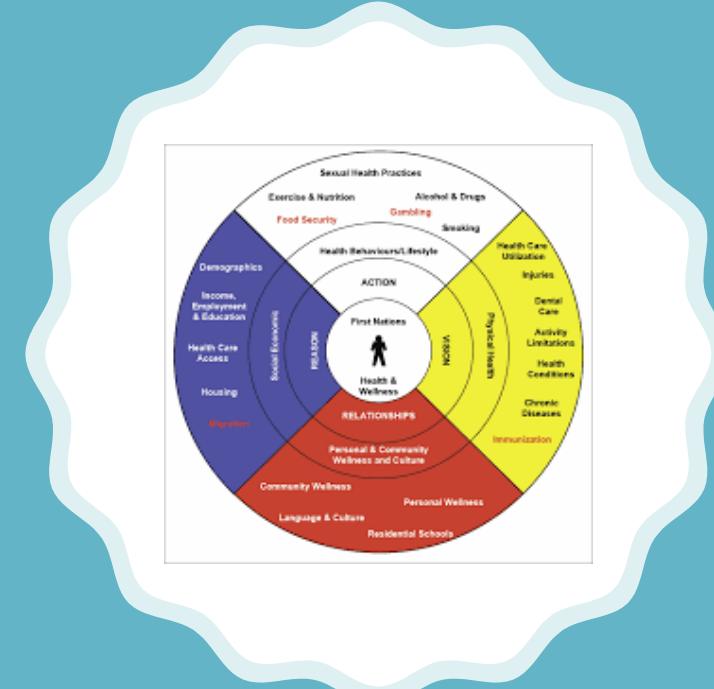
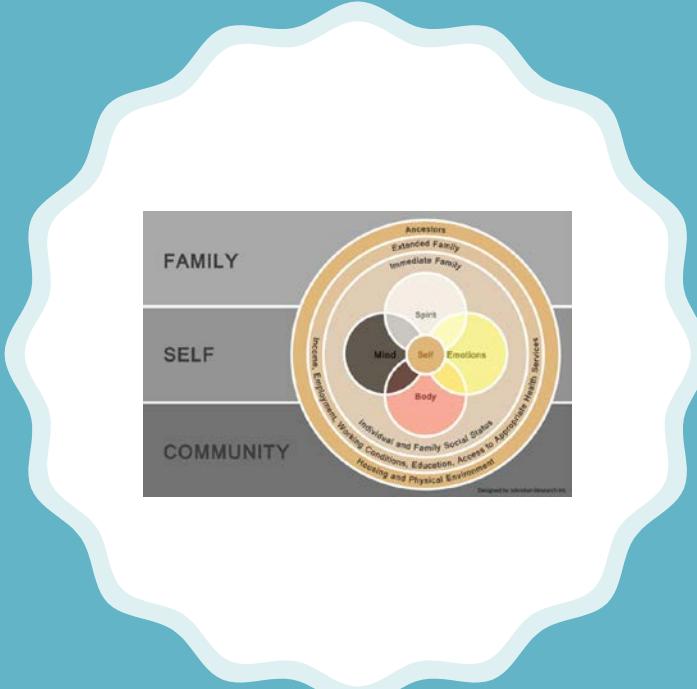
# WELLNESS DEFINED

- A measure of well-being
- Exists as relational construct  
(Rountree & Smith, 2016)
- Has impact on an individuals place  
within community (Linklater, 2014)



# IMPOSITION OF THE WESTERN HEALTH-RELATED WORLDVIEW

- Separation of mind and matter had led to multiple harms
  - Purporting to be only legitimate truth
  - Labeling as “other” and inferior
  - Exclusion
  - Extends to the health professions
- Ex. Academia and research
  - Provides basis (evidence) for evidence-based practice (EBP)
  - Determines “acceptable” practice and recommendations for practice
- Perpetuation of colonization and further harm (Linklater, 2014)
- Ex. Use of traditional medicine and healthcare discrimination (Moghaddam, 2013)
- A story...



# INDIGENOUS WELLNESS MODELS

# WELLNESS & INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE

- Wellness as a relational construct (Rountree & Smith, 2016)
  - Rather than ownership of health or a lack thereof
- Balance
  - Self
  - Others
  - Living world
- Reciprocity
- Resilience
- Integrated



# INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE

- Multiple definitions
  - Hart
  - Gonzales
  - Cajete
  - Cintli Rodriguez
- Concepts > delineation
- Local (shared global)
- Generational
- Similar terms
  - Cultural wisdom
  - Traditional knowledge, wisdom
  - Local or folk knowledge





By nature local, holistic, oral (Hart, 2010), and relational (Wilson, 2008).

Indigenous intelligence, encoded knowledge, multiple dimensions of knowledge, place, correspondence/co-respondent, origin and orientation, sacred formulas, ceremony as medicine, unity, embodiment, explanation, and memory (Gonzales, 2012)

Long excluded from mainstream scientific discourse

Not “alternative therapy”

Myth and story

Evidence-based

## INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE

# CULTURE AND IK AS FOUNDATIONAL TO WELLNESS

- Embeddedness/connectedness
- Relationality
- Connectedness or connectivity?
- Cultural connectivity
  - Being within or connected to (Hill, 2006)
  - Positive association
  - Dynamic
- Centering IK as foundational to wellness
  - Cultural reclamation & revitalization
- Cultural markers as indicators of wellness



# THE ROLE OF EVIDENCE

## EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICE

- Necessary – at times
- Hierarchy
- Scientific testing and proof
- Treatment external to recipient
- Health system as reservoir
- Exclusion of IK

## CHALLENGES

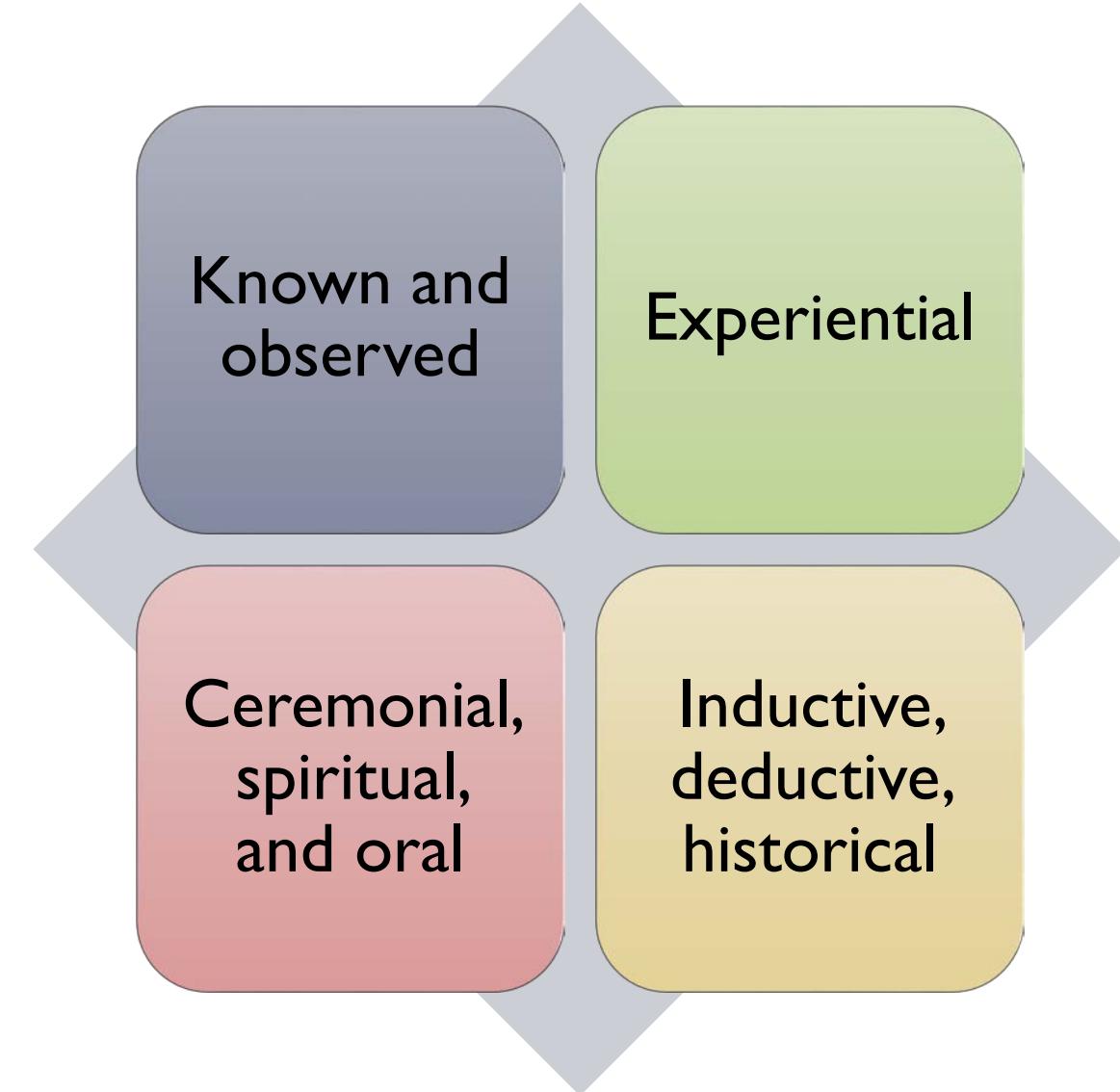
- Testing among non-diverse populations
- Cultural context and proven efficacy
- Under-representation
- May increase disparity
  - Cultural consideration
  - Adaptation & fidelity (NIHB, 2010)
- Cultural heterogeneity

# INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE AS EVIDENCE BASED

- Scientific
- Native Science (Cajete, 2000)
- Data, research & evidence
- Living scientific processes
- Complex & adaptive (Barnhart & Kawagely, 2005)



# EVIDENCE



# DECOLONIZATION

- Multiple definitions in the literature
- Decolonization work includes what decolonization means to a population
- IK foundational and necessary
- Ethics
- Decolonization of science, practice, global health
- Centering/re-centering IK



mmiijjxx

...

**DECOLONIZATION**, is the intelligent, calculated and active resistance to the forces of colonialism that perpetuate the subjugation and/or exploitation of our minds, bodies and lands, and it is engaged for the ultimate purpose of overturning the colonial structure and realizing Indigenous liberation.

# DECOLONIZATION OF WELLNESS AND HEALTHCARE

- Alignment with worldviews and value systems
- Equitable relationships
- Health protective
- Reciprocity
- Wellness and sovereignty
- Cultural reclamation & revitalization
- Connectedness/connectivity



# HEALTH SOVEREIGNTY

- Extends beyond systems
- Medicines, practices, plants, animals, minerals
- Agency
- Autonomy (ethnobiology.net, 2019)
- Wellness not defined by disease
- Pursuit of wellness.... Not “health”
  - Wellness as public good
  - Information and tools to make decisions
  - Appropriate mitigation of environment
  - Accept autonomy of choice... even/especially when this differs
  - Freedom to abandon biomedical model (Kuartei, N.D.)
- Where does this fit in our practice? Locally? Globally?

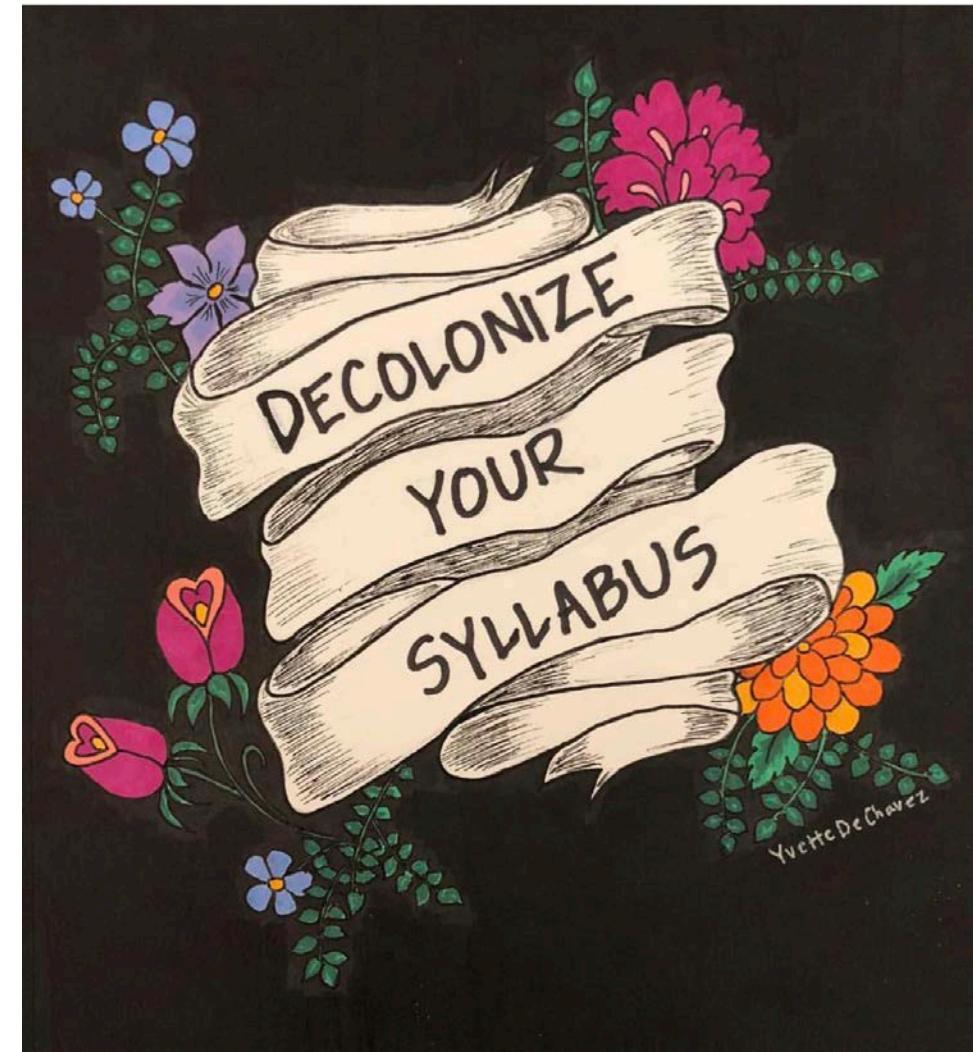
# DECOLONIZATION AND HEALTH SOVEREIGNTY

- Multiple areas
- Decolonization is necessary for health sovereignty
- Addresses health disparity
- More sovereignty = greater wellness
  - Cultural practices
  - Culture (applied IK)
  - Language (Linklater, 2014)



yvettedontlie

...



# RELEVANCE AND APPLICATION

- Indigenous healing practices
  - Applied IK
  - Promote prevention & wellness (Struthers, Eschiti, & Patchell, 2004)
  - Inherent integrated wellness applications (Kahn John, 2010)
  - Culture as healing modality
- Research & impacts on wellness
- The downside of good intentions
- Application
  - Potential to address inequities
  - Promote wellness
  - Support sovereignty and self-determination
  - Acknowledge strengths
  - Support incorporating cultural understanding into practice (Bearskin, 2011)
  - Educational and practice-based interventions
- Extension of benefits
- What does this look like?

# CAUTIONS

meztliprojects  
Shape House

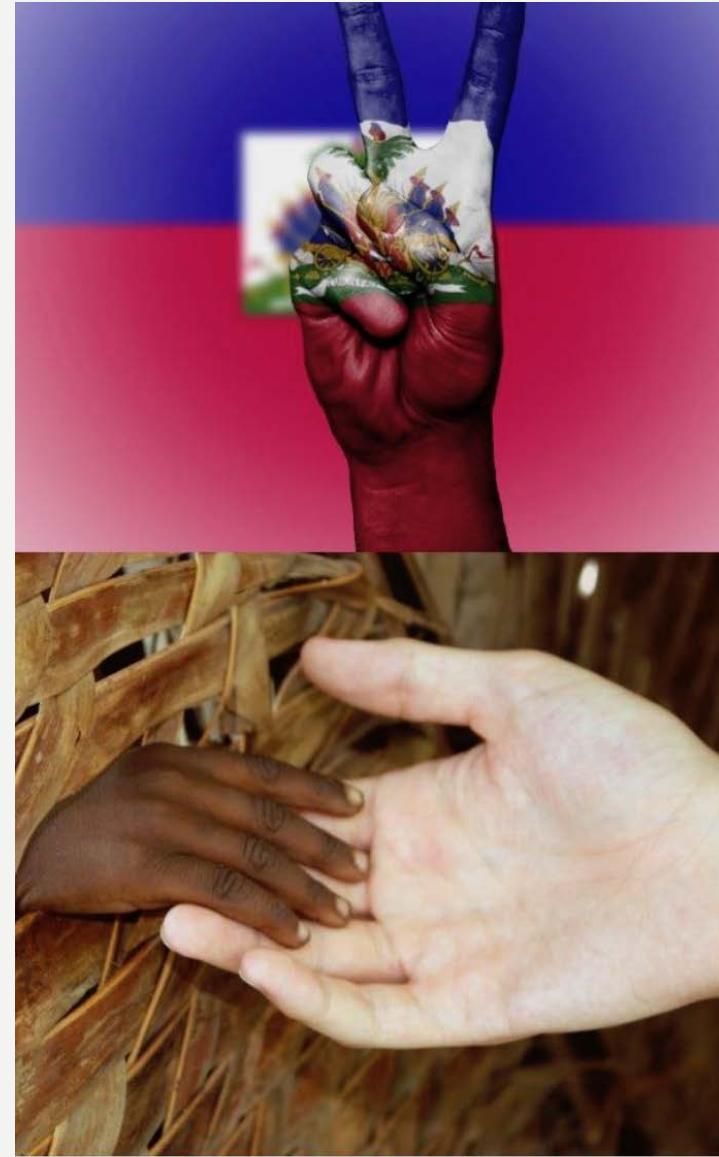


**Shape House**  
Sweat Session

Sweat sessions can facilitate weight loss, help eliminate toxins, pathogens, and stress as well as improve the overall condition of the body

~~\$50~~ **\$37**  
Sale Ends 12/18 [View Deal](#)

3 likes  
meztliprojects And these fools are back at it again @shapehouse #urbansweatlodge #culturalappropriation #sweatlodge #indigenous #yt

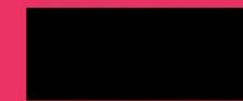


Help [REDACTED] & her [REDACTED] team to Haiti by shopping with Tupperware!



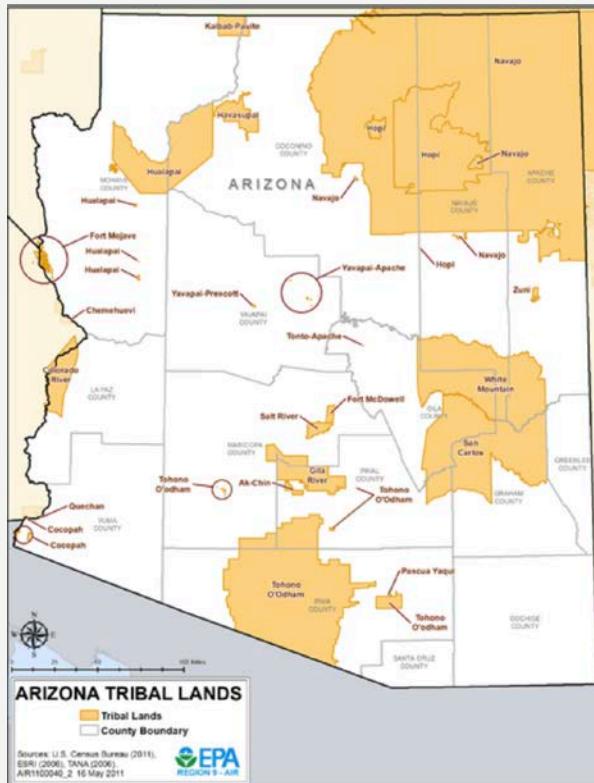
SHOP NOW THROUGH NOVEMBER 30TH!

Contact the Consultant:

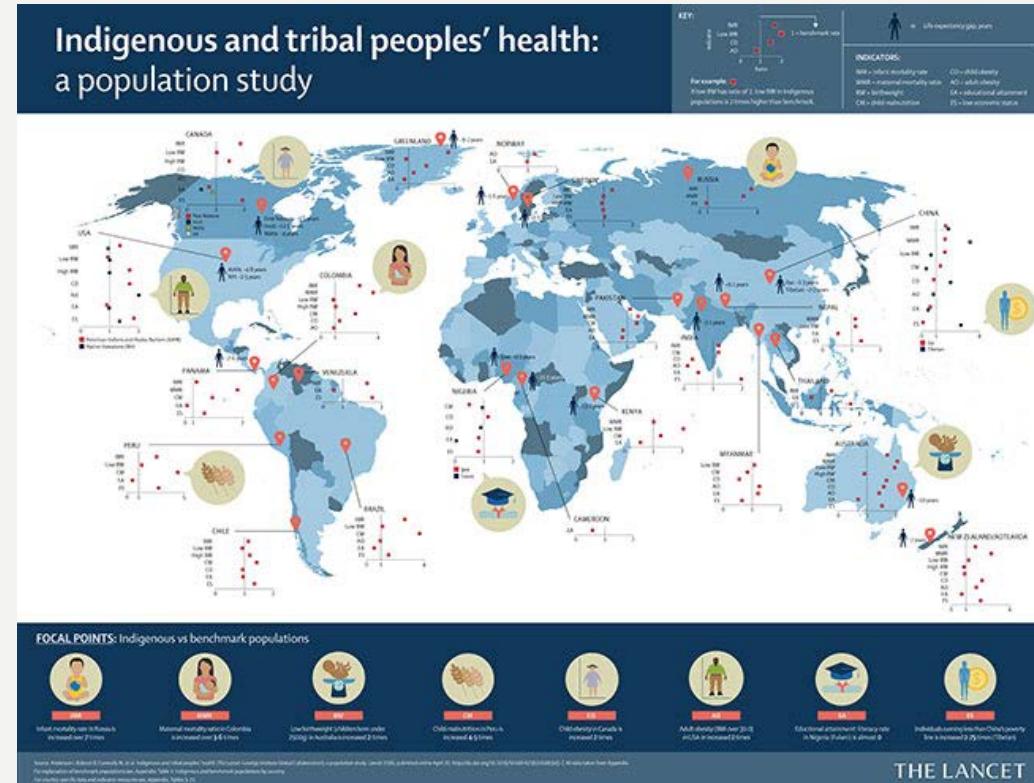


# CONTEXTS

## LOCAL



## GLOBAL

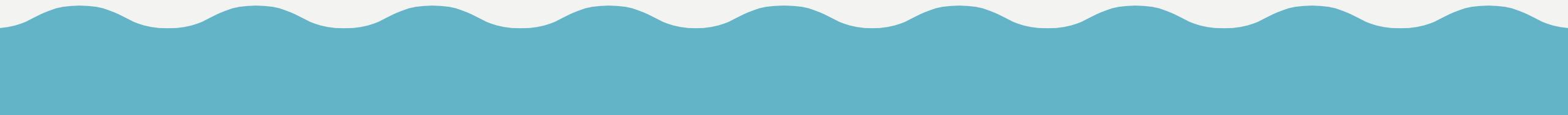




# SOLIDARITY & ALLYSHIP



# IN CLOSING...



# QUESTIONS?

# REFERENCES