

# Decolonizing Mental Health and Substance Misuse



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# Decolonization is



“the intelligent, calculated, and active resistance to the forces of colonialism that perpetrate the subjugation and/or exploitation of our (Indigenous) mind, bodies, and lands, and is engaged for the ultimate purpose of overturning the colonial structure and realizing Indigenous liberation

(Waziyatawin and Yellow Bird, 2005, pg. 2).



# Psychiatry and Indigenous People

Linklater, R. (2014). Decolonizing Trauma Work: Indigenous Stories and Strategies  
. Fernwood Publishing



- Goal is to identify and treat mental disorders
- Psychiatry Diagnosis
  - DSM
- Diagnosis and program funding
- Psychiatry and culture
- Psychotropic Medication
- Does not recognize colonization



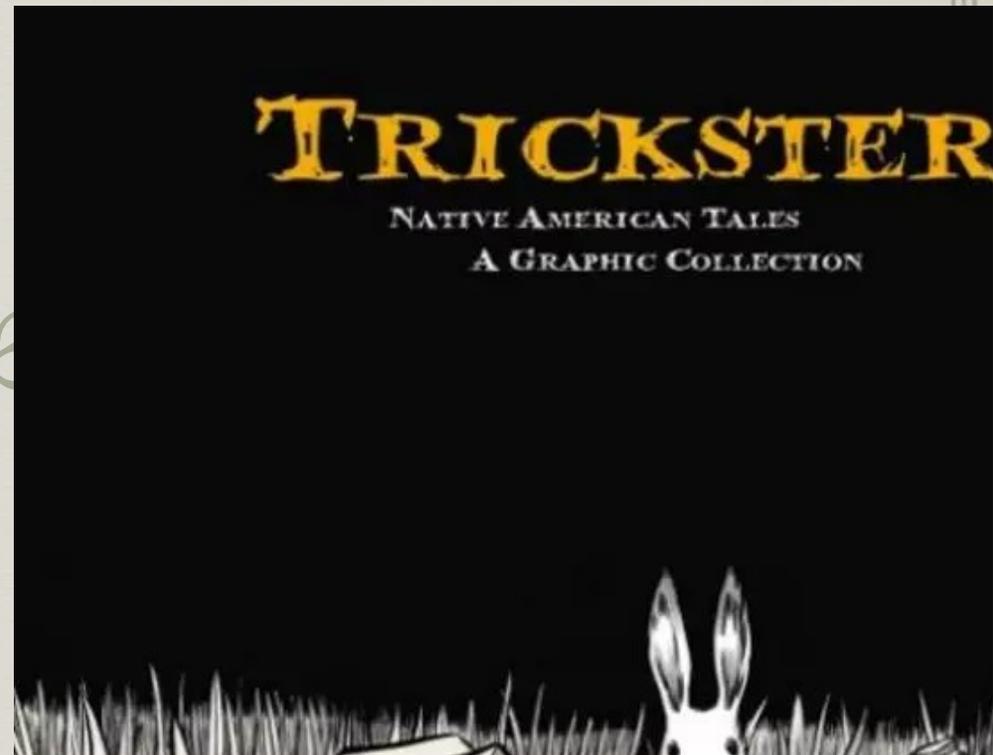
# Trauma

“Using trauma terminology implies that the individual is responsible for the response, rather than the broader systemic force caused by the state’s abuse of power”

Linklater, 2014



“Meet the Trickster, a crafty creature or being who disrupts the order of things, often humiliating others and sometimes himself in the process. Whether a coyote or a rabbit, raccoon or raven, tricksters use cunning to get food, steal precious possessions, or simply cause mischief.”



# Trickster Spirits and the Opioid Response

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# Historical Trauma

- ❧ Historical trauma - Cumulative emotional and psychological wounding from massive group trauma across generations, including lifespan.

(Brave Heart, 2004)



# takiwatanga



 Keri Opai



"In some Native languages the  
term for plants translates to  
'those who take care of us'.

— Robin Wall Kimmerer,  
Braiding Sweetgrass

# What works



- Those who are fluent in many theories and models of treatment.
- Who are client centered/counselor driven.
- Focus on strengths and protective factors
- Who are able to develop trusting therapeutic relationships.
- Who are work within their area of expertise.

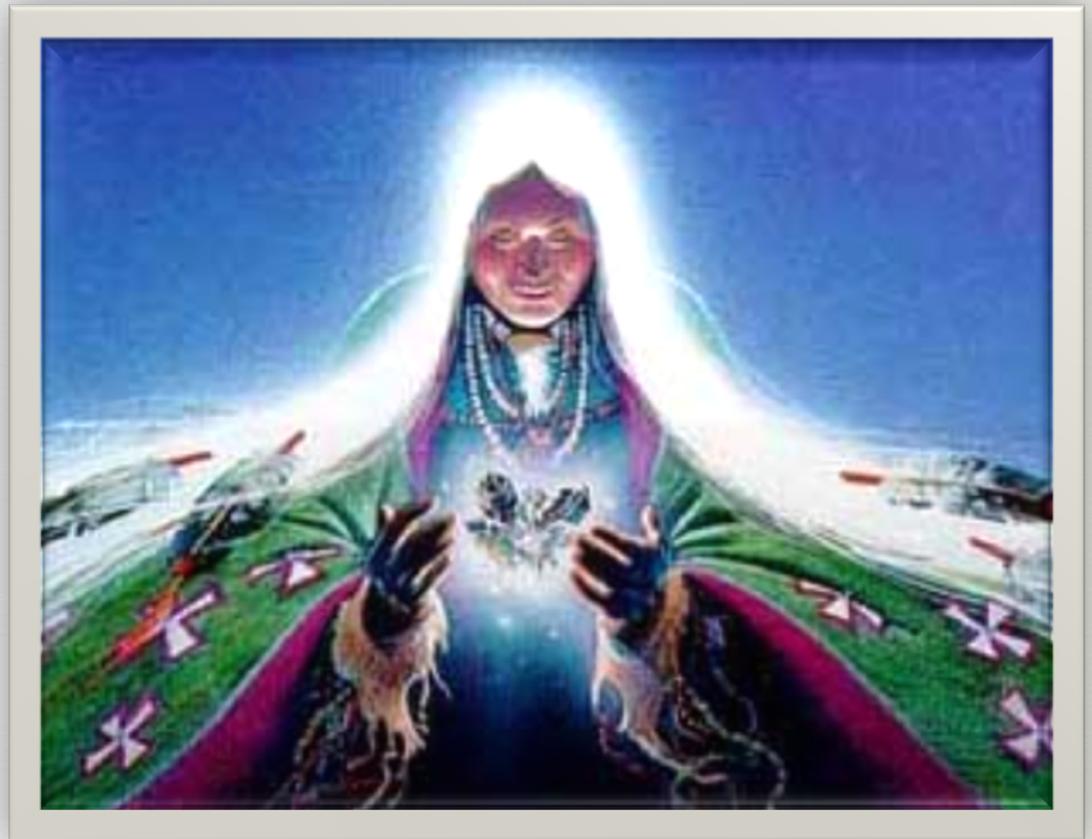


# Do not despair!!!

Mate, G. (2009)



- Our brains are resilient organs
- Some important circuits continue to develop throughout our entire lives
- They may do so even in the case of persistent and chronic substance dependency
- Be patient with science, we are continuing to learn more about this complex human conduction and how to intervene



# Resilient Responses to Trauma

- Increased bonding with family and community.
- Redefined or increased sense of purpose and meaning.
- Increased commitment to a personal mission.
- Revised priorities.
- Increased charitable giving and volunteerism.



Center for Substance Abuse Treatment , issuing body, publisher. (2014). *Trauma-Informed care in behavioral health services : A treatment improvement protocol*. (Treatment improvement protocol (TIP) series ; 57). Rockville, MD: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Center for Substance Abuse Treatment.

# Wellness

Sacred Tree: Four Worlds  
International Institute.  
<https://www.fwii.net/profiles/blogs/the-story-of-the-sacred-tree-1>



# Questions

