



**Practice Transformations**

*Changing Practice Changing Lives!*

# Developing a Practice Framework

Rooted in Indigenous Ways of Knowing & Being

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*Heidi Hebditch*

What we know  
matters, but  
who we are  
matters more...  
Brene Brown





# KTUNAXA NATION





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# Why do we need a service delivery framework/model?

The Historical Context

Facilitated by : Heidi Hebditch



# Why do we need a Framework?

There are several reasons:

- Human beings are emotional creatures; this can be very dangerous particularly when children are at risk.
- How your organization practices is directly linked to outcomes for service recipients – children and families. If there is no practice guidance, no stated mission, values or goals to anchor workers, the result is inconsistent and at times, naïve and dangerous practice.
- Without the solid foundation of a good, community driven practice framework your policies, practices, ethics, mandates and case management protocol will inevitably contain multiple inconsistencies leading to errors in practice, high staff turnover, lack of knowledge, lack of direction and overall failure in any attempts to adapt, apply, create or implement a consistent model of practice.
- Finally, and perhaps most importantly, if your community wishes to enter into a coordination agreement in the future with the government under Bill C-92 to exercise your jurisdiction, you must have a Practice Framework.



## Conversations with Galowly

Prayer from Gitxsan Hereditary Chief Audrey Lundquist, for one of the many children who went missing from B.C.'s child welfare system. May we hold in our hearts the 198 children and youth who were missing over the course of RCY's research review, including four young girls – three of whom were First Nations – who died while RCY completed this work.

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Galowly (Creator), Michael is AWOL again. He's fleeing from a broken system that's keeping him captive. He's running to Mom somewhere on the streets. She needed help years ago and all they did was rip her precious son from her arms. She has no family as she grew up in the system herself. What hope is there for her and her baby boy? He's 14 now and will soon age out. He longs for her and plans to take care of her. Yet he hasn't had help to deal with the trauma he's endured since being taken into care.

He's on the streets searching. What will he find in this dangerous world? For him and many other foster children and their families, all they will find are blunt systems like child protection, police and the whole justice system that can't meet their needs. Sadly, the mental health and substance use workers don't have the appropriate models of therapy or the skills to effectively help these children and their families. Tragically, Michael will run into predators who will exploit and brutalize him. He's experienced this. These children and their families are kept in their place with ideologies, values, beliefs, labels, judgements and attitudes. Galowly, what chance do they have? Is there any hope? Send more ancestors to take care of them, Galowly.

He's probably staying at the shelter with his friend Willie. Willie is a young 16-year-old who is labelled as oppositional defiant and they describe him as being hard to place. Both boys are alone. They have no buffer against this cruel world. What models of care and support are there to teach and foster resilience? Both boys want their families to love and protect them, but the child protection system doesn't help to build healthy family and community systems. All they have is each other and a strong desire to be with their moms and families. But many of their siblings are also in foster homes.

Michael has been found skinny and bruised but he's home until next time. No-one has seen Mom for a while. Sadly, his foster mom got the call. Mom was found dead on the street. Why would she want to live without her baby? My friend told me he crumbled into her compassionate arms and sobbed until he could sob no more. But he's gone again.

Galowly, I know you are taking him home to be with Mom. They can love each other in peace. But this shouldn't be the only option for these vulnerable children and their families. Please send us compassionate and accountable leadership to build better ecosystems of care. We need to wrap around these families as we build resilience and wellness. We need a just legal system and appropriate and effective mental health systems. Every child deserves to have a sense of belonging, mastery, independence, generosity and self-determination. We need more love and caring. Help us build our collective will and sense of humanity to protect and care for our sacred children and youth who are disappeared or missing. Forget me not.

# Some Sobering Statistics



- Evidence shows that children in out-of-home care face greater risks for poor health, social and educational outcomes because of adverse early life experiences such as maltreatment and poverty.
- First Nations, Inuit, Métis, Black and other communities made vulnerable by structural inequities are disproportionately harmed by involvement in the child welfare system

From the Government of Canada: <https://www.canada.ca>



# Some Data

## By Province

Province	C.I.C.	DATE	Avg/ Thousand
Ontario	12,385	2019	4.48/thousand
British Columbia	6263	2019	6.76/thousand
Quebec	9174	2019	5.79/ thousand
Yukon	95	2019	11.15 /thousand
Alberta	7985	2022	16.99/thousand

Source: Canadian Child Welfare Research Portal  
<https://cwrp.ca/statistics>



# In 2021/22

Source: [www.Canada.ca](http://www.Canada.ca)

Characteristics	Population in 2021	Point-in-time count, n	Percentage, % <sup>a</sup>	Rate per 1000
Saskatchewan	331 213	5719	9.4	17.27
Alberta	973 725	8164	13.4	8.38
British Columbia	926 027	10 462	17.1	11.30
<b>Manitoba 2022</b>		<b>9,196</b>	<b>29.60/thousand</b>	

Just a snapshot to show you the increase we are seeing in BC since 2019 which was 6.76/1000 and yet we are seeing a decrease in Alberta since they adopted a solution-focused, strength-based, relationship-grounded approach to their protection model



# Overall Trends

Overall, around the world we are taking more and more children into care, for longer and our systems are more and more expensive in part because we are privatising care arrangements around the world

Children in long term care cost our systems increasingly more money and they are significantly overrepresented in health, mental health, prison services across their life-time

Over representation of indigenous, people of colour and people of traditional cultures is dramatic

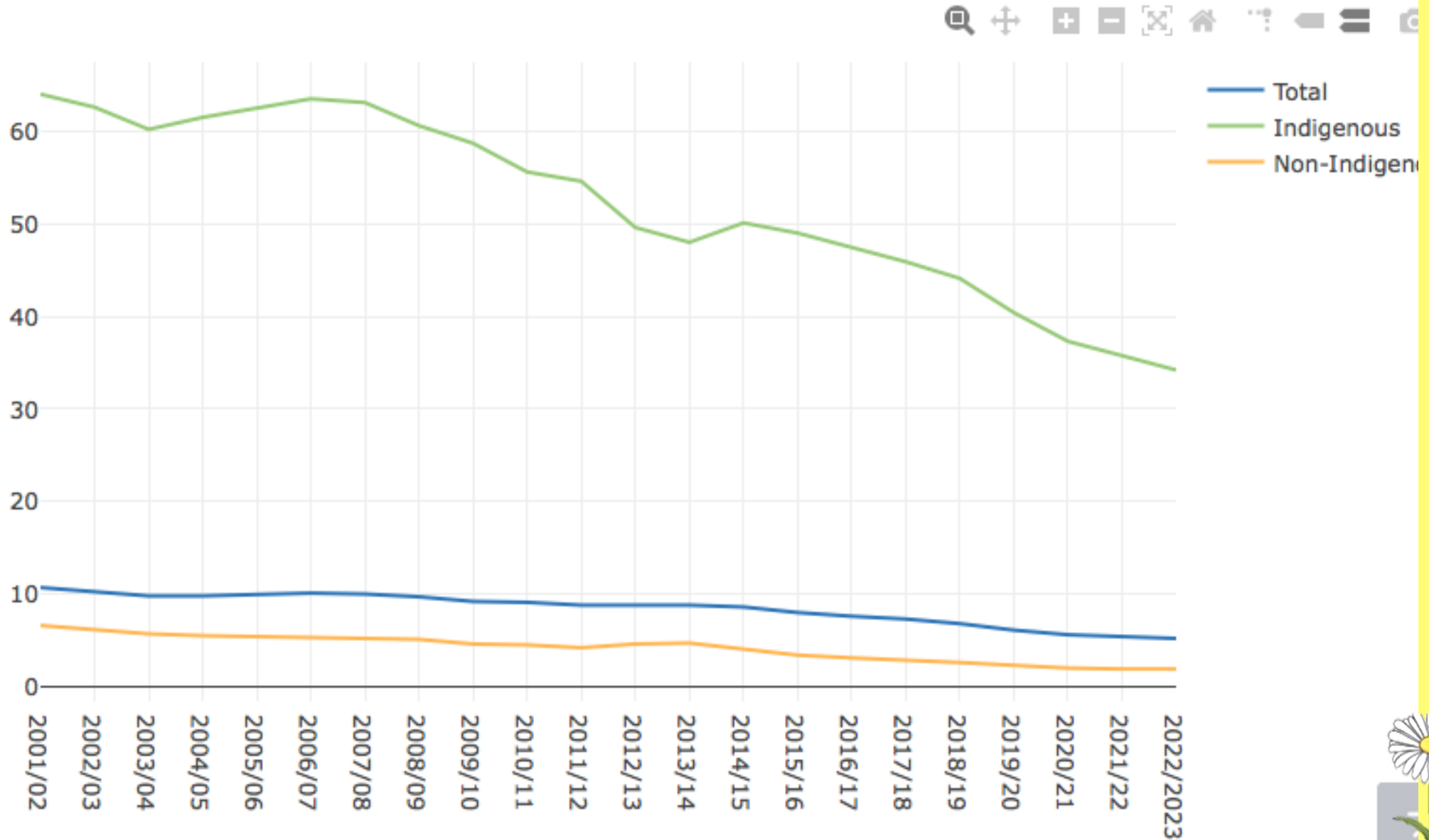
In Canada, 53.8% of children in out of home care are Indigenous from 7.7% of the population

Of all court order induced in care admissions relating to Indigenous children, 76% are due to neglect

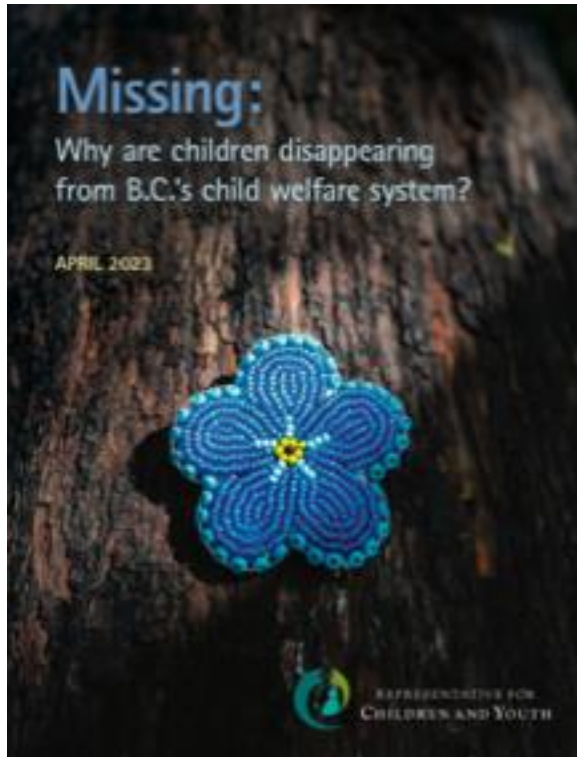
**In 2023 according to MCFD stats, there were 4,875 CYIC, 3,294 of those children are Indigenous; that's 34.2 Indigenous children out of every 1000 placed in care!  
And just 1.9 of every 1000 in non-Indigenous children.**



# Provincial Rate of CYIC per 1,000 Population<sup>1, 2</sup>



# We know the current systems don't work...



- Report from the Representative for Children and Youth Report states:
- The majority of young people who were lost or missing in B.C. (2015-2018) were between the ages of 14 and 18. Older children were more likely to be missing for longer periods of time.
- Sixty-five per cent of the young people reported as lost or missing were Indigenous.
- Indigenous females (40 per cent) were found to be over-represented among the young people reported as lost or missing.
- Nearly half the children and youth who were reported as lost or missing from care were in a contracted residential resource.
- Of the children and youth with a sibling also in care, less than 20 per cent were placed with one of their siblings.



# Something has got to change...

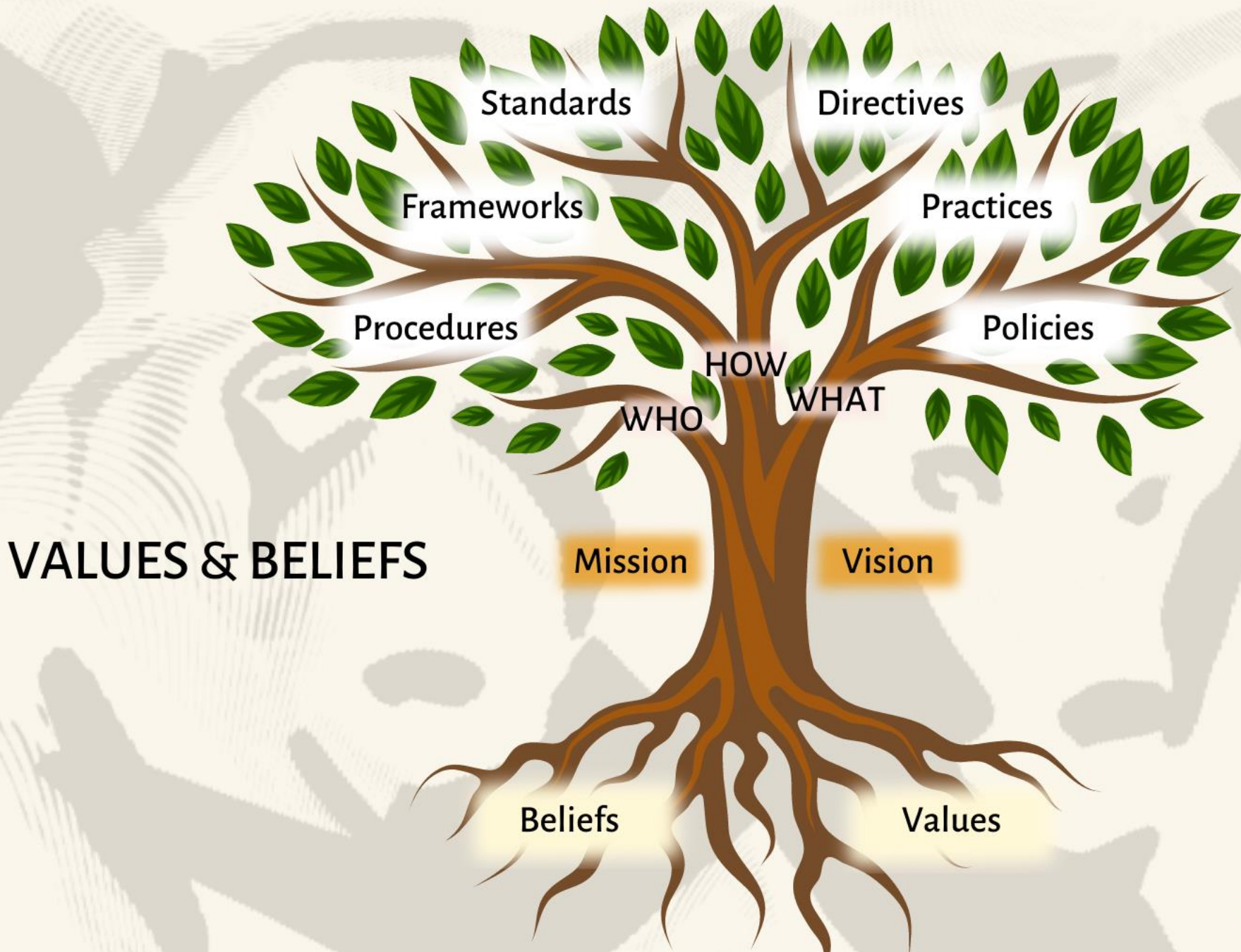
- The representation of Indigenous children in foster care increased even more from 47.8% of all foster children in 2011, to 51.7% in 2016, and to 53.7% in 2021 (Stats Canada)
- The total proportion of Indigenous children in care was nearly six percentage points higher in 2021 (53.7%) than in 2011 (47.8%) (Stats Canada)
- BC Coroners Service Report says, “...young people leaving government care died at five times the rate of the general population of young people in British Columbia.”



# Interrupting the Cycle of Colonization

- To interrupt this cycle organizations must have processes in place that align with the values and traditions of *your* community
- Those processes should ensure that those values live in the daily actions of workers in a way that prevents or interrupts the potential for a repeat of colonial practice
- That's where your practice framework comes in...





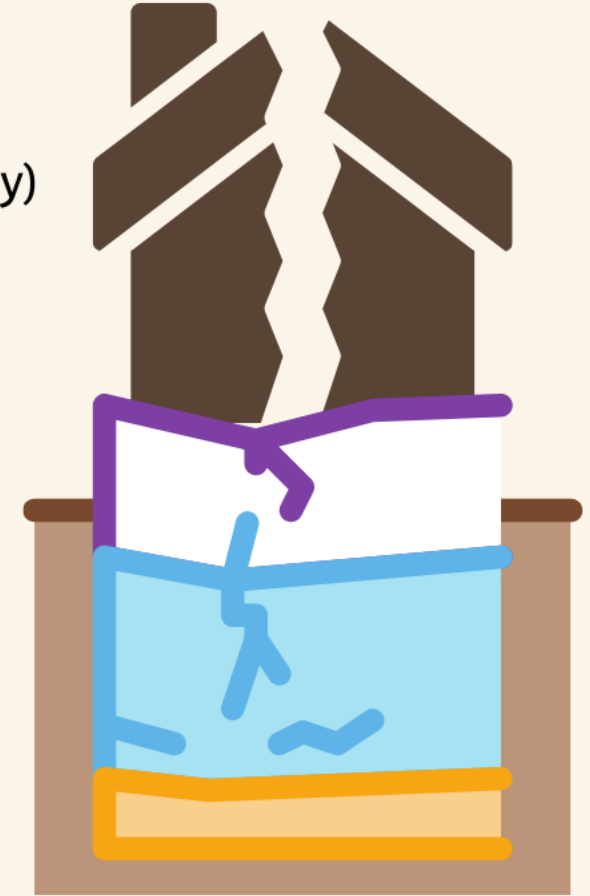
# Practice Framework = Foundation for Policy



Interior (Procedures) – What we decide after the structure is built – The “How” (i.e. Signs of Safety)

Structure - Frame of House (Policy) – What we build on the foundation - The “What” (i.e. Practice Cycle/Approaches)

Foundation (Practice Framework) - Principles, Beliefs, Values



# Safe, Healthy Communities Rest on the Foundation of Traditional Values...

Building a meaningful foundation constructed on traditional values is crucial to a safe, healthy community and is sure to bring the best possible outcomes for your most valued treasure; your children!





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# Some Examples of Frameworks

It all starts with your beliefs/values



# The Problems with Practice

*"The 1991 National Commission on Children (cited in Turnell & Edwards, 1999) concluded that "if the nation had deliberately designed a system that would frustrate the professionals who staff it, anger the public who finance it, and abandon the children who depend on it, it could not have done a better job than the present child welfare system" (p. 12).*



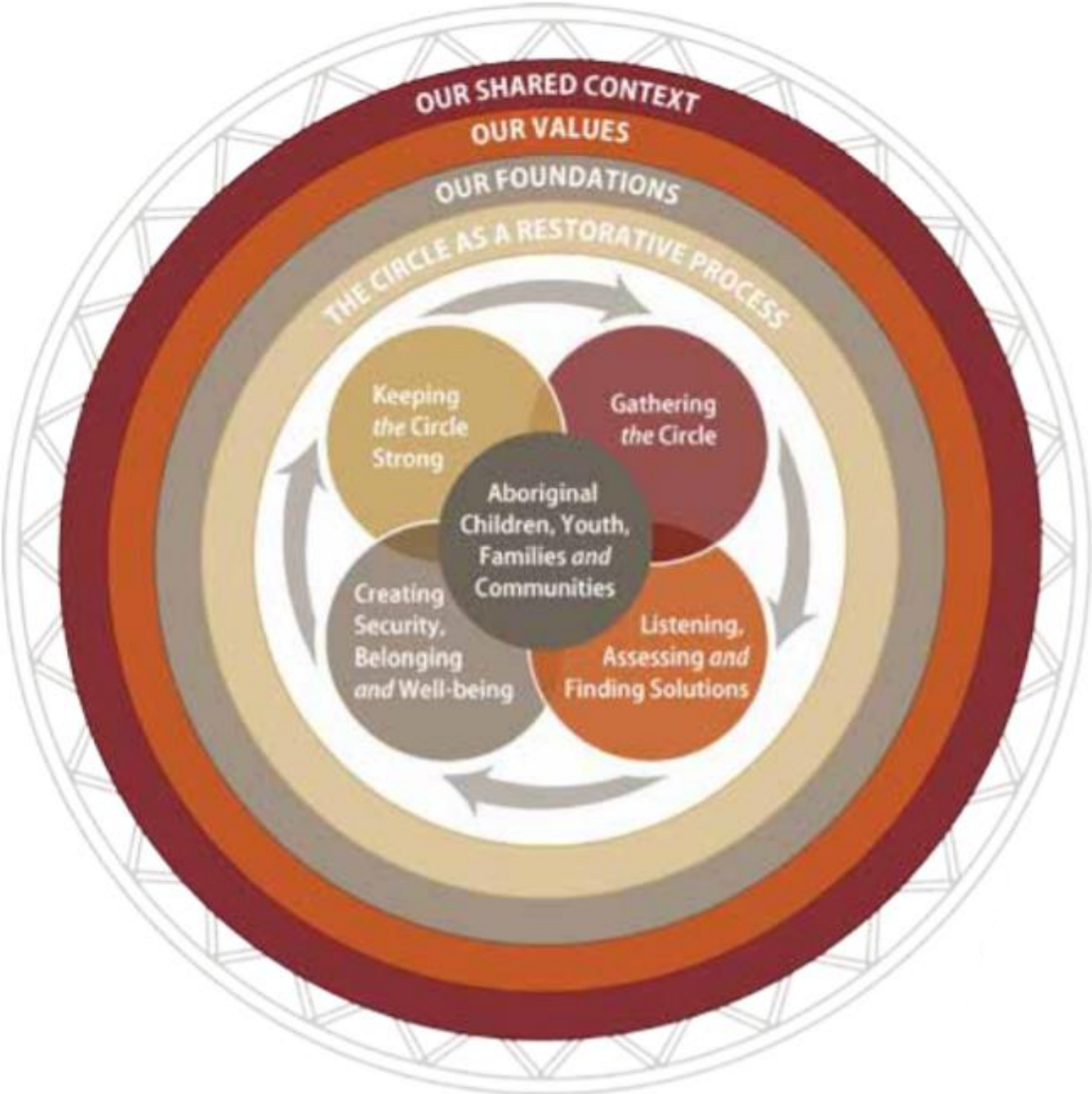
# Definition of Practice Framework

“A practice framework 'integrates empirical research, practice theories, ethical principles and experiential knowledge in a compact and convenient format that helps practitioners to use the knowledge and principles to inform their everyday work' (Connolly and Healy 2009, p32).”

What we do, how we do, why we do it...



# Aboriginal Policy and Practice Framework



# East Kootenay Primary Care Network Model of Care



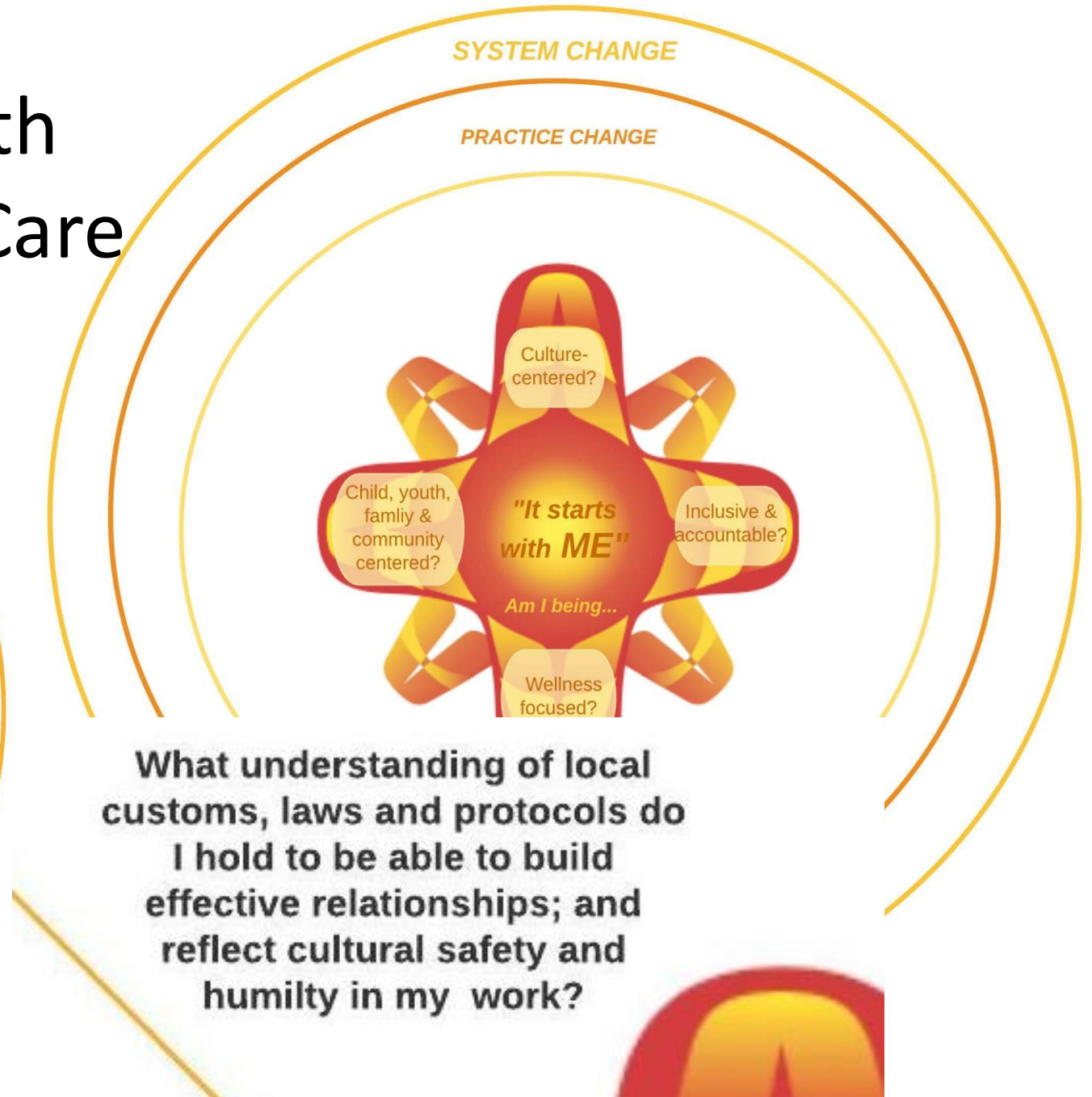
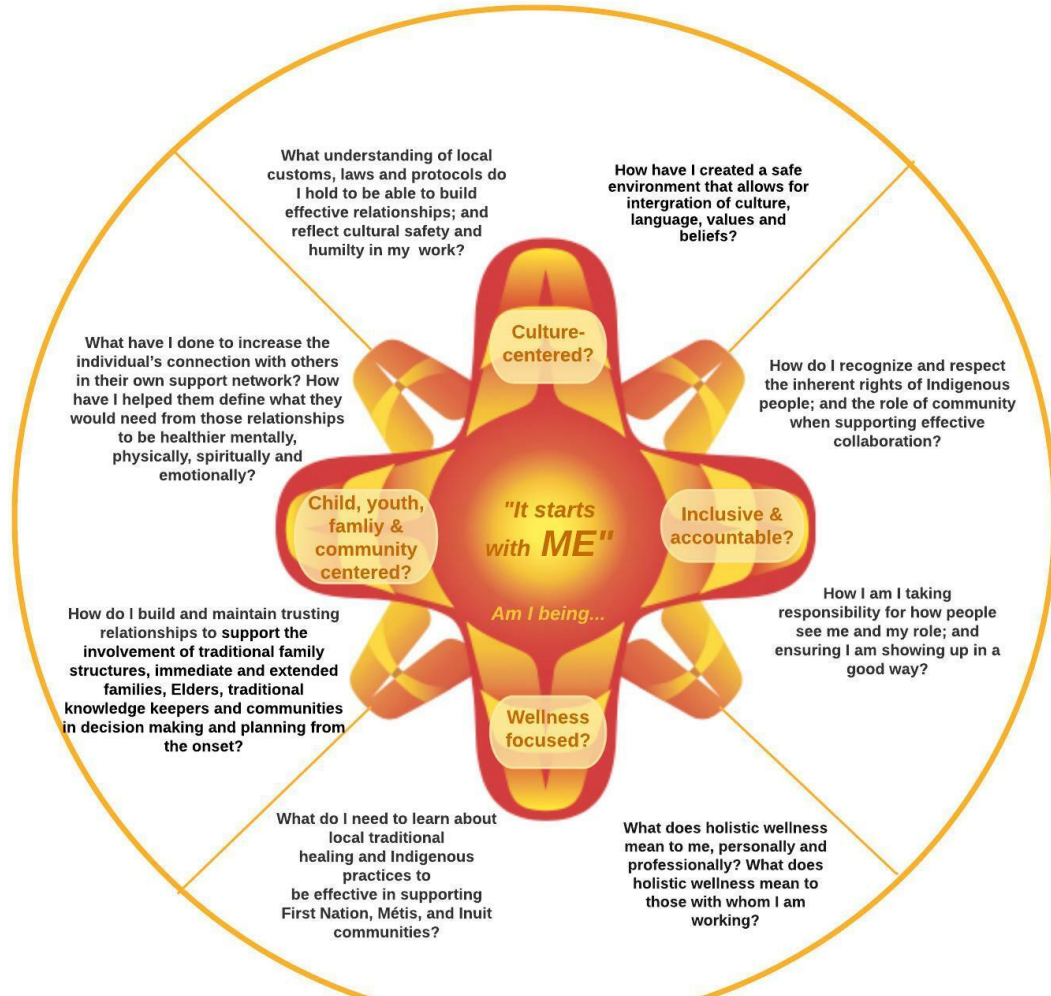
# Ktunaxa Social Sector Practice Framework

How do I prepare for practice?

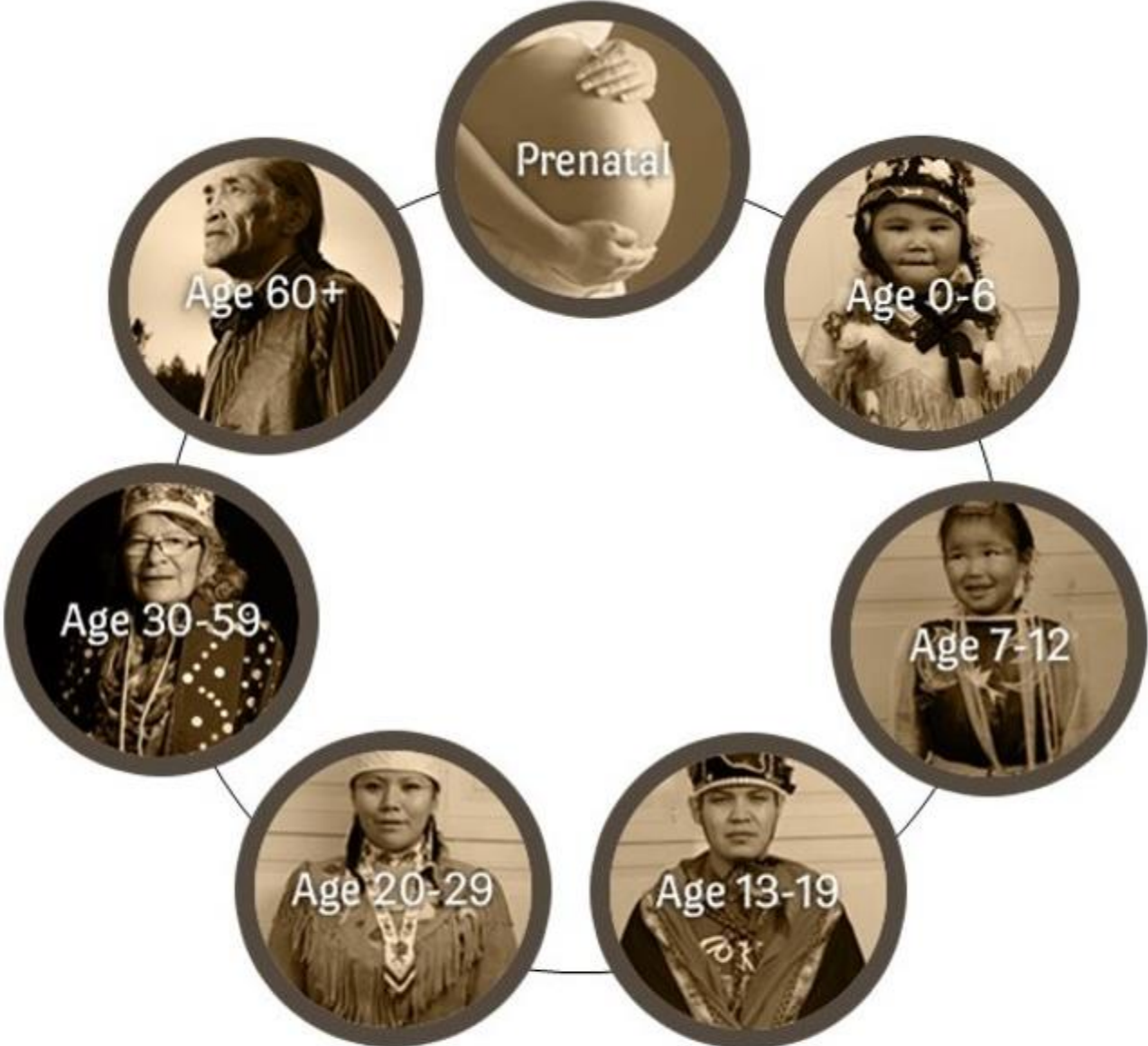
How do I show up in practice?



# Indigenous Child and Youth Mental Health Model of Care



# Life Cycle Approach



# PATHWAYS

Indigenous Agency Child and Family Work Flow



- WHO
- PURPOSE
- ACTIVITY
- DOCUMENT
- LEGISLATIVE REF



# PATHWAYS IN

Indigenous Agency Child and Family Work Flow





-  WHO
-  PURPOSE
-  ACTIVITY
-  DOCUMENT

SUPPORT REQUEST FROM FAMILY

SUPPORT REQUEST FROM COMMUNITY

SAFETY CONCERN

**WELCOME**

-  ?
-  ESTABLISH RELATIONSHIPS
-  LISTEN
-  REFERRAL

**GATHER CIRCLE**

-  ?
-  BUILD NETWORK
-  FACILITATION
-  ECO MAP

**IDENTIFY IMMEDIATE NEED**

-  ?
-  ESTABLISH SAFETY NEED
-  GATHER INFORMATION
-  SAFETY REPORT

**GATHER CIRCLE**

-  ?
-  IDENTIFY SAFETY NEED
-  FACILITATION
-  ECO MAP



**LISTEN & ASSESS**

-  ?
-  IDENTIFY STRENGTH & NEEDS
-  FACILITATION
-  WWW MAP (ASSESSMENT)

**DEVELOP IMMEDIATE PLAN**

-  ?
-  ESTABLISH DANGER
-  FACILITATION
-  SAFETY PLAN

**SUPPORT SECURITY/WELL-BEING**

-  ?
-  REVIEW NEEDS
-  FACILITATION
-  REVIEW/REVISE SUPPORT PLAN

**REVIEW & FOLLOW UP**

-  ?
-  ENSURE SAFETY
-  FACILITATION
-  REVISED/UPDATED

**PLAN**

-  ?
-  DEVELOP SUPPORT PLAN
-  FACILITATION
-  SUPPORT PLAN

**SUPPORT**

-  ?
-  DELIVERY SUPPORT
-  SERVICE POSITION
-  UPDATES ON PROGRESS i.e. MONTHLY

**KEEP THE CIRCLE STRONG**

-  ?
-  CELEBRATE
-  FACILITATION
-  CLOSING/REVIEW SUMMARY





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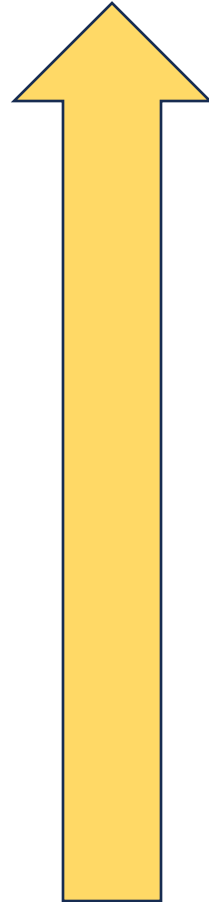
# What Difference Does a Framework Make?

A Quick Comparison

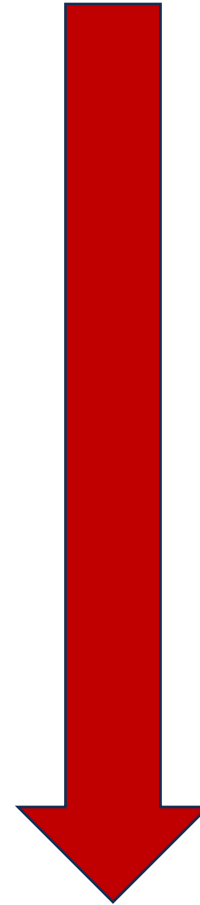
Facilitated by : Heidi Hebditch



# Values in Practice; a tale of two models



**Strength Focused model** will focus on an increase of wellness and safety  
Example: Signs of Safety which is a balanced assessment with a focus on those things that **create safety**



**Risk Focused model** will focus on a reduction of harm  
Example: Structured Decision-Making tools which put an emphasis on **identification of risk**





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# An Exercise in Applying the Values in practice

Let's consider the value of being  
strength-based or inclusive in practice

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## Signs of Safety® Assessment and Planning Framework

What are we worried about?	What's working well?	What needs to happen?

On a scale of 0–10 where ten means everyone knows the children are safe enough for the child protection authorities to close the case and zero means things are so bad for the children that they can't live at home, where do we rate this situation?  
*Locate different people's judgements spatially on the two-way arrow.*

0



10

Signs of Safety  
Family Strengths  
& Worries



# Thinking about a child/teenager in your life that you feel worried about:

## What are you Worried About?



**STEP ONE: START HERE, BACK AND FORWARDS**



## What's Working Well?

## What Needs to Happen?

**STEP THREE**

What has happened, what have you seen, that makes you worried about this child/teenager?

What words would you use to talk about this problem so that \_\_\_\_\_ would understand what you're worried about?

When you think about what has already happened to \_\_\_\_\_ what do you think is the worst thing that could happen to \_\_\_\_\_ because of this problem?

Are there things happening in \_\_\_\_\_'s life or family that make this problem harder to deal with?

What do you like about \_\_\_\_\_ what are his/her best attributes?

Who are the people that care most about \_\_\_\_\_? What are the best things about how they care for \_\_\_\_\_?

What would \_\_\_\_\_ say are the best things about his/her life?

Who would \_\_\_\_\_ say are the most important people in his/her life? How do they help \_\_\_\_\_ grow up well?

Has there been times when this problem has been dealt with or was even a little better? How did that happen?

Having thought more about this problem now, what would you need to see that would make you satisfied the situation is at a 10?

What would \_\_\_\_\_ need to see that would make them say this problem is completely sorted out?

What do you think is the next step that should happen to get this worry sorted out?

On a scale of 0 to 10 where 10 means this problem is sorted out as much as it can be and zero means things are so bad for the young person you need to get professional or other outside help, where do you rate this situation today? (Put different judgement numbers on scale for different people e.g., you, child, teacher etc).



# SDM Family Strengths & Weaknesses

Each of the following factors may be important to the level of maltreatment or risk of out-of-home placement for this family in the context of family strengths and weaknesses. Consider each factor and the items listed under each factor in terms of its importance in reducing risk of maltreatment or diverting the out-of-home placement of children in this family. For each factor, rate its importance on a continuum of strength/weakness by using a 5-point scale of:

**+2: Clear Strength, +1: Mild Strength, 0: Adequate, -1: Mild Stressor, -2: Serious Stressor**

To do so, circle the appropriate factor at intake and at case closure. Complete these ratings within 1-2 weeks of intake and again within 1-2 weeks of service termination.

## A. Environment

	INTAKE					CLOSURE				
	Stressor			Strength		Stressor			Strength	
1. Housing Stability										
Pays rent/mortgage on time	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	-2	-1	0	+1	+2
Has not moved in the last 6 months	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	-2	-1	0	+1	+2
2. Safety in Community										
Safe neighborhood for the children (no problem playing outside)	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	-2	-1	0	+1	+2
Neighbors look out for each other	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	-2	-1	0	+1	+2
3. Habitability of Housing										
Good space and privacy for children	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	-2	-1	0	+1	+2
Good adequate furnishings in rooms	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	-2	-1	0	+1	+2
4. Income/Employment										
The family has had stable employment in the last 6 months	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	-2	-1	0	+1	+2
Is receiving total public assistance	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	-2	-1	0	+1	+2
5. Financial Management										
Stable budgeting, seldom in crisis over money	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	-2	-1	0	+1	+2
6. Food and Nutrition										
Prepares balanced, nutritious meals	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	-2	-1	0	+1	+2
Family eats together whenever possible	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	-2	-1	0	+1	+2
7. Personal Hygiene										
Children look clean and well-groomed	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	-2	-1	0	+1	+2
Adults look clean and well-groomed	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	-2	-1	0	+1	+2
8. Transportation										
Has access to public transportation	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	-2	-1	0	+1	+2
Has access to private transportation	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	-2	-1	0	+1	+2
9. Learning Environment										
Provides age-appropriate toys and games	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	-2	-1	0	+1	+2
Attention paid to developmental needs of children	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	-2	-1	0	+1	+2



## Your Framework Informs your Model

- Once you understand the Values and Mission, your framework is then designed to provide community and partners with the understanding of “WHAT” you intend to do for the people of your community.
- The framework is then used to inform your policy, your standards and your practice model so that workers understand “HOW” the values and mission will be



## Your Future Model of Practice

- What are the most important values, beliefs or traditions that your ancestors used to keep families and children safe and healthy in times past?
- What would your ancestors, Elders or future generations say are the most important values, traditions that they would want guiding your practice with the people of this community in the future?



## An exercise in your Model of Practice

- Let's imagine a mom comes in, she's just had a new baby and already has one child growing up in care, she needs your help because she doesn't have enough food for her and the baby but she's also desperately afraid that you will report her to MCFD and she could lose another child to the system. How would you respond so that you are following the guidance, the values and missions of your ancestors, elders and future children? What would it look like in practice?
- What steps would you take to determine if this situation fits your mandate?
- How would you ensure that all families in need receive the same services no matter who the worker is? And, no matter who the family is?



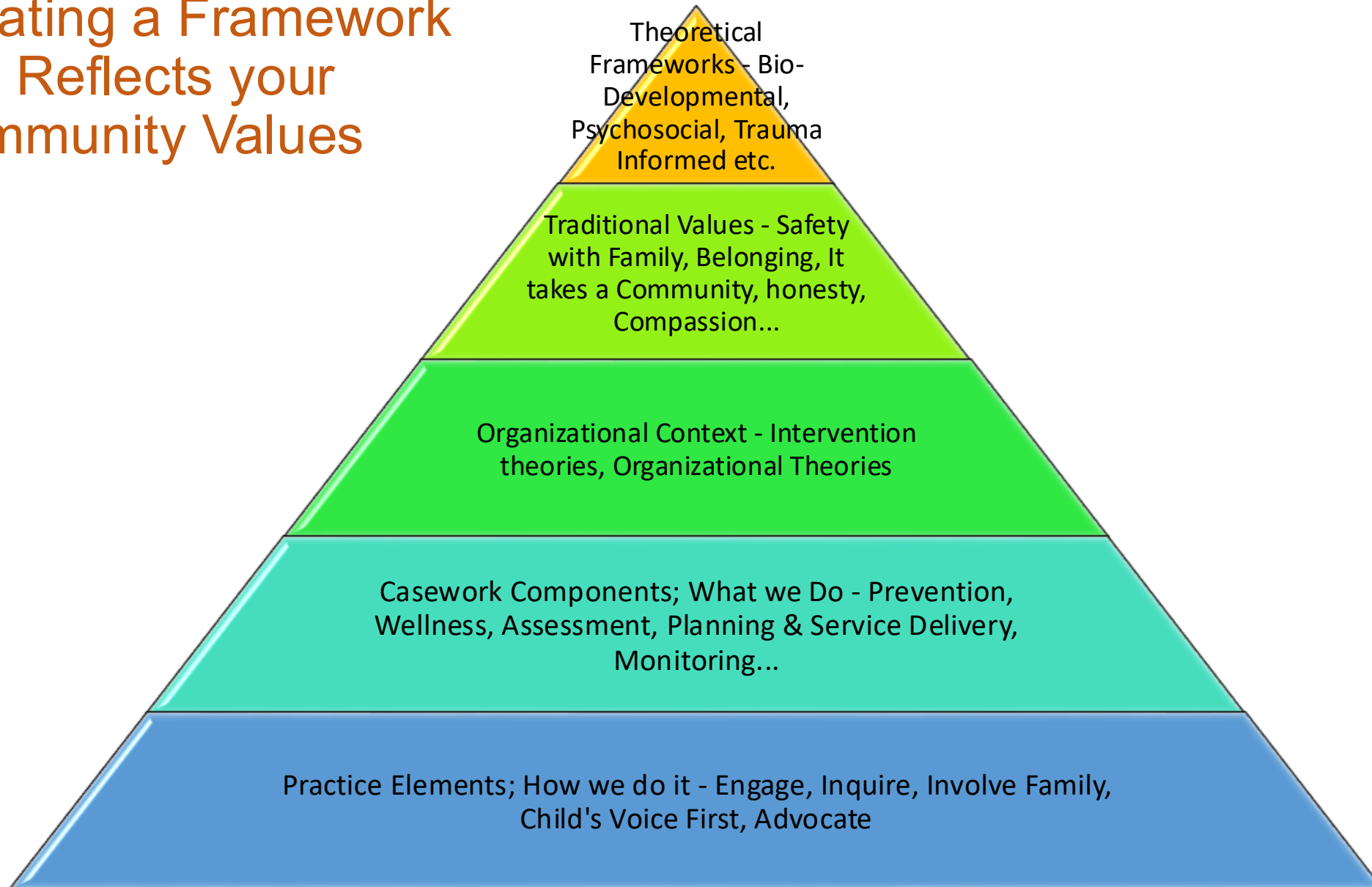
## An exercise in your Model of Practice

Now let's imagine you have no processes, no guidance in place...

- What do you suppose would happen if you had no guidance, no framework, no model of practice to lead workers through this situation?
- What affect do you think this might have on the children and families you serve?



# Creating a Framework that Reflects your Community Values



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DAKOTA TIWAHE WAOPE WOWAPI TAWAPI –  
DAKOTA FAMILY LAW TEMPLATE

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Southern Chiefs' Organization Inc.

Mike &  
Donna



A story of one Nation's journey...



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DAKOTA TIWAHE WAOPE WOWAPI TAWAPI –  
DAKOTA FAMILY LAW TEMPLATE

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Southern Chiefs' Organization Inc.

Questions



# Reflections

Discussion:

- What did you like about the work we did today?
- What did you learn about your community?
- What changes does it highlight as necessary?

