



Canadian Consortium on Child and Youth Trauma - Symposium 2023

Reflections and Photos from Ky Scott, Policy Analyst

[Indigenous Child & Family Services Directors Secretariat](#)

I had the privilege and honor of attending and presenting at the Canadian Consortium on Child and Youth Trauma's annual Symposium in Montreal on May 11 and 12. Alongside my mentors, Nancy Lucero (PhD, LCSW), and Jennifer Nutton (MSW, PhDc), we explored shared trauma frameworks as indicators for healing pathways, with the presentation facilitated by my friend and colleague, Kyle Turone (BSW). It was a whirlwind of connection and engagement with both each other and the attendees.

I was particularly excited to hear Dr. Renee Linklater speak about her experiences and lessons learned while writing her book "*Decolonizing Trauma Work*" and the sharing of stories and strategies from Indigenous healthcare practitioners. Her findings affirmed that healing from trauma, especially for Indigenous people, is about "connecting the disconnected" by centering and healing Spirit. Treating trauma as a disorder has been a compounding, re-traumatizing and ineffective colonial response in the field of health and wellbeing.

The first day of the Symposium was deep and uplifting, featuring strong, matriarchal, Indigenous voices. In an otherwise Eurocentric, colonial environment, there was finally an air of recognition of the inherent wisdom of Indigenous ways of knowing and being in the recovery and integration of wellness principles. Dr. Linklater's keynote presentation, titled, "Working in the context of Indigenous Health" and "The Collective Benefits of Redefining Trauma Work" panel, which included teachings from elders, matriarchs, and Indigenous practitioners, demonstrated this beautifully. The connection between their teachings and our workshop, "Beyond Individual Experience: Frameworks for Understanding Shared Group Traumatization and Healing," brought a powerful Spirit into our afternoon session.

Themes from the first day revealed how colonial responses to trauma are oppressive and isolate individuals and lead to increased disconnection. Terminology and diagnostic approaches can repress the important messages that the body is trying to convey. The need for connection and community was strongly emphasized.

Panelist and elder, Wanda Gabriel, summarized healing as happening through the 5 R's: reclaiming culture, revitalizing language, restoring connection, releasing emotions, and reconciliation in the family. To achieve this, she stated, we must break the three colonial rules: don't talk, don't trust, don't feel. Healing and thawing the trauma experience requires the sharing of our stories, building trust in our communities and families, and fully embracing emotional connections, especially of love, support, and care.

As ICFS Agency Directors, this is not new information for you. It simply reaffirms the work you have been advancing, the practices you have centered, and the trauma wisdom you hold individually and collectively as survivors of attempted genocide (Dr. Restoule's definition of the trauma experience of Indigenous people). My experience as an attendee and presenter has taught me that "Our Way" is gaining recognition as important principles for all individuals on a healing journey, beginning before birth and continuing throughout life. The interconnection, the power of "blood memory," and the Spirit that connects us to one another, Mother Earth, and all of Creation provide everything we need to heal ourselves, our communities, and our nations.



As always, dear Directors, you are leading the way. The mainstream collective is reconsidering their practices in light of your successes and resilience as a people. Hy Hy and Marsee for all of your good work, love, and care.



Dr. Renee Linklater sharing on the creation journey of “Shkaabe Makwa” (meaning ‘Spirit Bear Helper’ in Anishinabee). This hospital-based, health justice initiative endeavors to facilitate wholistic healing through a culturally-responsive system.

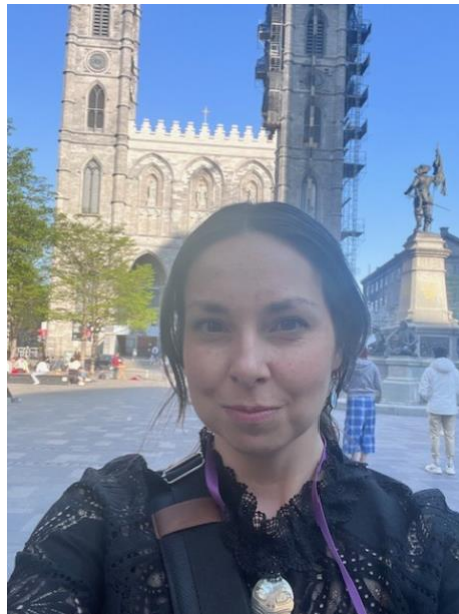


Kyle Turone (Left), Jennifer Nutton (Left-center), Ky Scott (Right-center), and Nancy Lucero (Right) following their presentation “Beyond Individual Experience: Frameworks for understanding shared group traumatization and healing.”





Kyle Turone, BSW (Left), introducing the panel and moderator: Dr. Renee Linklater, Moderator (Left-center), Wanda Gabriel (center), Dr. Brenda Restoule (not pictured, was featured on Zoom), and Dr. Karlee Felner (right)



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“Had to take a selfie on my walk past the Basilica Notre Dame after our presentation. Thank you to Mary and CSFS for the beautiful frog jewellery featured. I hope the animal Spirit of communication was carried through for my time in Montreal!”

