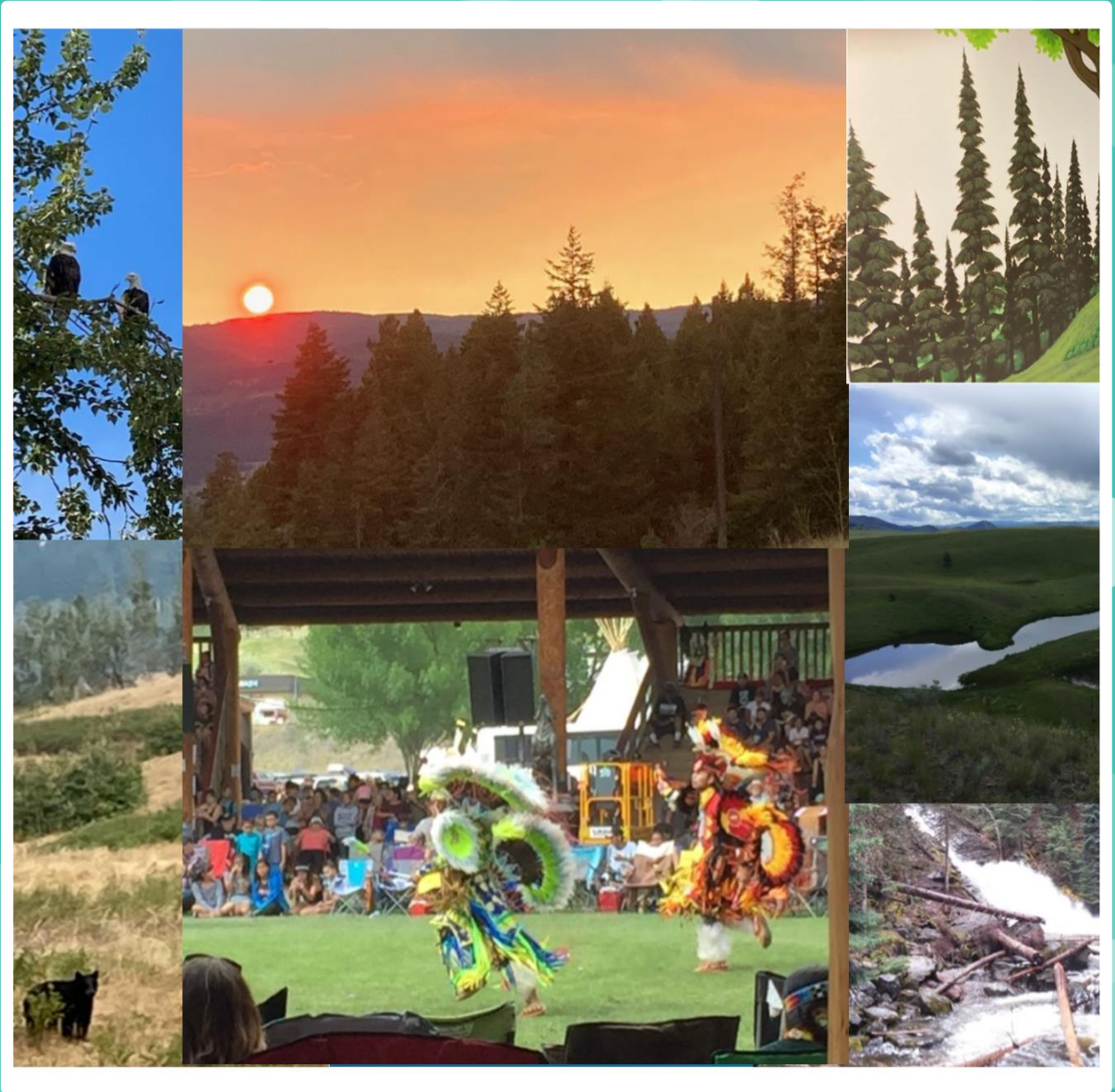# INCORPORATING CULTURAL SAFETY, TRAUMA-INFORMED, INCLUSIVE & CLIENT-CENTRED DURING INVESTIGATIONS OF CHILD ABUSE PARTICULARLY REGARDING FORENSIC INTERVIEWS


Dr. Tara Ettinger

Acknowledging and Honouring Traditional Territories

Being Mindful - Taking Care of Ourselves

Helpful tools:

- Grounding self

- Cognitive restructuring (i.e: even though this discussion involves thinking about harmful acts towards children, the focus is on healing and creating better outcomes)

- Connect with our trustworthy network of people and resources to turn to
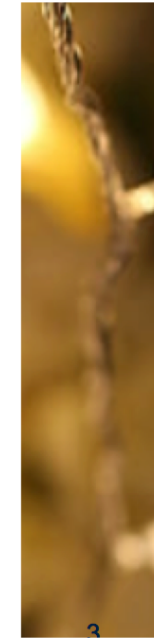
May/22 - Generate further discussion and thinking regarding trauma-informed, inclusive and culturally safe practices with the diverse populations we work with

Jan/23 - Indigenous research exploring cultural safety, inclusivity and trauma-informed work and approaches when working with Indigenous children/youth during disclosures of abuse and involved in investigational processes

March/23- Cultural considerations in working with Indigenous children and youth during investigations of child abuse, particularly during the forensic interview process and within CYACs

Feb/24 - Enhancing Capacity to Provide Culturally Responsive Services in CYACs through Partnerships and Collaboration - Examine key cultural considerations when working with Indigenous populations and how CYACs are becoming the solution

This Presentation will explore:

- Incorporating cultural safety, trauma-informed, inclusivity and client-centred into these settings and processes

* what do these term mean and what are we actually doing in practice that enables us to say we are incorporating them?

- Why attention is needed in this area

- How we address and apply into practice - actionable example applications

What – **Cultural safety, trauma-informed**, inclusivity and client-centred into child forensic interviews

- Cultural Safety
- Trauma-Informed
- Inclusivity
- Client-Centred

Cultural Safety/Sensitivity

- acknowledging and recognizing cultural differences

- differences need to be taken into account from many viewpoints and acknowledged and addressed within practice

- expanding cultural knowledge

- understanding one's own limitations

- understand impact of one's own position

- adapting services to meet culturally unique needs

- promote health and healing

(Barber Rioja & Rosenfeld, 2018; Ettinger, 2024; Häkkilä et al., 2020; Brascoupé & Waters, 2009; Curtis et al., 2019; DeSouza, 2008; Mental Health & Substance Use, 20

Trauma-Informed

- a way of practice when working with people in being able to recognize and address their trauma effectively

- respond appropriately to signs of trauma and incorporates the impacts of trauma into all service delivery.

- incorporate an understanding of past and current experiences of trauma into all service delivery models

- recognize the impacts of trauma on client's behaviour, functioning, and thought processes, while providing them a safe, nonjudgmental, trusting, collaborative and empowering environment

Trauma-Informed

- encompass a person-centred approach that prioritizes children's needs and is less about getting the facts for a case

- must consider culture which represents the vast structure of behaviours, ideas, attitudes, values, habits, beliefs, customs, language, rituals, expressions of distress and grief, history, perceptions, ceremonies and practices that are particular to a group of people

(Calls forJustice, 2019; Goelitz, 2020; Levenson, 2017; Poole, 2013; Ettinger, 2024; Goldsmith et al., 2014; Langballe & Schultz, 2017; Milam et al., 2017; The National C

Inclusivity

- Services to be inclusive of family and community and viewed as sources of support, care, and help

- Identify the importance of involving communities as ways of creating solutions to challenges and as a key to success

- Work with to understand the specific community they are working with, and the values that will support traditional practices and customs

- involve the community in service design and delivery - they should be seen as the experts in being able to create approaches and in understanding a child's needs

Inclusivity

- incorporate flexibility in the workplace; that is, being able to quickly adapt to new circumstances as they arise.

- Learn directly from client - adapt to what needs changing or improving and reintegrate new ideas back into client's experience process

(Anderson, 1998; Carrière, 2008; de Finney, 2022; Ettinger, 2024; Rae, 2001)

Client-Centred

- Prioritizes child's needs and less about needs of the case

- Encouraging children's voice and experiences in many areas of practice

- Understanding that not everyone should be treated the same or implementing a standard approach to care

- acknowledging individual differences and perspectives so determining and addressing unique needs can be achieved

Client-Centred

- acknowledging diverse world views, and to recognize that every child they encounter is a unique cultural being with a distinct assembly of norms.

- practice needs to adapt to who this child is and what they need.

(Ball, 2008; Thompson & Taylor, 2021; Milan et al., 2017; Ettinger, 2024; Fontes and Plummer, 2010; Fontes, 2005; Winkworth & McArthur, 2006)

Why – attention is needed in this area

- re-traumatization
- Need to build trust
- barriers to disclose
- impact on forensic interviewer

Re-traumatization

"Forensic interviews, especially relating to child abuse, are highly emotional and stressful events for children" (Hritz et al., 2015, p. 7)

If underlying traumas are not recognized or responded to appropriately within a forensic interview, the potential of re-traumatizing children and creating greater harm is increased (Evans & Graves, 2018)

The potential for exacerbated negative impacts that forensic interviews may have on children is especially true for those who are not from the dominant community culture (T. Ettinger, 2024).
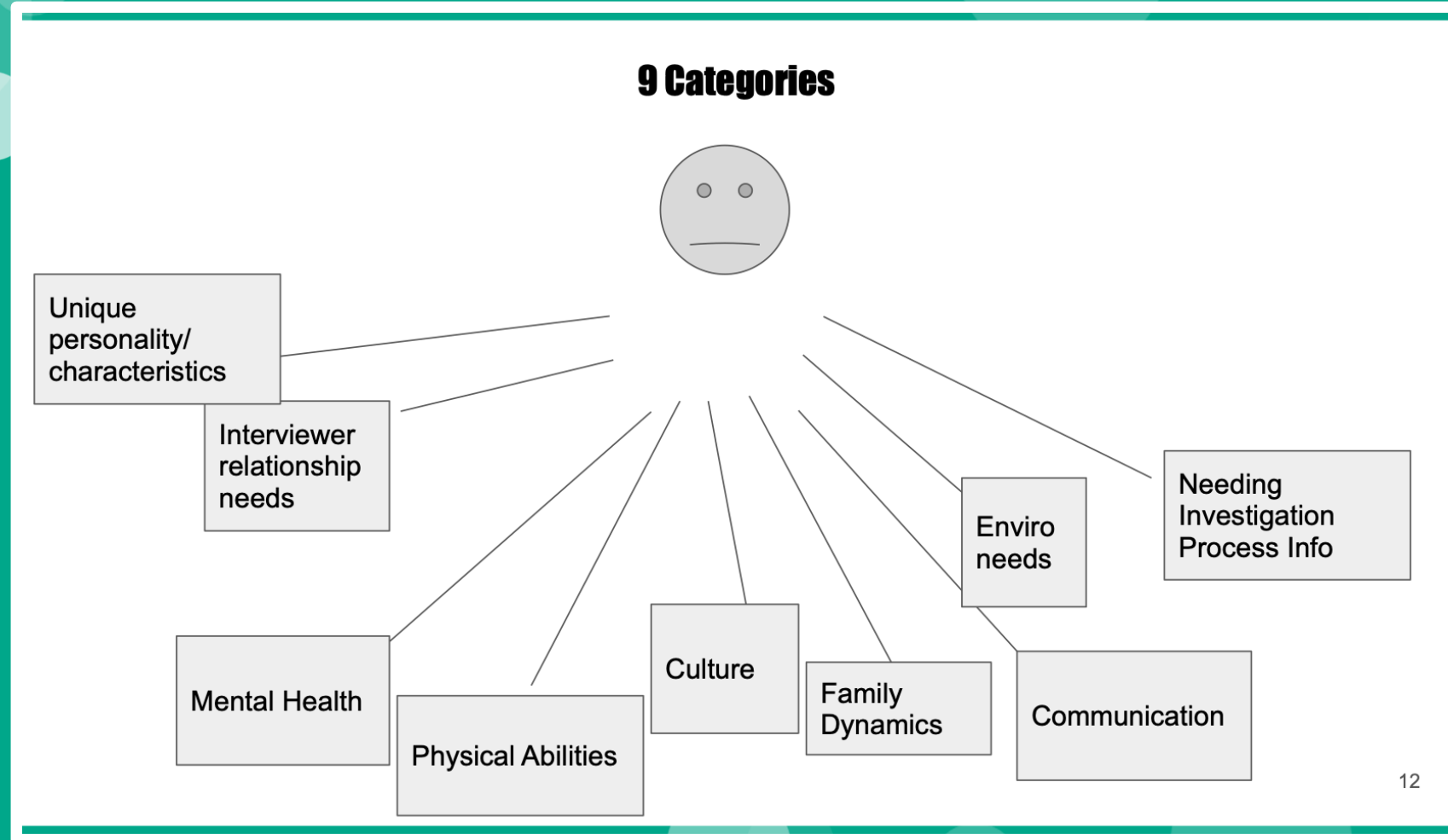
Need to build trust

- **Mistrust of legal systems is not uncommon for cultural groups who may have had past fearful experiences with governments (Sawrikar, 2016)**

- **Colonization has created multigenerational grief, trauma, displacement, and an understandable distrust of law enforcement and child-protection workers (Blackstock & Trocmé, 2005; Indigenous Services Canada, 2018).**
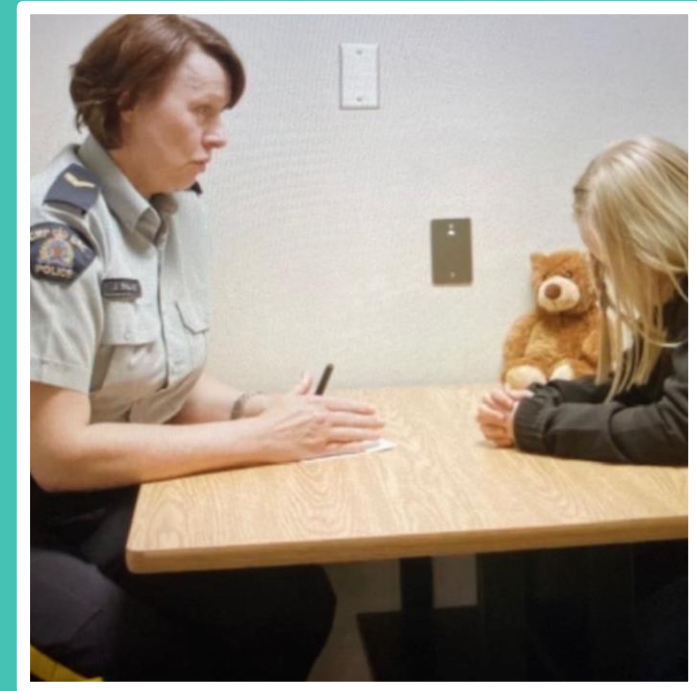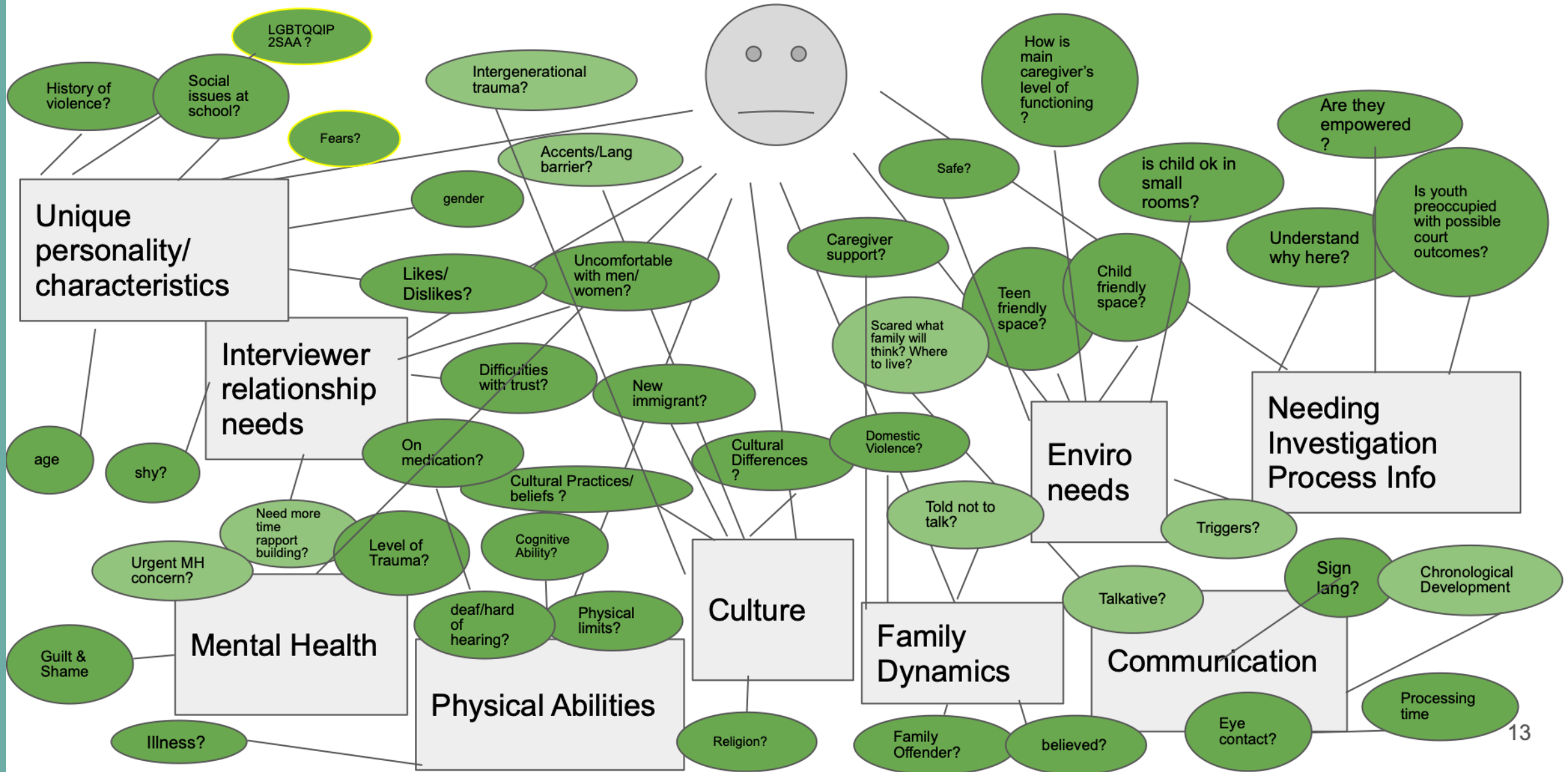
Barriers to disclose

- Half the problems during investigations are due to physical, emotional, cognitive, health, or behavioural issues presented by the child/youth.

9 Categories

- Unique personality/ characteristics
- Interviewer relationship needs
- Mental Health
- Physical Abilities
- Culture
- Family Dynamics
- Enviro needs
- Communication
- Needing Investigation Process Info

12

(Ettinger, 2023. National CYAC Presentation)

9 Categories with multiple factors in each

(Ettinger, 2023. National CYAC Presentation)

Impact on Forensic Interviewer

The evidentiary mandate of forensic interviews may place interviewers in a double-bind position, torn between feeling empathetic towards young victims' emotional states and having to question them as witnesses

Some CYACs request pertinent information about children prior to forensic interviews using MDT collaboration and this can assist the interviewer in gaining such knowledge about children and then strategize how best to meet children's needs and develop ways in being sensitive to their specific needs or vulnerabilities. (Rohrabaugh et al., 2016; The Children's Law Center at the University of South Carolina, 2010).

Many child forensic interviewers undergo stress, vicarious trauma, and burnout (Perron & Hiltz, 2006; Starcher & Stolzenberg, 2020).

✓ What

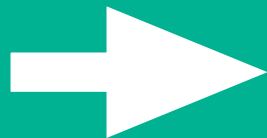Cultural safety, trauma-informed, inclusivity and client-centred into child forensic interviews
- Cultural Safety
- Trauma-Informed
- Inclusivity
- Client-Centred

✓ Why

More attention is needed in this area
- re-traumatization
- Need to build trust
- barriers to disclose
- impact on forensic interviewer

➡ HOW

How we address and apply into practice - actionable applications

Cultural Safety/Sensitivity

- acknowledging and recognizing cultural differences

- differences need to be taken into account from many viewpoints and acknowledged and addressed within practice

- expanding cultural knowledge

- understanding one's own limitations

- understand impact of one's own position

- adapting services to meet culturally unique needs

- promote health and healing

(Barber Rioja & Rosenfeld, 2018; Ettinger, 2024; Häkkilä et al., 2020; Brascoupé & Waters, 2009; Curtis et al., 2019; DeSouza, 2008; Mental Health & Substance Use, 20

Cultural Safety/Sensitivity

- **acknowledging and recognizing cultural differences**

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Cultural Safety/Sensitivity

* On-going expanding of personal cultural self-awareness

   - have a clear sense of my own ethnic, cultural and racial identity

   - aware of the assumptions held about people of cultures different one's own

   - personal motivation ?

Applying
In Practice

>

- Educational opportunities
- Reflecting on experiences/cases
- Debriefing practices
- Case reviews

Cultural Safety/Sensitivity

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Cultural Safety/Sensitivity

* Developing Personal Ability

- work hard to understand the perspectives of others and consult with my diverse colleagues, community members, clients about culturally respectful and appropriate courses of action

- taking any opportunity participating in places where one can learn about difference and create relationships.

- involves a commitment to learning over a life-time (cultures changes over time and can vary from person to person. So does attachment to culture)

Applying
In Practice

>

- Educational opportunities
- Reflecting on experiences/cases
- Respectfully curious as practice (don't assume - ask) - 'Columbo' (Goelitz, 2020)
- Gatherings, events
- Screening/collaboration/MDT Triage (prior to forensic interview. Consulting example - Indigenous agencies, Health, Immigrant Service etc.)

9 Categories with multiple factors in each
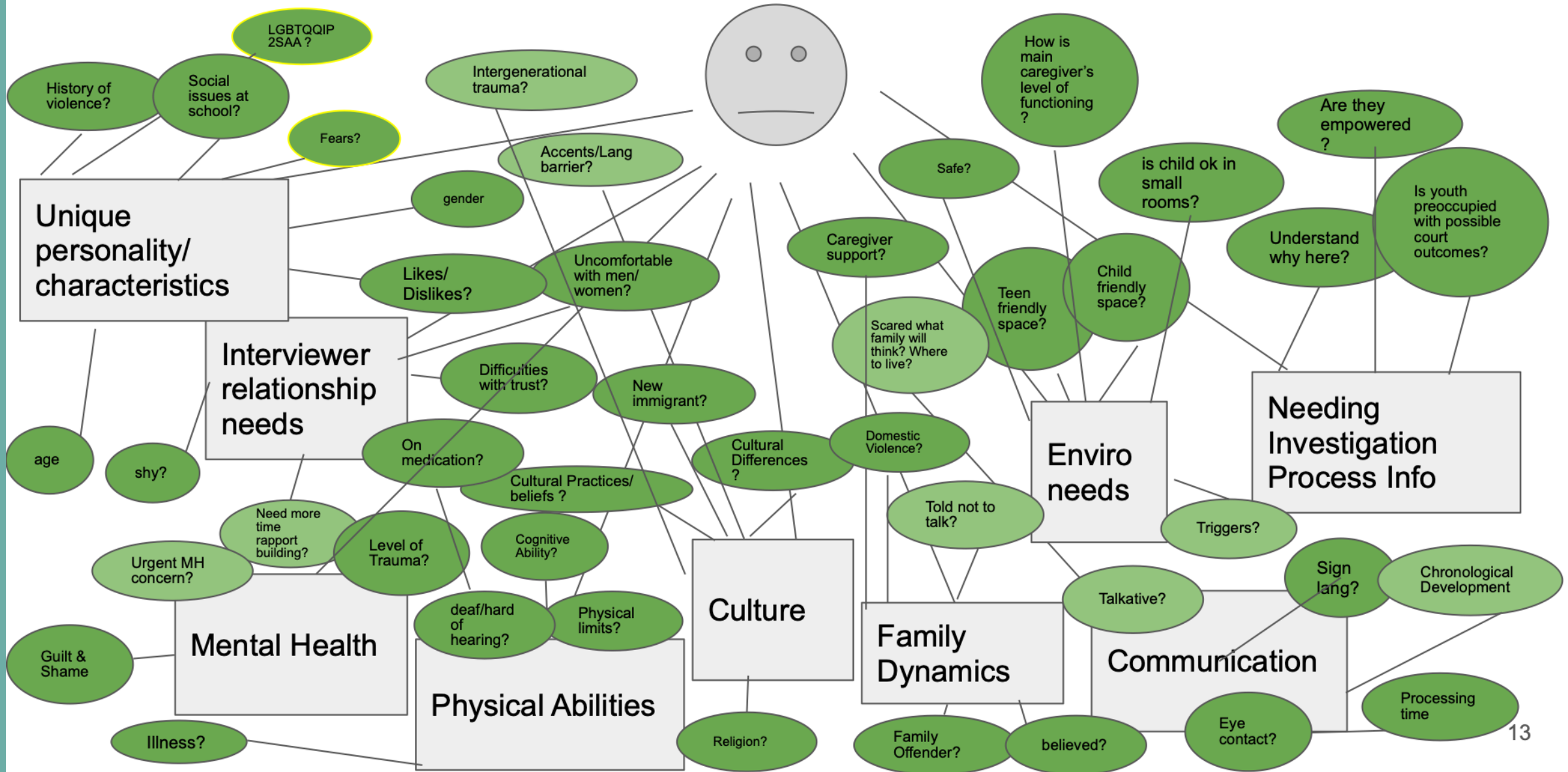
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Cultural Safety/Sensitivity

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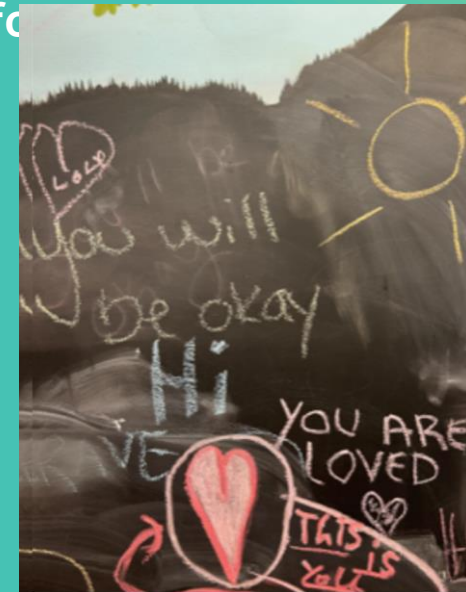
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Cultural Safety/Sensitivity

* putting into practice - the specific cultural protocols and practices which are
   necessary for work

   - take the time needed to get more information

   - aware of stereotypes/assumption as they arise and have developed personal strategies fo
   reducing the harm they cause.(Respectfully curious or asking for definition as protocol)

Applying
In Practice   >
- Debriefing practices
- Case reviews
- Screening support/MDT Triage
- Respectfully curious
- Parent/Guardian Mtg. With Police/Child protection after forensic interview
- Child/Youth debrief/mtg. after forensic interview (signs of safety, chalk board)
- Advocate program - planning mtg. After forensic interview/long-term follow up
- Promoting Self-care and with colleagues and within agency (debriefing, case

Trauma-Informed

- a way of practice when working with people in being able to recognize and address their trauma effectively
- respond appropriately to signs of trauma and incorporates the impacts of trauma into all service delivery.
- incorporate an understanding of past and current experiences of trauma into all service delivery models
- recognize the impacts of trauma on client's behaviour, functioning, and thought processes, while providing them a safe, nonjudgmental, trusting, collaborative and empowering environment
- encompass a person-centred approach that prioritizes children's needs and is less about getting the facts for a case
- must consider culture which represents the vast structure of behaviours, ideas, attitudes, values, habits, beliefs, customs, language, rituals, expressions of distress and grief, history, perceptions, ceremonies and practices that are particular to a group of people

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Trauma-Informed

* Creating safety in all our approaches in all the work we do

- How am I doing? (Not conscious of this = unaware or inability to not impact those we're working with)
- What is a safe environment and relationship for the person we are working with?
- Responsiveness to person we are working with (initially, during, at end....)

Applying
In Practice > - Educational opportunities
- morning check-in, debriefing, mindfulness, pause before practice
- screening/collaboration

Trauma-Informed

- a way of practice when working with people in being able to recognize and address their trauma effectively
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Trauma-Informed

* Ensuring trust, transparency, collaboration, mutuality, empowerment, voice and choice with everyone we work with

- Responsiveness to person we are working with (history, initially, during, at end….

Applying
In Practice   >
- screening/collaboration – who's best to support and understand/assess needs of child?
- MDT Triage
- Available space
- Check-ins
- Educational opportunities
- Respectfully curious
- Parent/Guardian Mtg. With Police/Child protection after forensic interview
- Child/Youth debrief/mtg. after forensic interview (signs of safety, chalk board)
- Health & Wellness – referral collaboration

Inclusivity

- Services to be inclusive of family and community and viewed as sources of *support*, *care*, *and help*

- Identify the importance of involving communities as ways of creating solutions to challenges and as a key to success

- Work with to understand the specific community they are working with, and the values that will support traditional practices and customs

- involve the community in service design and delivery - they should be seen as the experts in being able to create approaches and in understanding a child's needs

- incorporate flexibility in the workplace; that is, being able to quickly adapt to new circumstances as they arise.

- Learn directly from client - adapt to what needs changing or improving and reintegrate new ideas back into client's experience process

(Anderson, 1998; Carrière, 2008; de Finney, 2022; Ettinger, 2024; Rae, 2001)

Inclusivity

* Helping to ensure that each child can flourish - practice needs to range to meet different capabilities, ways of being and knowing

- Collaborative practices
- On going relationships

Applying In Practice >

- screening/collaboration - who's best to support and understand/assess needs of child?
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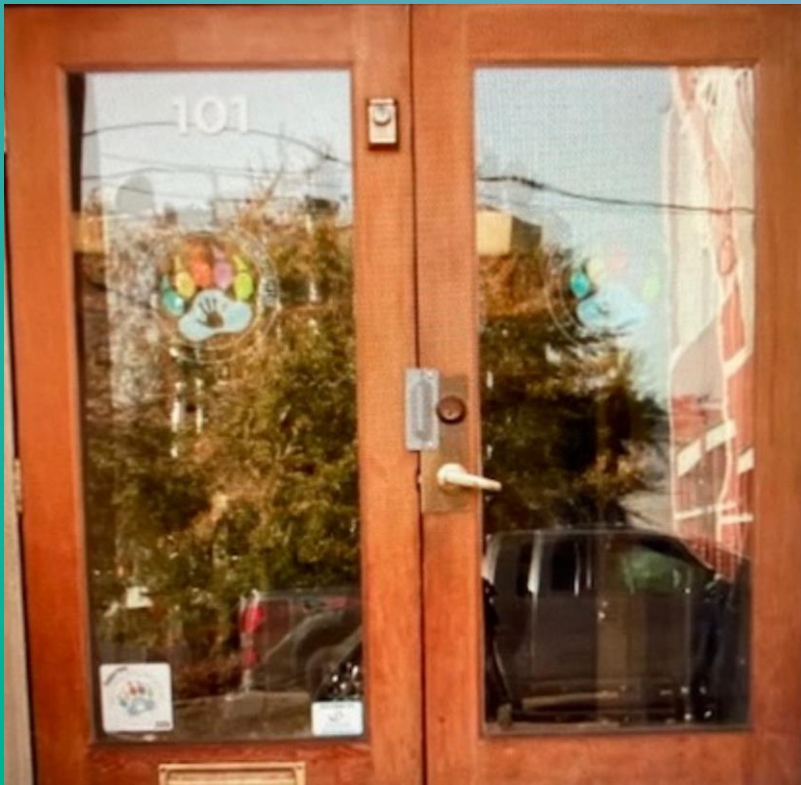
Clients as part of the process

Sometimes the small things can go a long way!

Keeping clients informed
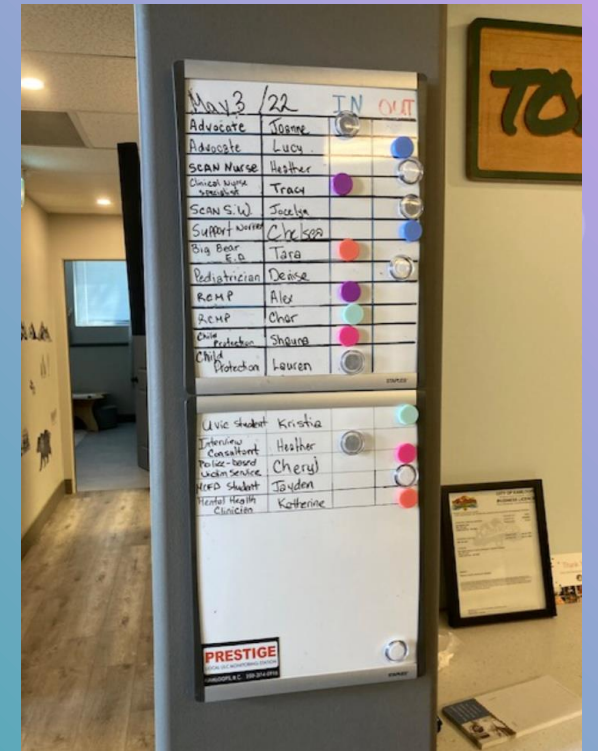
Client-Centred

- Prioritizes child's needs and less about needs of the case

- Encouraging children's voice and experiences in many areas of practice

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- practice needs to adapt to who this child is and what they need.

(Ball, 2008; Thompson & Taylor, 2021; Milan et al., 2017; Ettinger, 2024; Fontes and Plummer, 2010; Fontes, 2005; Winkworth & McArthur, 2006)

Client-Centred

* Helping to ensure that each child can flourish – practice needs to range to meet different capabilities, ways of being and knowing – Instilling the child feels empowered, choice, hope thru listening, communicating, partnership

– Culturally safe, trauma-informed, inclusive/Collaborative practices

Applying In Practice >

- screening/collaboration – who's best to support and understand/assess needs of child?
- MDT Triage
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- Respectfully curious
- Parent/Guardian Mtg. With Police/Child protection after forensic interview
- Child/Youth debrief/mtg. after forensic interview (signs of safety, chalk board)
- Health & Wellness – referral collaboration

Key Cultural Considerations © T. Ettinger (2024)

Enhancing Cultural Safety In Forensic Interviewing During Investigations of Child Abuse: Indigenous Perspectives

CYACs are becoming the solution

- They have the ability to incorporate cultural aspects into practice that is specific for every child.

- They can incorporate cultural elements into physical space such as the inclusion of healing mtools and land elements.

- They can address children's emotional needs and promote healing.

- They can acknowledge and understand and address trauma.

- They can help bridge connections and encourage long-term support.

- They can help break the cycle of abuse through prevention and healing methods.

- They can model appropriate approaches and practices.

- They can prioritize child's needs.

- They can demonstrate intent in keeping children safe.

- They have the ability to enhance relationship with Indigenous peoples

- They can help bridge cultural knowledge with the rest of the MDT.

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Collaboration with Indigenous partners to inform service design and delivery at Big Bear CYAC

1. MDT Planning Meetings
2. Partership Advocate Program
3. Mental Health/Wellness MDT
4. Circles/Pre-interview visits
5. Indigenous space
6. Creative Evaluation

Best Practices for Indigenous Engagement

Identify

Learn/Research

Plan

Engage

Maintain

GAMBLE & McQUEEN, 2019; Indigenous Corporate Training, 2022

November 13/2024 Webinar

Discussion with:

- Kamloops RCMP Sex Crimes Unit

- X2 Indigenous Child and Family Services Agencies

- Forensic Interview specialist/consultant - Dr. Heather Price

Thank you

Dr. Tara Ettinger

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250-571-9995

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