



# ETHICAL RECONCILIATION

Decolonizing Healthcare for Indigenous Wellness

Josh Swain, MScPH



# Situating Myself



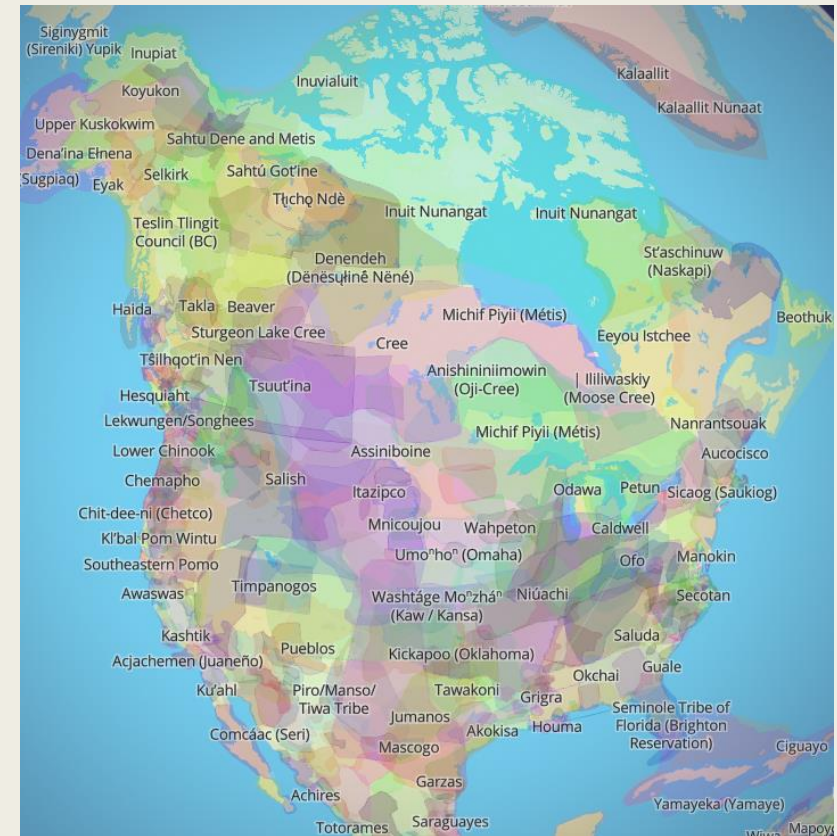
**Josh Swain**

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# Land Acknowledgement

- I am grateful to be a guest in this territory.
- Turtle Island is home to countless nations.
- First and foremost, we should always centre local experts.



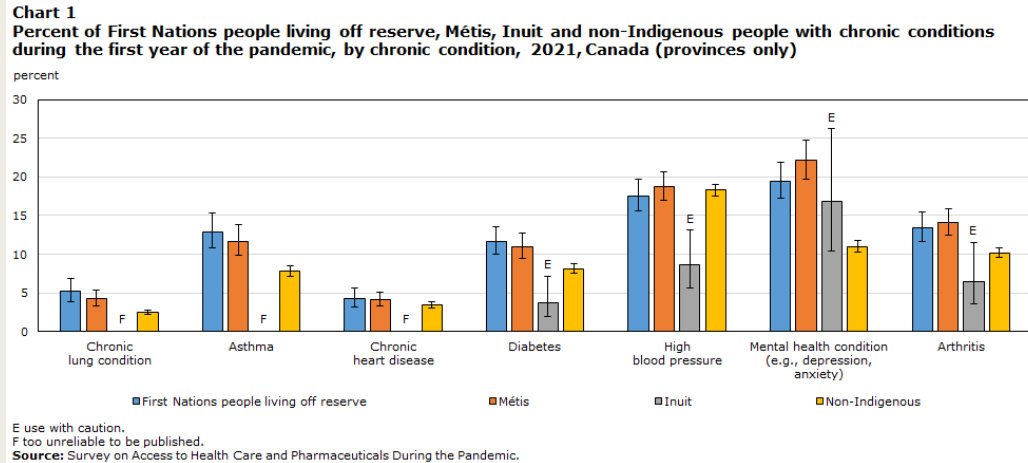
From: native-land.ca

# My Path

- Began in financial services
- Returned to university and completed my BSc in Biology, and MSc in Public Health
- Public Health work focused on Indigenous self-determination and self-governance.



# Why are we having this conversation?

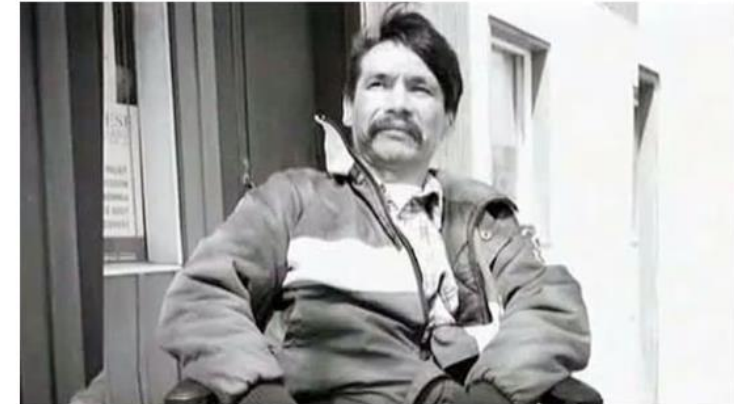


Manitoba

## Ignored to death: Brian Sinclair's death caused by racism, inquest inadequate, group says

Brian Sinclair, 45, was found dead in Health Sciences Centre ER 34 hours after arriving without being treated

Aidan Geary · CBC News · Posted: Sep 18, 2017 10:53 PM EDT | Last Updated: September 19, 2017



Brian Sinclair was 45 when he died waiting to be seen in the emergency room at Winnipeg's Health Sciences Centre. He was discovered dead 34 hours after he arrived. (Maurice Bruneau/Submitted by family)

Montreal

## Racism, prejudice contributed to Joyce Echaquan's death in hospital, Quebec coroner's inquiry concludes

Atikamekw woman died of pulmonary edema last September and was subject to racist remarks by hospital staff

Antoni Nereant · CBC News · Posted: Oct 01, 2021 8:21 AM EDT | Last Updated: October 1, 2021



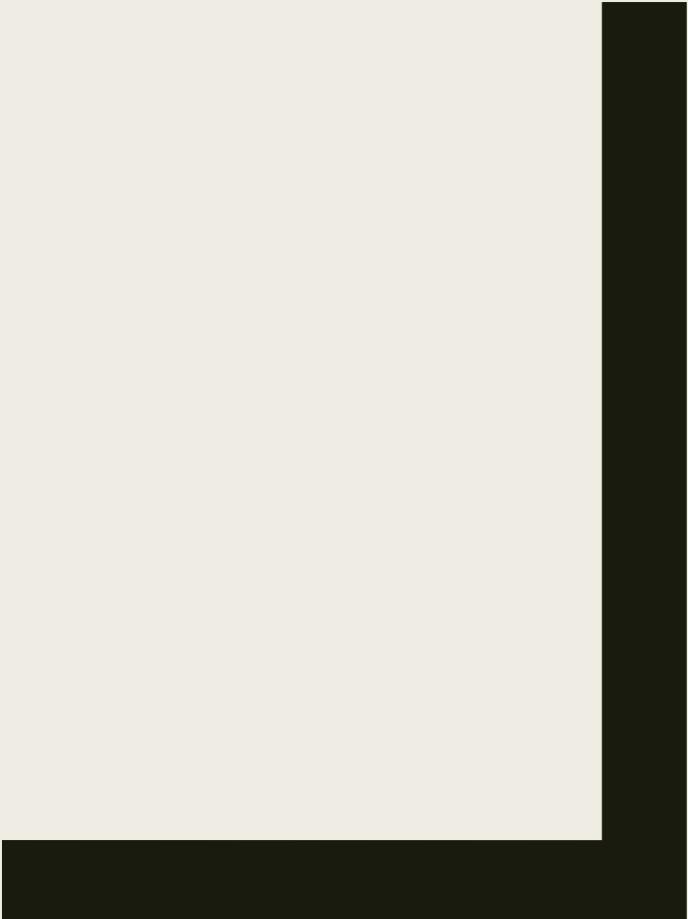
A Quebec coroner's report concluded Friday that the racism and prejudice Joyce Echaquan faced in the hospital contributed to her death last year. The report went on to say that Quebec must acknowledge systemic racism within its institutions.

# Objectives

- Understand the imperative of reconciliation and decolonization
- Define what it means to decolonize health systems
- Identify systemic and institutional barriers
- Explore actionable ethical strategies
- Envision an equitable future



BRIDGING THE  
PAST WITH THE  
PRESENT



# Kwayskahstasowin


- “You cannot reconcile a relationship that never existed. We don’t need any more ‘sorrys’. We have closets full of sorrys. There is no word in Cree for Reconciliation. Only ‘kwayskahstasowin’ which means ‘setting things right.’”
- Maria Campbell, Order of Canada, The Saskatchewan Order of Merit.



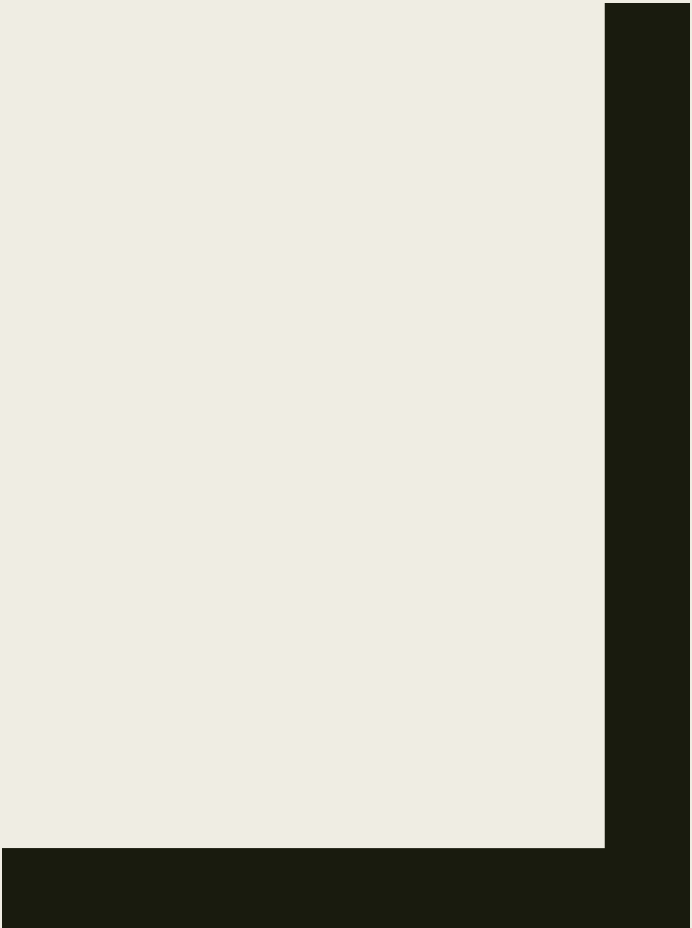
# Not Just Historical

"Then"	Now
Indian hospitals	Racism in emergency departments
Forced sterilization	Ongoing reproductive coercion
Denial of care to indigenous patients	Lack of access to culturally safe care
Biomedical dominance	Exclusion of Indigenous healing spaces and practices
Residential schools	Insufficient mental health supports

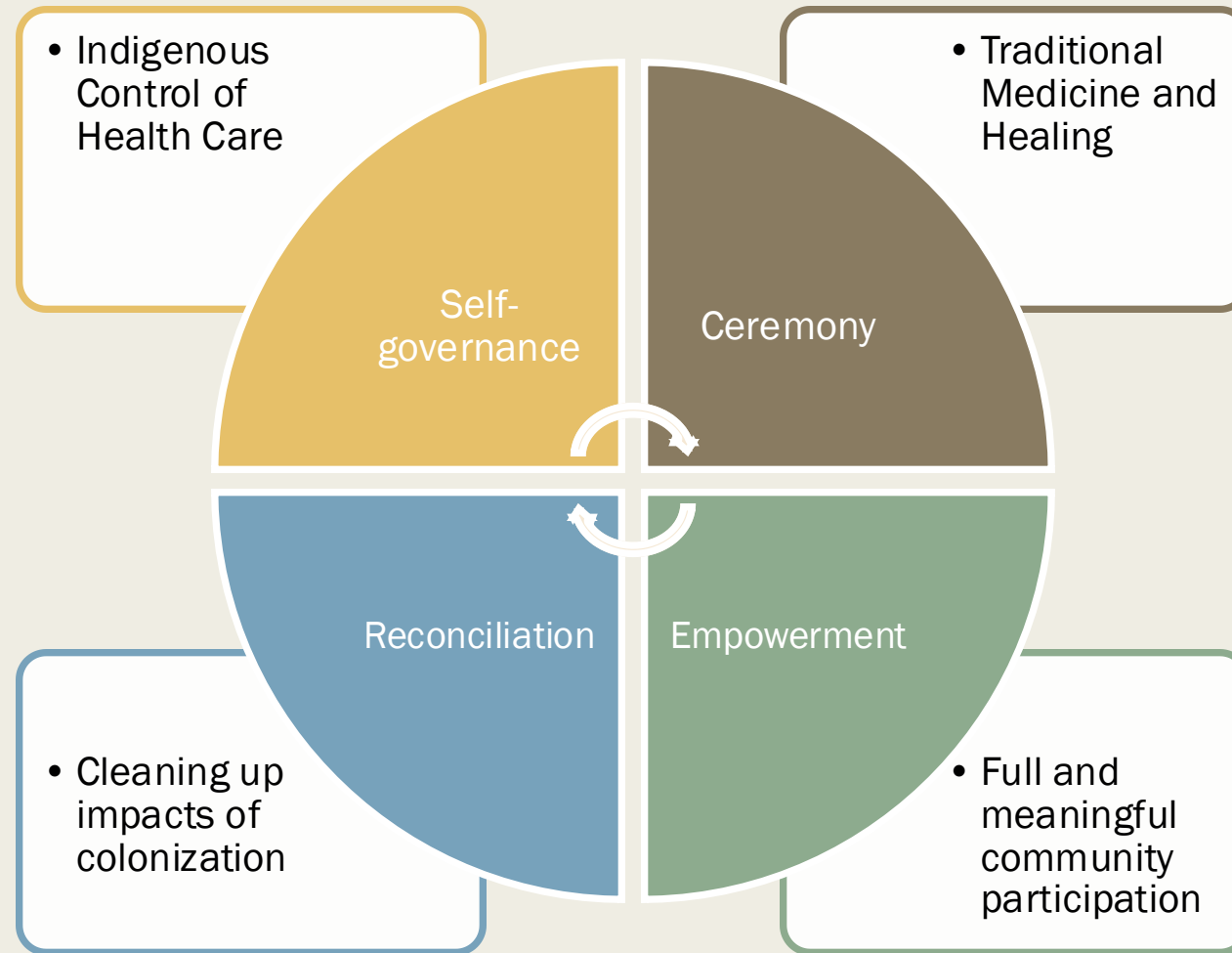
- Colonialism didn't disappear - it adapted.
- Reconciliation requires that we see these continuities clearly.



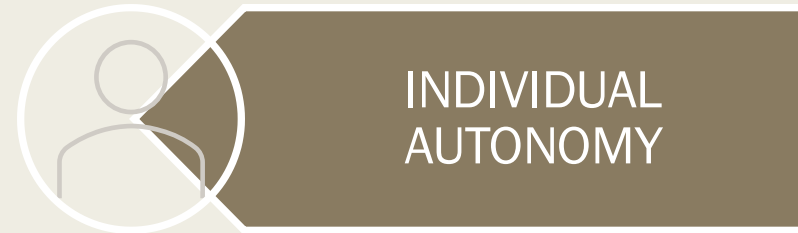
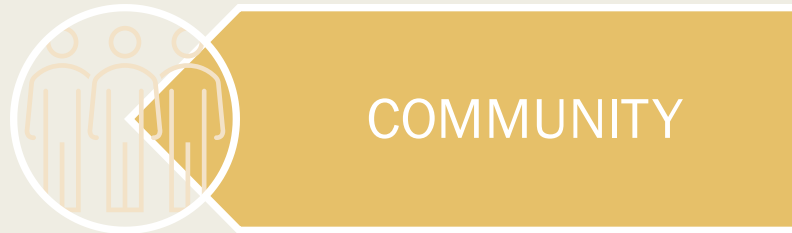
WHAT DOES IT  
MEAN TO  
DECOLONIZE  
HEALTH SYSTEMS  
AND ETHICS?



# Decolonizing Health Systems



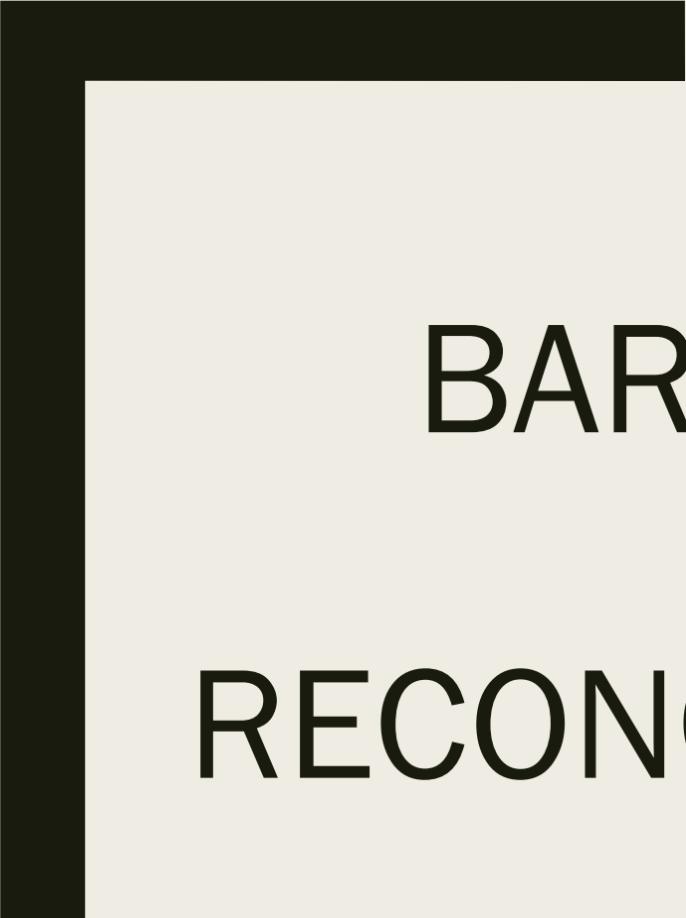
# Indigenous vs “Western” Ethical Values



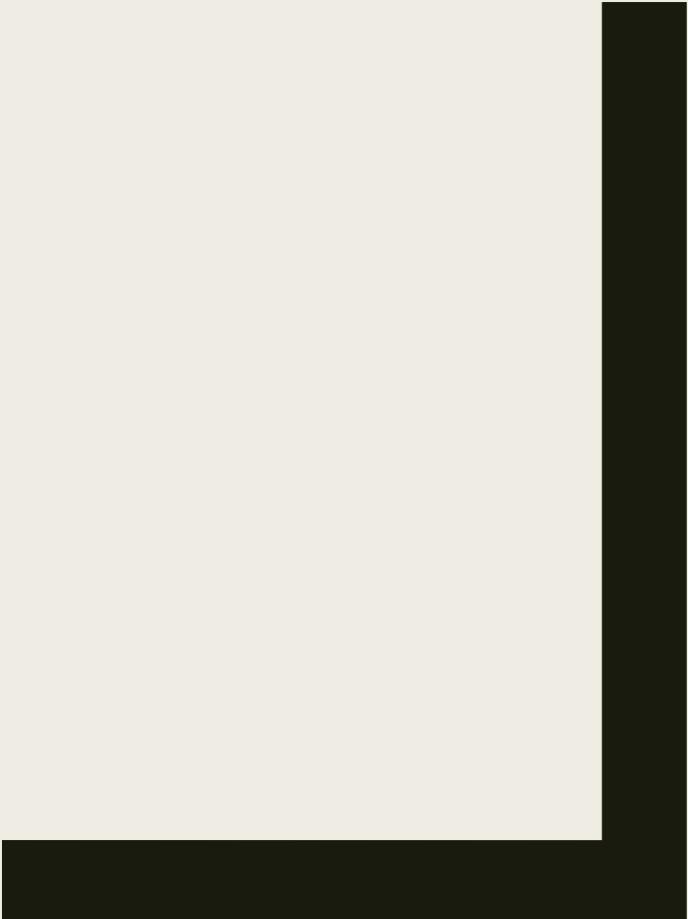
# Epistemic Injustice

- Silencing and sidelining Indigenous Ways of Knowing
- Exclusion of community-based research
- Undermining or disempowering story-based or qualitative data

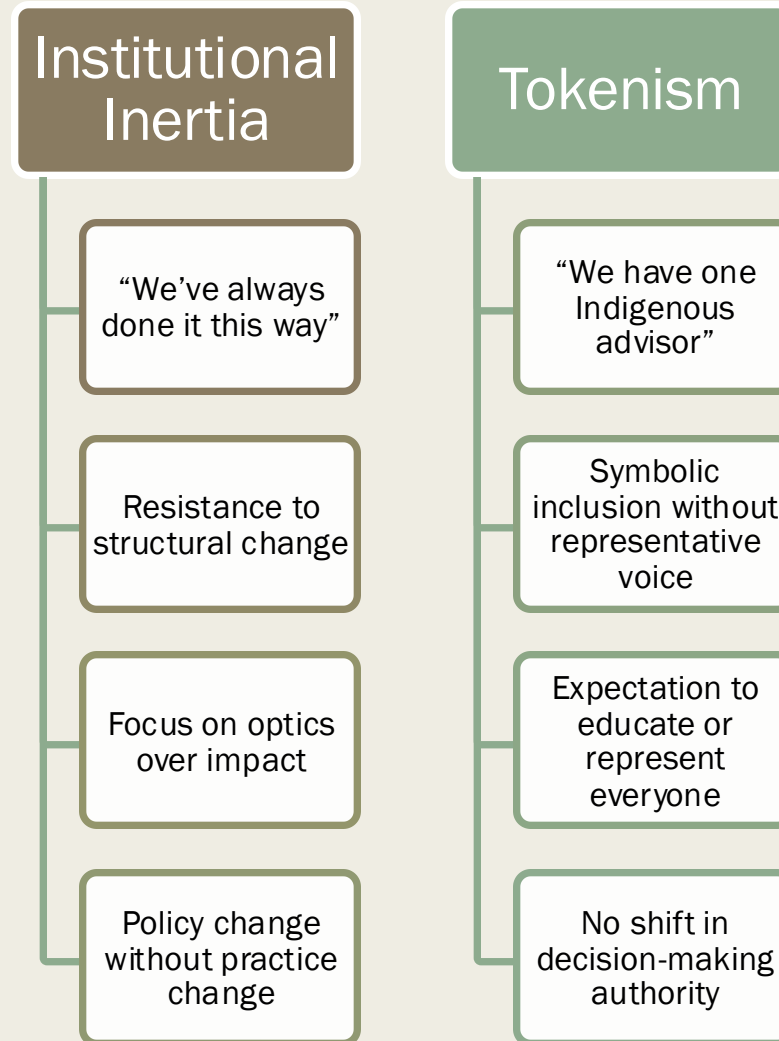




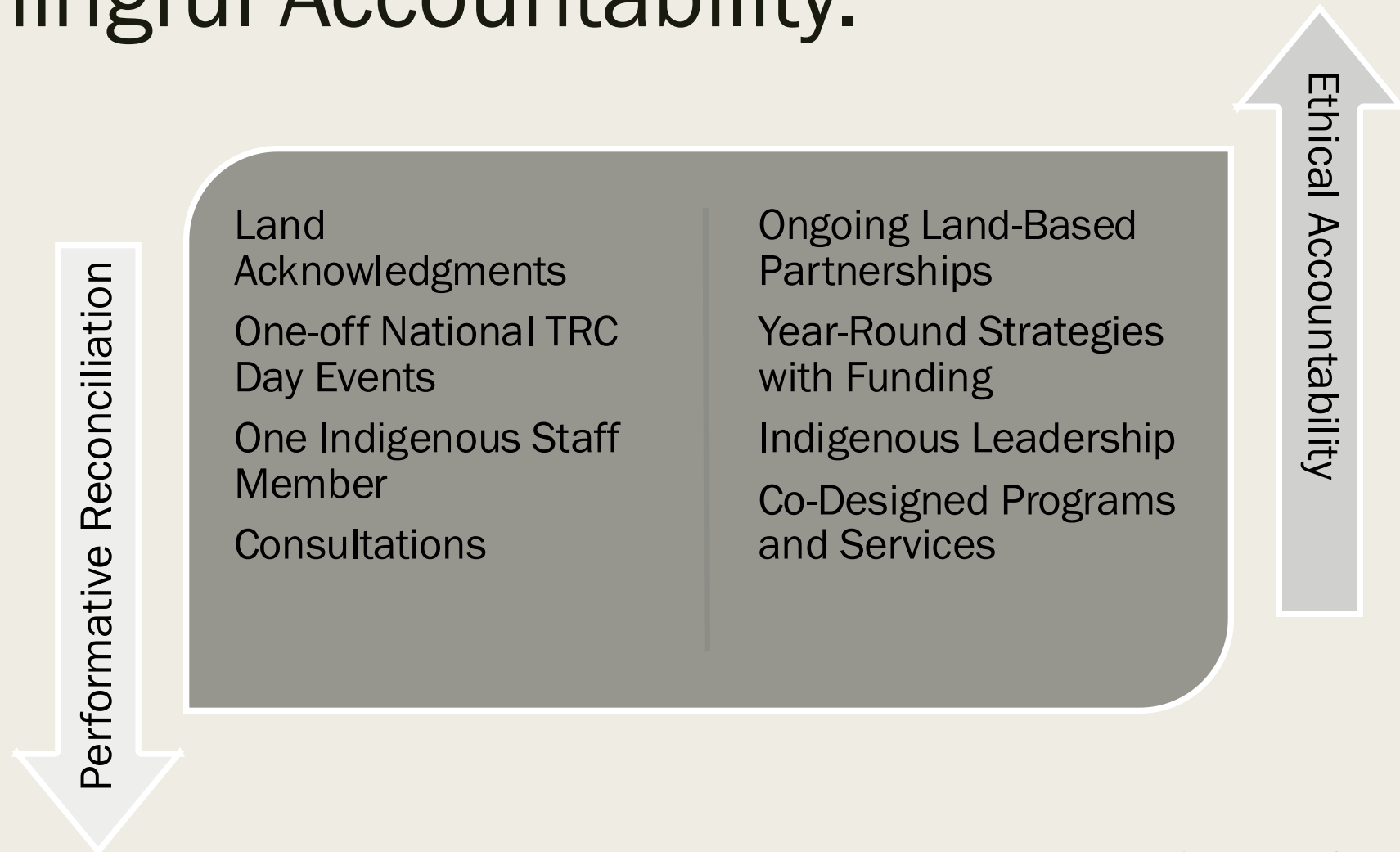
BARRIERS TO  
TRUE  
RECONCILIATION



# Institutional Inertia and Tokenism



# Performative Reconciliation vs. Meaningful Accountability.



# Policies that overlook Indigenous- specific health realities

“One-size-fits-all” population health models

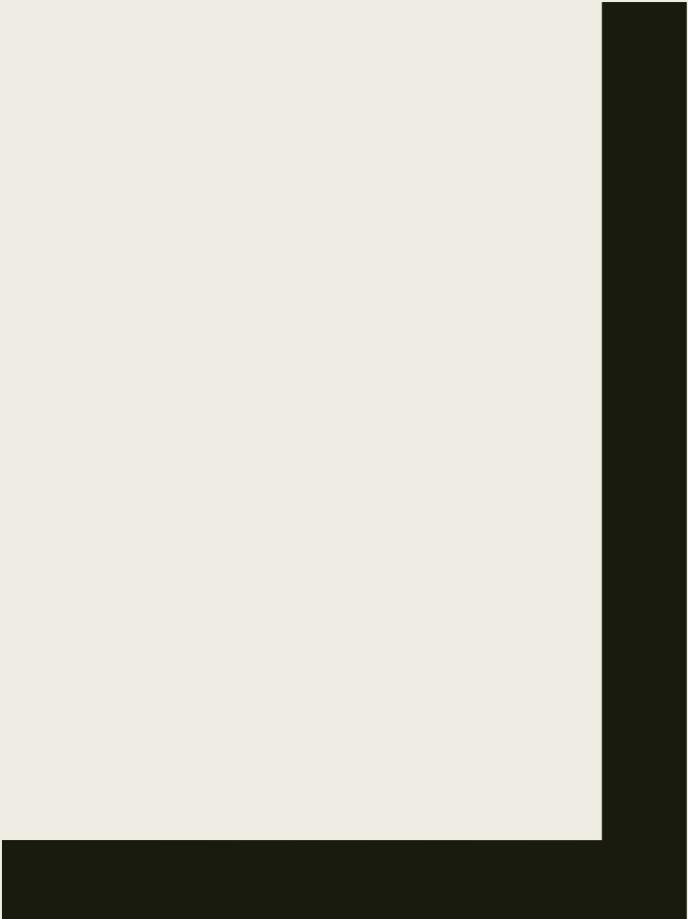
Urban Indigenous communities treated as pan-Indigenous or invisible

Cultural programming seen as secondary

Individual-focused care instead of community-centered wellness



DECOLONIZING  
IN PRACTICE:  
STRATEGIES



# Indigenous Self-Determination

- Indigenous-led governance of health systems
- Community-based primary healthcare
- Resourcing for long-term programming
- Integration of Indigenous protocol
- Indigenous identified and validated wellness indicators

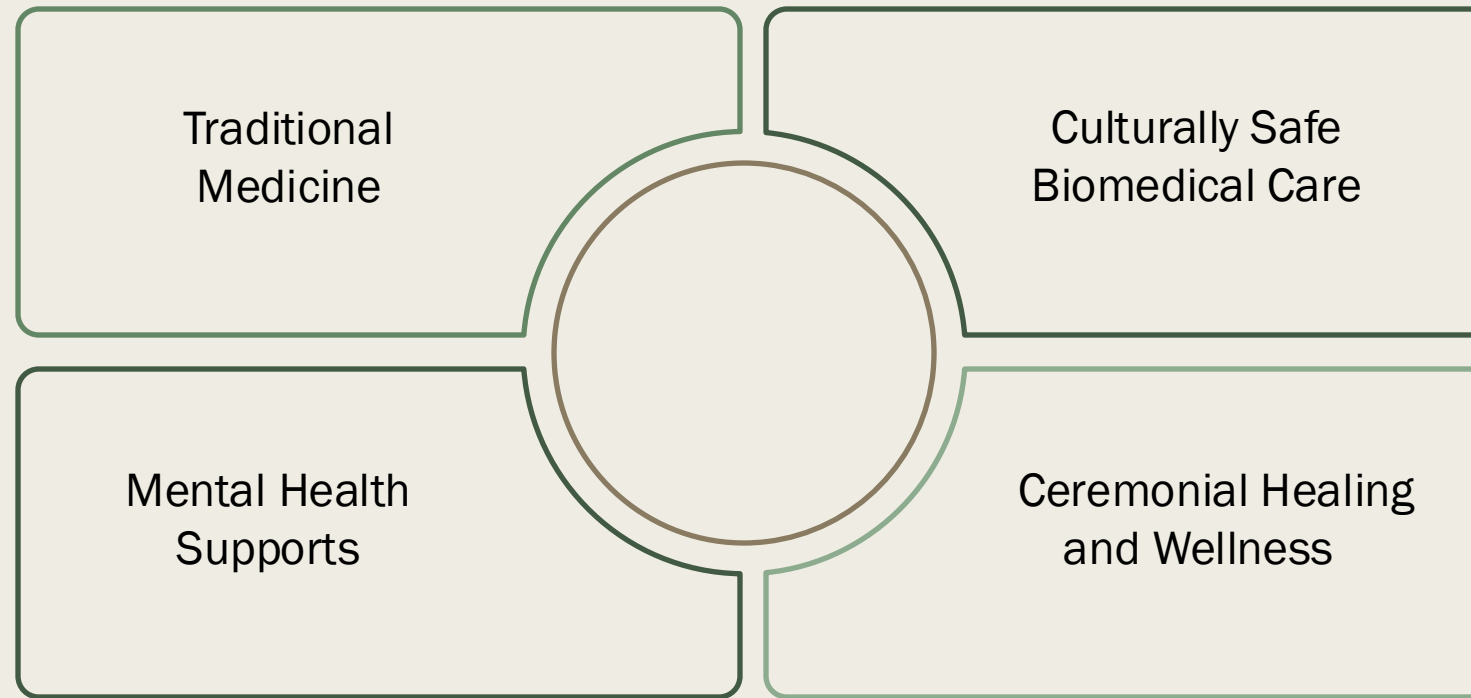
# Determinants of Health

Determinants of health should be identified and validated by the Indigenous Community:

- Elders and Traditional Knowledge
- Language
- Being on the Land
- Traditional Foods
- Community
- Ceremony
- Love and Relationships
- Recovery from Colonial Trauma

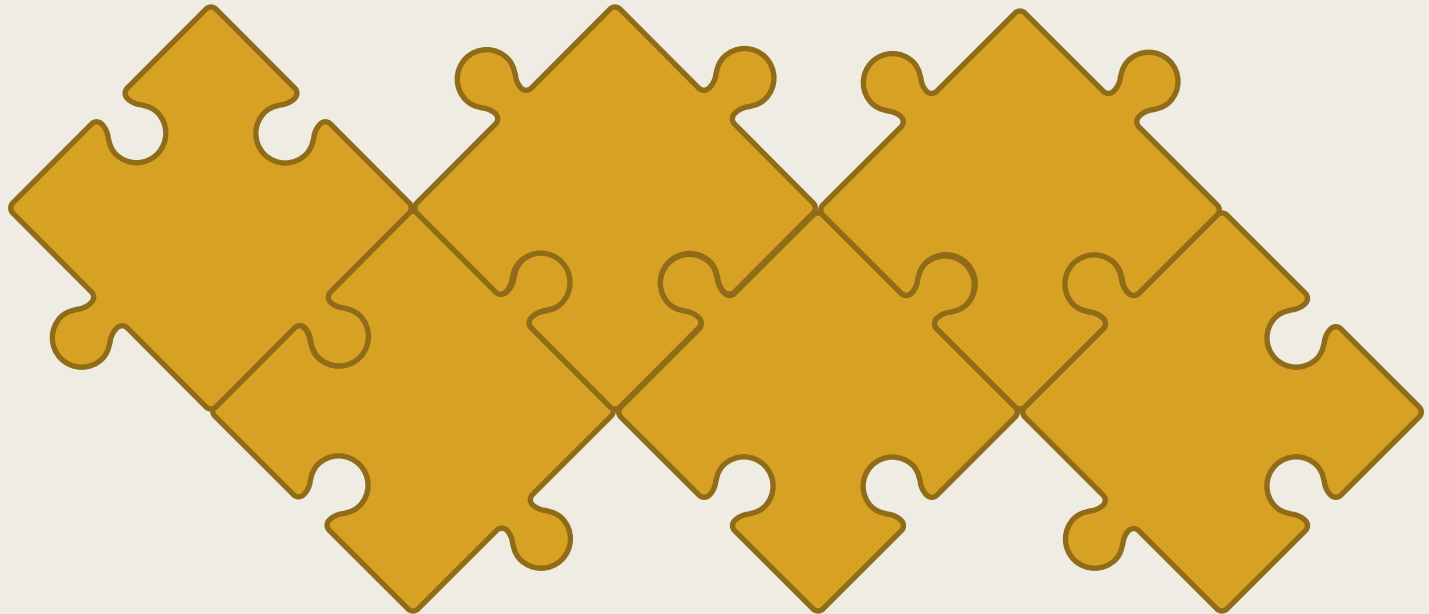
Dr. Suzanne (Ethsi) Stewart, PhD, C.Psych  
Dalla Lana School of Public Health

# Integration of and Support for Traditional Medicine and Healing Practices

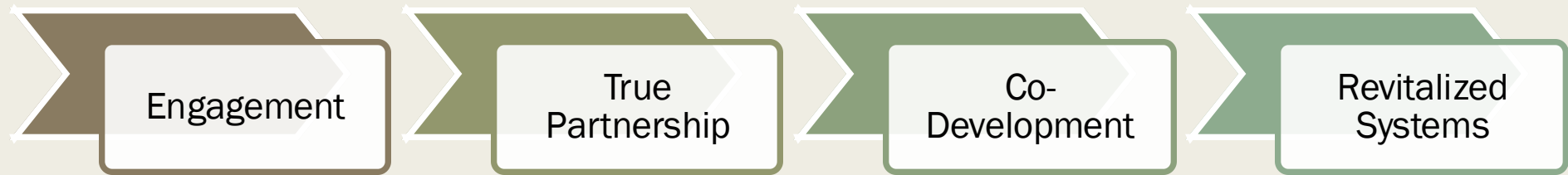


# Collective Action

- Youth
- Elders
- Families
- Health Professionals
- Local Leaders



# The Path Forward





THANK YOU

