

Perspective Article

DECOLONIAL PRACTICES IN CLINICAL SOCIAL WORK AND MENTAL HEALTH THERAPY. A MODEL FOR INCLUSIVE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURES

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This paper explores how decolonial practices in clinical social work and mental health therapy can serve as a model for fostering inclusive, reflexive, and empowering organizations. Grounded in critical adult learning theory and decolonial praxis, we examine the transformative potential of reconnecting individuals, organizations and communities to Earth-based identities and Indigenous knowledge systems through Eutierria Therapy, a five-pillar framework integrating ecological & relational, decolonial & ancestral, communal & interdependent, embodied & somatic, and material & systemic healing practices. Clinical social work and mental health therapy have been shaped by Eurocentric frameworks, perpetuating epistemic injustice. Decolonial approaches challenge dominant Western epistemologies by centering marginalized voices and facilitating conscientization and participatory competence, empowering individuals to examine socio-political realities and initiate change while organizations facilitate collective action.

Through medicine stories, healing narratives that honor Indigenous epistemologies, we demonstrate how decolonial practices reintroduce ancestral connections, reshape knowledge validation, and amplify diverse perspectives. Drawing from our experiences in community mental health organizations, we examine challenges and opportunities in disrupting power hierarchies and creating authentic cultural engagement.

This process transforms organizational spaces into sites where marginalized and dominant groups collaborate to dismantle colonial structures. Rather than token inclusion, decolonial work requires fundamental restructuring of operations, shifting resources and decision-making authority. We reflect on tensions when implementing decolonial practices within Western-governed institutions, recognizing authentic transformation requires fundamental shifts in power, knowledge, and resource distribution.

Ultimately, adopting decolonial practices offers a transformative model for dismantling colonial legacies within community psychology and mental health.

Keywords: Eutierria Therapy, Epistemic injustice, Critical adult learning theory, Medicine stories, Conscientization, Indigenous knowledge systems

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All terms presented in ***bold italics*** are defined in the Glossary, which is provided in Appendix C.

1. Introduction

What if the structures meant to heal us were never designed for our wholeness? What if the path to healing begins not within the individual psyche, but in the reclaiming collective truth, land, and cultural wisdom?

Clinical social work and mental health therapy operate within structures that perpetuate systemic erasure and ***epistemic injustice*** by privileging Western medicalized knowledge while marginalizing Indigenous and non-dominant perspectives. These fields, historically shaped by Eurocentric and colonial frameworks (Mullan, 2023; Tamburro 2013), often fail to resonate with racialized communities' contextual realities (Aladejebi, 2021). Absent diverse curricula reinforces oppression and hegemony (Hanson & Fletcher, 2021).

This paper explores how decolonial practices in clinical social work and mental health therapy can foster inclusive, reflexive, and empowering organizations. Grounded in ***critical adult learning theory*** and ***decolonial praxis***, we examine the potential of reconnecting individuals and communities to ***Earth-based identities*** and ***Indigenous knowledge systems***.

We recognize that some practitioners reading this work may operate within institutional constraints that may seem incompatible with decolonial healing. While ***Eutierria Therapy*** envisions fundamental transformation beyond these colonial structures, we also understand the reality that many healers must navigate existing systems while working toward broader change.

We present Eutierria Therapy: a five-pillar framework that operationalizes decolonial healing through (i) ecological & relational, (ii) decolonial & ancestral, (iii) communal & interdependent, (iv) embodied & somatic, and (v) material & systemic practices.

Through ***medicine stories***, we illustrate how this framework manifests across relational engagement, from individual therapeutic relationships to organizational transformation. Rather than simply including marginalized voices, we demonstrate how healing becomes a cultural reclamation and resistance when rooted in ancestral wisdom and ecological relationship. Authentic decolonial practice requires simultaneous attention to personal healing, community building, and structural change; challenging conventional boundaries between therapy, education, and social action.

We examine epistemic injustice in mental health contexts, present theoretical frameworks, explore Earth-based identities and Indigenous knowledge systems, then analyze decolonial practices through medicine stories. Writing from unceded lands of Taungurung Peoples (central Victoria, Australia), Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Peoples (Melbourne, Australia), and Tāp Pīlam Coahuiltecan Nation territory (South Texas, USA), we approach this work as authors positioned across colonial contexts; from Australia's White Australia Policy legacy and post-war Italian migration to Boriken (Puerto Rico), the world's oldest colony. Our analysis draws from our positioning as practitioners, educators, and consultants at the intersections of clinical practice, organizational development, and community healing (see Appendix D for detailed author positionalities).

2. Epistemic Injustice

Epistemic injustice describes how knowledge from socially disadvantaged groups is ignored or devalued, with dominant Western perspectives systematically overshadowing marginalized knowledge (Fricker, 2007; Samra, 2023; van bavel et al., 2022).

Clinical social work and mental health therapy, shaped by Eurocentric frameworks, consistently prioritize Western approaches over Indigenous and non-dominant knowledge systems (Hanson & Fletcher, 2021; Mullan, 2023; van bavel et al., 2022). Organizations often misperceive how their roles create unintentional biases sometimes acting against those they serve (Hiebert, 2023; Williams, 2020). The **medical deficit model** stifles voices of ill and disabled persons (Chapman & Carel, 2022), while Non-governmental organizations in colonized contexts perpetuate colonized mindsets through **psychological contracts** accommodating oppressive agendas (Masud, 2019).

Epistemic injustice manifests in **testimonial injustice**, where marginalized people's knowledge claims are dismissed due to identity prejudice, and **hermeneutical injustice**, systematically marginalizing oppressed communities' knowledge (Chapman & Carel, 2022; Samra, 2023). Within community psychology and broader academic canons, these intertwined structures of cultural and structural violence often normalize such systemic exclusion by pathologizing individual suffering rather than interrogating macrosocial matrices (Dutta et al., 2016)

Indigenous wisdoms, developed through generations of direct landscape observation, is dismissed as "anecdotal" despite its profound depth and temporal reach. In mental health, people with stigmatizing diagnoses find their lived experiences considered less reliable than clinician observations, reinforcing power imbalances and inappropriate interventions (Samra, 2023; van bavel et. al., 2022).

Hermeneutical injustice occurs when marginalized groups cannot articulate experiences because available language fails to capture their reality due to **coloniallingualism**, creating gaps that prevent communities from envisioning their own flourishing (LeBlanc & Kinsella, 2016; Meighan, 2022).

Authority figures hold **epistemic privilege** through institutional position alone. Medicalized discourses have marginalized **Mad**-identifying people's perspectives, creating systemic discrimination assuming pathological views rooted in individuals rather than social structures (LeBlanc & Kinsella, 2016).

For **People of the Global Majority** and **Indigenous Peoples**, much madness represents responses to intergenerational trauma, yet this lived experience is systematically silenced, privileging professional expertise over cultural wisdom (Campbell-Stephens, 2020; Maté & Maté, 2022). Historical legacies persist: mainstream social work enforced residential schools and marginalized Indigenous and Black populations, while contemporary mental health interventions reproduce colonial hierarchies without interrogating shaping socio-political landscapes (Aladejebi, 2021; Cavalieri, 2018; Lazaridou & Fernando, 2022).

Confronting epistemic injustice requires expanding beyond narrow knowledge bases, building authentic relationships honoring **Indigenous data sovereignty**, and centering knowledge co-production processes recognizing Indigenous peoples' ownership of their cultural wisdom (Brannelly, 2016; Turner et al., 2022). Mental health practitioners embracing multiple knowledge traditions create space for healing practices respecting varied cultural understandings of wellness and personhood.

3. Earth-based Identities & Indigenous Knowledge

Earth-based identity represents a fundamental way of being where one's *sense of self* emerges through deep relationship with the natural world. Unlike Western individualism's abstracted *zero-point ontology*, Earth-based identities understand personhood as constituted through ongoing dialogue with land, water, and the *more-than-human community* (Abram, 1996; Chan et al., 2019; Greenwood, 2019). This identity emerges as lived reality; a bone-deep knowing that shapes perception, determining which questions seem worth asking and which truths appear self-evident.

Our understanding emerges from positioning across different colonial territories: unceded lands of Whadjuk Nyoongar, Taungurung, and Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Peoples in Australia, and Tāp Pīlam Coahuiltecan Nation territory in South Texas, while drawing from Taino epistemologies of the Caribbean and *land-based practices* across North America and Australia. We acknowledge that Australian Indigenous Peoples have maintained the world's oldest continuous cultures, carrying deep wisdom about living in relationship with land across tens of thousands of years.

Indigenous knowledge systems are complex epistemologies developed through generations of careful observation and intimate relationship with specific territories. These dynamic systems have sustained communities over millennia, integrating spiritual insight, ecological understanding, social bonds, and practical skills through worldviews where separation appears as illusion (Buenavista et al., 2018; Turner et al., 2022). In many Indigenous and *Majority World* communities, self exists "in relation to particular places, which sustain memories" of ancestors while connecting to future generations, recognizing animals and plants as relatives within shared family systems (Readsura Decolonial Editorial Collective, 2022, p. 17; Shafaieh, 2022).

Earth-based identities emerge from local landscapes through extended collaboration with specific environments, where land functions as teacher and knowledge develops through direct engagement with place, seasonal cycles, and reciprocal relationships sustaining ecosystems (Parker, 2012). This pedagogical relationship suggests reconnection with place might be as therapeutic as conventional clinical interventions (Acharibasam et al., 2024; Lees & Bang, 2023).

These place-based systems weave together values, worldviews, practical skills, and governance structures, sustaining both human and *more-than-human* wellbeing (Turner et al., 2022). Indigenous knowledge systems function as counter-epistemologies offering radically different wellness conceptions where mind flows into body, personhood exists within community bonds, and human life remains inseparable from the breathing, pulsing world sustaining it (Frumkin et al., 2017). These systems embed in language, ceremony, seasonal cycles, and kinship networks extending beyond human relations (Johnston, 2024; Langmaid et al., 2020; Lees & Bang, 2023).

Integrating Earth-based identities and Indigenous knowledge into clinical and organizational practice fundamentally transforms healing conceptualization. Rather than locating distress within individual psyches, these frameworks recognize how disconnection from land, community, and cultural wisdom creates population-level suffering. Healing involves reconnection and *re-membering*, not symptom management (Blume, 2020; Richardson et al., 2021).

For clinical practice, these frameworks suggest *land-based healing*, ceremony, community involvement, and cultural reconnection, challenging individualistic focus by recognizing wellbeing emerges through fostering *right relationship* with community and place (Chui, 2018; Mullan, 2023; Sasakamoose et al., 2024). Practitioners must therefore shift from office-

based verbal processing toward embodied, land-connected, and culturally embedded healing modalities (Blume 2020).

For an organization, these frameworks require transforming hierarchical structures replicating colonial power dynamics. Organizations aligned with Earth-based and Indigenous perspectives prioritize consensus decision-making, recognize Elder wisdom, and incorporate seasonal rhythms. They maintain relationships with operating lands measuring success through outcomes contributing to community wellbeing and ecological restoration (Arjaliès & Banerjee, 2024; Turner et al., 2022).

Earth-based identities and Indigenous knowledge systems provide fundamentally different approaches to knowing, being, and healing; a paradigm shift with significant potential for addressing individual suffering and broader social and ecological crises. These frameworks form the ecological and ancestral roots of Eutierria Therapy.

4. Theoretical Frameworks

Our analysis draws from critical adult learning theory and decolonial praxis providing a lens for understanding individual **conscientization** and systemic transformation in mental health and community settings.

Critical adult learning theory challenges education's neutrality positioning adult learning as inherently political and contextual. This approach emphasizes critical reflection as central to transforming learning from experience and questioning assumptions maintaining oppressive systems (Wilson & Kiely, 2002). Rather than viewing adult education as skills acquisition for economic productivity, it envisions learning as democratic participation and **liberatory action**, through dialogue and problem-posing education, "to make sense of and act upon the personal, social, occupational and political environment in which they live". (Brookfield, 1986, p. vii).

We extend this framework to include **ecological and ancestral sense-making**; understanding oneself and environment through relationship with land and cultural lineage. In decolonial practice, critical adult learning becomes re-membering suppressed knowledge systems and re-connecting to Earth-based identities that colonization has systematically disrupted. Thus, critical adult learning in decolonial contexts becomes simultaneously pedagogical, healing, and resistance practice operating across individual, organizational, and community levels.

Freire's *conscientization*, awakening where peoples recognize **oppressive structures** and gain capacity for purposeful, solidarity-based action, becomes particularly relevant in colonial contexts (Freire, 1970/2005; Lloyd, 1972). This process is vital for breaking individualistic, decontextualized views of suffering, enabling marginalized groups to collectively mobilize, reclaim power, and contest asymmetrical structural arrangements in the face of localized crises (Fernandes-Jesus et al., 2020). Freirean praxis resists dominant ideologies reproducing inequality fostering learning environments that expose and disrupt hegemonic norms, including the colonial assumption that Western knowledge systems are universal or superior (Evans et al., 2022; Ismail, 2018).

Decolonial praxis is the active, ongoing relationship between action and reflection within "disrupting colonial knowledge production and severing connections to colonial ways of being and knowing" (Aladejebi, 2021, p. 2). It recognizes that colonialism persists not only historically but as **coloniality** (Readsura Decolonial Editorial Collective, 2022).

Central to decolonial praxis is **mental decolonization**: reclaiming suppressed knowledge traditions and producing liberatory knowledge grounded in oppressed peoples' lived experiences (Levin, 2022). This involves naming and resisting the normative assumptions embedded in Western frameworks while centering Indigenous, Black, and other marginalized epistemologies (Levin, 2022; Phillips et al., 2015). Decolonial praxis fosters **socially critical consciousness** about structural causes of suffering and promotes collective action for broader well-being (Chui, 2018; Datnow et al., 2022).

This approach advances epistemic justice by creating space for knowledge traditions surviving centuries of attempted erasure. It facilitates **collective agency** where communities reclaim cultural knowledge and healing practices (Barra & Jessee, 2024; Evans et al., 2022; Phillips et al., 2015; Puketapu-Dentice et al., 2017).

At the organizational levels, decolonial praxis entails reconfiguring power dynamics to include historically silenced perspectives. Practitioners in colonial institutions must engage ongoing reflexivity about **positionality**, recognizing that decolonization demands systemic transformation, not mere inclusion. This systematic application of critical reflexivity serves as an essential methodological tool to expose hidden institutional hierarchies, dismantle colonial biases, and ground community practice in genuine psychosocial accompaniment (Quiroz-Saavedra, 2026).

Together, these frameworks shape our understanding of decolonial healing, not as standardized intervention or technical toolkit, but as a dynamic, relational, and pedagogical process. Decolonial healing unfolds between people reclaiming wholeness, reconnecting to community, and co-creating new worlds of meaning and care.

This framework emerged through collaborative dialogue between three authors positioned across different colonial contexts: unceded Tāp Pīlam Coahuiltecan territory (South Texas), and Taungurung/Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung lands (Victoria/Melbourne, Australia). Our iterative process involved examining shared patterns of colonial harm and healing across these contexts, leading to the identification of the **Nine Rings of Relational Engagement** (see Figure 1). The medicine stories presented are composite narratives synthesizing experiences from our collective work in community mental health, organizational transformation, and decolonial practice across both geographical contexts, designed to protect confidentiality while preserving essential healing wisdom.

5. Eutierria Therapy

Eutierria Therapy represents an integrated decolonial healing framework that operationalizes these Earth-based and Indigenous principles through five interconnected pillars:

- Ecological & Relational healing
- Decolonial & Ancestral remembrance
- Communal & Interdependent connection
- Embodied & Somatic rootedness
- Material & Systemic regeneration

Drawing its name from Glenn Albrecht's concept of eutierria, the positive feeling of oneness with Earth and its life forces, our approach understands healing as fundamentally relational and systemic, unlike conventional models focused on individual symptom reduction

(Albrecht, 2019). It addresses not only personal distress but also the colonial wounds that have severed people from their ecological and cultural roots.

These pillars emerged from recognizing recurring patterns: clients who felt cut off from their land and ancestors, healers choosing between cultural authenticity and professional legitimacy, and organizations causing unintended harm.

The Eutierria Therapy framework connects with Indigenous Cultural Determinants of Health (Australian Government Department of Health, Disability and Ageing, 2021) that focus on relationship to Country, family bonds, cultural knowledge, and community self-determination. Eutierria Therapy works from this same understanding, that healing happens through restoring connections rather than fixing individual problems, and that cultural identity and land-based belonging are themselves forms of medicine.

Table 1. Eutierria Therapy

Pillar		Core Focus	Key Practices
Ecological & Relational		Right relationship with land, community, more-than-human world	Land-based healing, eco-somatic work, kinship restoration
Decolonial & Ancestral		Dismantling colonial harm, reconnecting to ancestral wisdom	Cultural reclamation, ceremony, language revitalization
Communal & Interdependent		Rebuilding kinship networks, mutual aid, shared responsibility	Healing circles, cooperative care, collective decision-making
Embodied & Somatic		Body wisdom, trauma healing, seasonal rhythms	Movement, breathwork, nervous system regulation, ritual
Material & Systemic		Structural change, <i>Land Back</i> , economic justice	Policy change, resource redistribution, governance transformation

Note: The complete framework, with detailed practices across nine interconnected rings, is provided in [Appendix A](#). We use the term “rings” instead of “levels” to reduce hierarchical implications. Figure 1, below, provides an overview of how the Nine Rings work within Eutierria Therapy. More information on each ring can be found in [Appendix B](#).

6 Medicine Stories

Rather than presenting "case studies" to understand the application of Eutierria Therapy, we offer medicine stories. These are healing narratives that emerge through the integration of ancestral wisdom, land-based practices, community connection, embodied awareness, and structural transformation (Dupuis-Rossi, 2020). As Indigenous traditions have long recognized, stories themselves carry healing power; they are not merely illustrations but active agents of transformation, connection, and remembering, and provide guidance for adaptive action.

Figure 1: Eutierria Therapy's Nine Rings of Relational Engagement



Note. This model represents an integration and decolonial adaptation of foundational community capacity and multi-level empowerment frameworks, drawing structurally on Kegler et al.'s (2008) community capacity framework, Rappaport's (1987) empowerment theory, and Perkins and Zimmerman's (1995) levels of analysis. Conceptually, the model's center is anchored in Arthur Blume's (2020) Indigenous American Psychology Paradigm (IAPP), utilizing a creation-centric framework that positions Creation—the sacred, interdependent web of all animate and inanimate life—as the foundational core from which all relational rings flow.

Kodó (2024) writes about how storytelling is a universal, foundational and cornerstone feature of Indigenous cultures and communities. He highlights how knowledge, traditions, and healing practices get passed down through generations as medicine that carries ancestral wisdom supporting the longevity of communities. What makes Indigenous storytelling powerful is how it can adapt to different situations while keeping its core meaning intact. It pushes back against colonial attempts to silence Indigenous voices and erase Indigenous

experiences, thus avoiding the pitfalls that prior generations have fallen into. Kodó (2024) highlighted the words of Cherokee author Thomas King, “You can’t understand the world without telling a story...stories are the cornerstone of our culture”. Storytelling becomes a tool of empowerment, creating spaces where marginalized voices can reshape dominant narratives. Stories function as medicine when they reconnect us to ancestral wisdom, ecological belonging, and collective truth (Duncan & Perry, 2022). As noted during the development of this framework, ‘each story, once tended and understood, becomes its own medicine. Each medicine-story can then be gifted back into the world for healing, weaving, and guiding others’. This understanding frames how we approach the following narratives: not as objects of study, but as living offerings that demonstrate the five pillars of *Eutierria Therapy*: ecological/relational, decolonial/ancestral, communal/interdependent, embodied/somatic, and material/systemic healing (Barra & Jessee, 2024; Kodó, 2024; Wildcat et al., 2014).

6.1 *Medicine Stories as Decolonial Practice*

Through medicine stories we have crafted composite stories that weave together experiences, cultural wisdom, and healing possibilities. These composite narratives synthesize our cross-cultural collaborative practice in healing work, community organizing, and organizational transformation, alongside the visionary potential we see emerging in decolonial practice. When we reference healing traditions such as *curanderismo*, *Hoodoo*, or land-based practices, we do so to acknowledge the rich diversity of ancestral wisdom that exists across cultures, not to claim representation of or authorization from specific communities. We want to show how different cultural healing practices deserve recognition as valid approaches, not lesser alternatives to Western therapy.

The composite structure reflects both our commitment to confidentiality and our understanding that stories function as medicine in Indigenous traditions. They guide us toward possibility rather than simply documenting what has already occurred. Each narrative draws from real experiences while pointing toward the transformative potential we believe exists when healing work centers ancestral wisdom, ecological relationship, and community accountability. In this way, our medicine stories serve as both reflection and invitation, offering pathways for others to consider in their own contexts while respecting the sovereignty of the cultural traditions that inform this work.

These composite narratives are woven from multiple experiences to protect anonymity while preserving the essential medicine they carry. They demonstrate how the Eutierria Therapy framework manifests across different rings of practice, from individual healing relationships to organizational and community transformation. Each story illustrates the synergistic interaction of the five pillars and the progression through *reflexive practice*, conscientization, *participatory competence*, *reIndigenization*, *living practices*, and *material shifts* that characterizes decolonial healing work.

We chose to tell our medicine stories at individual, civil participation, and organizational rings because decolonial healing doesn't happen in isolation - it spreads outward through connected webs of transformation. This fits with what community capacity researchers like Kegler et al. (2008) have observed about the connections between individual psychological changes, civic engagement, and community outcomes. Empowerment theorists like Rappaport (1987) and Perkins & Zimmerman (1995) have shown similar patterns; when people heal personally, it creates changes that ripple out to their work relationships and the institutions around them. We see similar interconnected rings in Indigenous community

building approaches, including Nation Building processes that use traditional governance to rebuild communities and support healing at both individual and collective levels.

6.2 Individual Ring – Medicine Story 1

The client came to therapy carrying a quiet fear that had followed them since childhood: the fear of being "weird." Schoolyard taunts, subtle messages at home, and broader societal judgment had taught them that their natural ways of thinking, being, and expressing were somehow outside acceptability. Beneath this social anxiety, another deeper fear surfaced: a profound fear of death that sparked panic whenever mortality came to mind.

We began with reflexive practice, creating space to trace these fears' roots without judgment. Together, we explored memories of childhood social dynamics and the client's experience of being one of the few children of their ethnic identity in school, subject to ridicule and exclusion. We followed these threads into family patterns: how a parent's dreams of becoming a musician were labeled 'weird' and crushed under pressure of social conformity. Through gentle, relational inquiry, the client began seeing that their struggles were not personal failings but symptoms of much larger systems of erasure and standardization.

Through this reflection, conscientization emerged. We explored how colonialism and **white body supremacy** had established rigid frameworks of "normalcy," casting anything outside the dominant mold as deviant (Menakem, 2017). The client began unlearning internalized shame of difference, recognizing that "weirdness" was not a flaw, but rebellion; a refusal to be flattened by systems demanding sameness.

The fear of death was also drawn into the light. Triggered by a recent experience, the client opened up about a childhood loss: the death of a close friend. The profound grief and fear that followed had never been fully processed, instead becoming an invisible undercurrent of dread. We honored this revelation by exploring participatory competence and co-created a ceremonial process through **Ketamine-Assisted Psychotherapy (KAP)**. The client chose symbols, set the tone, and entered the journey as an active participant in their own healing.

During the first ceremony, a deep shift occurred. Immersed in expanded awareness, the client felt a profound connection to **Mother Earth**, realizing that "*this body is only borrowed*," that life itself is a cycle of returning, not an ending. Death, once a source of terror, was reframed as transformation; a returning to the whole. This began reIndigenization and **cultural return**, even without a named Indigenous lineage, returning to **Earth-based wisdom**: seeing life and death as sacred, relational movements within a living world.

In a second KAP ceremony focused on the fear of being weird, the client brought a rose as an anchor. On the journey, they experienced a vision of the rosebush speaking: "*Bloom! All expressions of Creation are sacred.*" They returned carrying a new truth: that there is no true "normal," only the diverse blooming of existence. This truth was rooted into action as the client began setting clearer boundaries, speaking more freely, and allowing their uniqueness to show.

These internal shifts gave rise to material changes. The client, once fearful of social spaces, founded a men's circle with friends, a relational field where emotional openness, creativity, and nonconformity were welcomed. Rather than reproducing hierarchies of dominance and exclusion, this new space embodied the healing he had sought: relationality, mutual care, inclusivity, and honoring of diverse expressions of self.

Through this journey, all five pillars of Eutierria Therapy became living realities. Healing was **ecological and relational**, grounded in reconnection to Mother Earth; **decolonial and ancestral**, dismantling imposed standards of normalcy; **communal and interdependent**,

moving from isolation into heart-centered community; **embodied and somatic**, reinhabiting the body as a sacred site of life; and **material, systemic, and sumbiophilic**, shifting both internal world and relationship structures.

The client's journey reminds us that healing is not about conforming to dominant models of wellness or identity but about remembering what was always sacred: life in its diverse, relational, ever-blooming forms, and building spaces where that sacredness can thrive.

6.3 Civil Participation Ring – Medicine Story 2

In a time when healing had been fractured into separate territories (licensed professionals here, traditional practitioners there, cultural wisdom relegated to the margins) a small group of healers began to gather. They came from different lineages: a therapist carrying Puerto Rican **Espiritismo** in her bones, a counselor reconnecting with Irish folk traditions, a social worker exploring his **Xicano** roots, a therapist connecting with her grandmother's Hoodoo practices, and others whose ancestral health expertise had been dampened by professional training that taught them to choose between cultural authenticity and clinical legitimacy.

The circle began with reflexive practice; each healer sharing their **medicine story** of disconnection. They described feeling torn between two worlds, never knowing how to bridge the gap between what their grandmothers had taught them and what graduate school demanded. One member reflected, "I was trained to be a therapist, but my grandmother was a **sobadora**. I've spent years trying to figure out which one I'm allowed to be." Another shared how their Indigenous healing practices felt like secrets they had to hide in clinical settings, creating internal splits that left them exhausted and spiritually hungry.

Through these vulnerable sharings, conscientization emerged organically. The group began naming what they experienced as '**professional healing apartheid**': the systematic separation and hierarchical ranking of healing knowledge that had fractured healing into disconnected colonized compartments. The group came to understand how Western psychology had built walls between what counted as "real" therapy and the healing practices their families had used for generations, leaving practitioners with an impossible choice: professional acceptance or cultural authenticity. This was structural violence designed to maintain Western epistemological dominance, though it was framed as personal and professional inadequacy.

As awareness deepened, the group moved into participatory competence. Instead of just talking about their struggles, they decided to do something about it. Their monthly gatherings always began the same way: drums, quiet reflection, and an invitation for each person's healer ancestors to join them. What emerged was a space where different wisdom traditions could meet without anyone having to give up what made them who they were.

The reIndigenization and cultural return that followed was profound. Members began sharing their **medicine bags**, the cultural healing practices they carried: dreams as psychic connection from **Borikua** traditions, storytelling as healing tools, plant medicine knowledge, energy work, and ceremony. One member taught about her grandmother's use of sobadoras for physical and spiritual ailments. Another shared how his **Lao Theung** ancestors used seasonal agricultural rituals for community building and collective healing.

Living practices emerged both within the circle and in members' individual work. The group developed protocols for honoring ancestors at each gathering, creating sacred space that acknowledged healing as relational work involving more than just the humans present. Slowly, members began bringing pieces of their heritage into their day jobs. Some started meeting clients outside in nature, others wove breathwork and movement into sessions, and

several began planning treatment around seasonal rhythms. When institutional pushback came, they had each other's backs.

The material shifts were both subtle and revolutionary. Word spread quietly among the group; when someone needed a healer who understood their cultural background, they knew who to call. They advocated within their organizations for more flexible healing approaches, with some successfully integrating land-based practices into clinical work. The group established a small fund to support members attending cultural healing training and ceremonies. The real breakthrough came when they started teaching other healers what they'd learned. One workshop became two, then five, then a small but growing community of practitioners who had decided they wouldn't sacrifice their heritage for a license.

Through this journey, all five pillars manifested: ecological and relational healing through ancestral wisdom and land-based practices; decolonial and ancestral remembrance as members reclaimed suppressed traditions; communal and interdependent connection through mutual support; embodied and somatic rootedness through movement, breath, and ceremony; and material, systemic, and sumbiophilic transformation through new professional networks and institutional advocacy.

The group became more than a support group; it became a living laboratory for decolonial healing practice. What surprised them was how personal and political healing turned out to be the same work. As they became more whole as practitioners, other healers took notice. The group had become something bigger than they'd imagined; a quiet revolution in how therapy could honor both clinical training and ancestral knowledge.

This medicine story reminds us that healing the healers is essential work, and that practitioners who remember their own cultural medicine become conduits for collective transformation, weaving back together what colonization tore apart.

6.4. Organizational Ring – Medicine Story 3

In a mid-sized nonprofit mental health organization serving diverse communities, something began to shift when individual staff members started bringing their whole selves to work. At first the changes felt small and personal. There was a therapist who had started bringing her *curanderismo* practices back into her work. Several social workers had found their way into healing circles. Even some administrators were asking uncomfortable questions: *"Why does this place feel more like a factory than a place where people heal?"* These individual transformations created ripples that would eventually reshape the entire institution.

The organizational reflexive practice began when staff members doing their own decolonial healing work started asking questions. *"Why do we measure success through symptom reduction when our clients are asking for deeper spiritual healing?"* one therapist wondered. *"How can we serve Indigenous families while operating from completely Western frameworks?"* asked another. A social worker questioned why the organization's policies seemed designed to disconnect rather than connect people to their cultural resources.

These questions sparked staff workshops examining the organization's embedded assumptions. What they called a **"Cultural Memory Audit"** was just honest conversation about what they'd been doing wrong. They looked at their rush to fix people, their rigid hierarchies, the way they kept everyone separate and isolated. When they traced their organization's history alongside the colonial history of their region, the connections were impossible to ignore; their own policies were doing to clients what colonization had done to their families.

Conscientization came when staff finally said out loud what they'd been feeling: they were part of the problem. Here they were, trying to heal people while using the same systems that had hurt them in the first place. All those individual therapy sessions, standardized tests, and funding reports that reduced people to numbers was just another way of telling clients that their families, their cultures, their ways of understanding the world were wrong. It hurt to see it so clearly, but it also felt like freedom.

The shift into participatory competence happened when leadership, influenced by staff members' healing journeys, decided to restructure decision-making processes. They established a **Cultural Knowledge Working Group** that included staff, community elders, traditional healers, and clients' family members, giving this group real budget authority and programming influence. The Working Group was their attempt to stop having a few people at the top make all the decisions. Instead, they wanted the community (elders, healers, even clients' families) to have real say in how things worked.

ReIndigenization and cultural return manifested as the organization began embedding ancestral rhythms into daily operations. They started planning staff cycles using lunar phases rather than arbitrary quarterly reviews. Meetings began with ancestor remembrance or ritual storytelling led by community elders. Local Indigenous educators and ceremony keepers became partners, not just consultants, helping them rethink everything about how therapy could work. The building itself changed too! Healing gardens replaced sterile waiting rooms, spaces for ceremony appeared where there had been storage closets, and the walls came alive with artwork that meant something to the people who walked through the doors.

Living practices emerged as the organization created new rhythms honoring both staff and client wellbeing. They established seasonal rest and renewal weeks following local growing seasons. Staff meetings became something people wanted to attend. There was always food, always time to just be quiet together, always space for someone to share a story that mattered. Sessions with clients started differently too, with acknowledgments of the land, the ancestors, the sacred nature of the work they were doing together.

The material shifts were comprehensive and revolutionary. The organization redirected significant efforts to support community-led ecological events and land-based healing programs. They created a **Cultural Continuity Fund** that supported cultural workers and traditional healers as equal partners. Staff compensation was restructured to include payment for relational labor; time spent in community building, ceremony, and cultural learning that had previously been invisible and unpaid. Money became less of a barrier. They figured out sliding scales that worked, started mutual aid programs where the community could support each other. The old model of "pay per session or don't get help" gave way to something that looked more like how families and communities had always taken care of each other.

Through this transformation, all five pillars manifested institutionally: ecological and relational healing through seasonal rhythms and land-based programs; decolonial and ancestral remembrance by centering Indigenous healing wisdom; communal and interdependent connection through shared leadership; embodied and somatic rootedness via natural cycles and embodied workplace practices; and material, systemic, and sumbiophilic transformation through restructured economic models supporting regenerative relationships.

The transformation wasn't without challenges. Some funders questioned the shift away from standardized metrics. The process of decolonizing practices while maintaining legal compliance created ongoing tensions requiring creative navigation.

Yet the impacts were undeniable. Client satisfaction and healing outcomes improved dramatically when people could access culturally resonant services. Staff resilience increased as workers felt aligned with their values and supported in their wholeness. The organization became a model for other institutions, demonstrating that decolonial healing practices could transform entire systems of care.

This medicine story reminds us that institutional transformation is possible when individual healing work ripples outward into collective action. What they learned was that organizations don't have to be places where culture goes to die. When institutions line up with the healing wisdom they claim to support, they can become places where communities reclaim what was taken from them. It's not easy work, it takes guts, imagination, and the willingness to keep changing, but it opens the possibility of institutions that serve the whole person, the whole community, the whole web of relationships that make healing possible.

7. Medicine Stories as Transformative Practice

These medicine stories reveal that decolonial healing operates as an interconnected web spanning individual, relational, and organizational rings. Each narrative demonstrates how personal conscientization creates ripple effects that reshape professional networks and institutional structures, illustrating that individual healing cannot be separated from community and organizational transformation.

All three stories follow a consistent transformative progression: *reflexive practice* → *conscientization* → *participatory competence* → *reIndigenization* → *living practices* → *material shifts*. This sequence is not linear but cyclical, with each stage deepening and reinforcing the others. Individual transformation becomes the foundation for *collective action*, while *material shifts* create conditions for deeper personal and community healing. The client's journey from fear to founding a men's circle, the healers' movement from professional fragmentation to integrated practice, and the organization's shift from colonial structures to participatory governance all demonstrate this pattern.

The stories teach us that decolonial healing involves recovering what colonization severed: connection to land, ancestors, community, and cultural wisdom. Professional fragmentation, choosing between credentials and cultural authenticity, reflects broader colonial wounds. When therapeutic work amplifies marginalized knowledge systems, healing itself becomes an act of resistance and cultural reclamation. While our medicine stories focus primarily on North American contexts, similar patterns of healing and empowerment could emerge globally, such as Indigenous Nation Building processes in Australia that rebuild communities through traditional governance and Caring for Country practices.

Unlike clinical case studies that maintain professional distance, medicine stories function as active agents of transformation, inviting readers into relationship rather than observation. Stories honor Indigenous epistemologies where knowledge transmission happens through narrative, creating community among those who recognize themselves in the experiences shared.

Each story demonstrates the synergistic interaction of Eutierria Therapy's five pillars: Ecological & Relational healing provides the foundation while Decolonial & Ancestral work requires Community support and Embodied practices. Material & Systemic changes emerge naturally from integrating the other pillars. The pillars are not sequential steps but

interconnected dimensions of wholeness that manifest simultaneously across all rings of practice.

These narratives remind us that decolonial healing is not about techniques but about relationships: to land, ancestors, community, and our own wholeness. The Eutierria Therapy framework provides structure, but the stories show how healing unfolds in lived experience. Medicine stories themselves become part of the healing practice, creating webs of connection and possibility that extend far beyond individual therapeutic encounters.

Evidenced in these stories are what Rappaport (1987) surmised; that when people are empowered, it doesn't stop with them. It moves out to their workplaces and communities too. Rappaport (1995) also saw how powerful stories can be for people who haven't had a voice; they create new spaces where different perspectives can change things.

8. Implementation Challenges

Working Within Colonial Systems: Some practitioners ask how this framework applies within billing requirements and scope of practice limitations. We acknowledge these constraints while emphasizing that true decolonial healing requires systemic transformation, not adaptation to colonial structures that created the harm.

Though decolonial frameworks have gained recognition, implementation is far from straightforward. Individual resistance meets institutional inertia, and this work asks us to sit with discomfort, complexity, and contradiction on a daily basis. Decolonial healing doesn't follow a neat timeline. It's messy, full of breakthroughs that lead to breakdowns, moments of clarity followed by confusion. Our practice has brought us face-to-face with painful contradictions, institutional pushback, and moments of profound grief; experiences we've learned to welcome as necessary openings that deepen our collective wisdom and sharpen our discernment (Coff & Lampert, 2019; Dupuis-Rossi, 2020; Hoggett & Randall, 2018; Richardson et al., 2021).

The biggest obstacles come from institutions themselves; bureaucratic structures, fear of risk, and funding that's still tied to colonial ways of measuring success. We've seen mental health organizations talk about decolonial approaches while still requiring staff to use evaluation systems that only value Western ways of knowing. It's a paradox: practitioners are invited to work with Indigenous knowledge systems, then also required to prove it works using standardized tools that were never designed to capture what traditional healing actually does (Battiste, 2005; McDermott et al., 2021). The insistence on peer-reviewed evidence keeps marginalizing Indigenous wisdom traditions, in opposition to Western standards about what counts as "real" evidence (Anjum & Aziz, 2024; Williams & Shipley, 2023; van bavel et al., 2022). These constraints reflect symptoms of deeper colonial thinking that are at the core of how organizations work. Universities are especially bad at this, with promotion systems, publication requirements, and research methods that favor Eurocentric ways of thinking (Anjum & Aziz, 2024; Kinnamon, 2023).

Many organizations implement diversity initiatives that miss the mark, focusing on increasing the number of diverse faces in the room without questioning the fundamental assumptions about whose knowledge matters (Anjum & Aziz, 2024; Hellerstedt et al., 2024; Mayorga-Gallo, 2019). This surface-level approach ends with the ill-effects discussed by Samra (2023). Efforts to fix epistemic injustice actually make the problem worse by keeping the same hierarchies in place (Ncube, 2022; Samra, 2023). We've watched 'lived experience

research' usurped by people with more social privilege, particularly white people, even in mental health settings where we know racial inequities are huge problems (Hiebert, 2023; Levin, 2022; Samra, 2023). When organizations include Indigenous knowledge without actually sharing power, it becomes appropriation dressed up as inclusion (Adams et al., 2017; Cavalieri, 2018; Stirling et al., 2023).

The hardest challenge is trying to bridge completely different ways of understanding what makes knowledge valid. Western evidence-based approaches want randomization, control groups, and standardization; things that don't make sense when you're working with Indigenous knowledge systems that are all about relationships, context, and seeing the whole picture (Cavalieri, 2018; Johnston, 2024; Wilcox et al., 2023). This has adverse implications for clinical settings where practitioners have to prove their work is "effective" according to Western standards, while traditional healing operates from completely different ideas about how change happens, how long it takes, and what relationships have to do with it (Gopalkrishnan, 2018; Marques et al., 2022; Salmon et al., 2018).

Despite these challenges, powerful possibilities emerge in the spaces between dominant structures. People are getting creative, building parallel systems, finding ways to work within institutional constraints while still doing the real work (Kinnamon, 2023). Some institutions are starting to recognize oral knowledge transmission, relational methodologies, and community-defined outcomes as legitimate academic work. This shifts power toward Indigenous knowledge holders while still functioning within broader academic systems (Keane et al., 2023; Williams & Shipley, 2023). When organizations shift genuine authority to councils where Elders sit alongside community voices and those carrying lived wisdom, the resulting governance creates actual redistribution of institutional power (Benton, 2017; Richards, 2015).

A critical caution emerges around institutional co-option of decolonial language without genuine structural transformation. However, safeguards can include ensuring Indigenous and community voices hold decision-making power, measuring success through community-defined outcomes rather than institutional metrics, and maintaining accountability to the communities being served over the needs of funders or accrediting bodies.

Land-based learning and healing practices are opening up some of the most powerful possibilities for decolonial work. When education and therapy are moved out of buildings and onto the land, colonial ideas that knowledge and place are separate things become disrupted (Bowra et al., 2021; Kirmayer et al., 2009; Wildcat et al., 2014). Storytelling, ceremony, and cultural practices offer ways to transmit knowledge that honor Indigenous epistemologies while creating spaces for collective healing (Duncan & Perry, 2022; Johnson-Jennings et al., 2020). Those of us walking this path have had to accept a humbling truth: *decolonization offers no arrival point, no moment of completion; only an ongoing practice of shedding colonial conditioning, recovering what was taken, and birthing what might yet be possible.*

9. Conclusion

This paper has argued that healing must transcend clinical boundaries to become relational, ancestral, ecological, and systemic. We have provided a roadmap for how decolonial practices, when rooted in Earth-based identities and Indigenous knowledge systems, can transform mental health organizations from sites of adaptation into spaces of liberation and collective transformation.

Eutierria Therapy offers a framework grounded in five interconnected pillars: Ecological & Relational healing, Decolonial & Ancestral remembrance, Communal & Interdependent connection, Embodied & Somatic rootedness, and Material & Systemic regeneration. Through medicine stories, we have illustrated how these pillars manifest in both individual therapeutic relationships and organizational structures, creating conditions for authentic cultural engagement and collective action.

Our contribution extends beyond offering new techniques or interventions. We argue not for tweaks to existing models but for an entirely different understanding of what healing means, whereby personal wellness cannot exist apart from community bonds, ancestral continuity, and *right relationships* with the living world that sustains us. Reform efforts that accommodate colonial systems inadvertently perpetuate the very structures causing harm. Practitioners constrained by current systems can begin with individual elements while joining collective efforts toward the fundamental restructuring that authentic healing requires. This approach challenges mental health practitioners and organizations to move beyond inclusion toward transformation, beyond appropriation toward accountability, beyond managing symptoms toward remembering culture as medicine.

Decolonial healing is not a destination but a returning, a re-membering of what colonialism taught us to forget. It flows from the recognition that we are of the Earth, that knowledge lives in bodies and relationships, and that healing happens in community. The work of reconnecting individuals and communities to Earth-based identities and Indigenous knowledge *systems* offers pathways to more just, sustainable, and life-affirming futures.

We invite practitioners, educators, and organizations to engage with these frameworks not as abstract theories but as living practices that demand our full participation. Decolonizing mental health demands collective courage and the willingness to confront our own complicity, to question what we've been taught counts as "knowledge," and to build sanctuaries where marginalized wisdom traditions can exist without translation or apology.

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APPENDIX A

EUTIERRIA THERAPY MODEL

The **Eutierria Therapy Model** is organized by pillar, exploring how the Nine Rings of Relational Engagement) can look as they move through the process of reflexive practice to material shifts at each ring. You will notice that there are example practices throughout. These practices are NOT meant to be prescriptive. These are only meant to serve as examples to inspire critical thinking and creativity relevant to your own context.

Table S1. Pillar: Healing Must Be Ecological & Relational (Relationship)

Ring	Reflexive Practice	Conscientization	Participatory Competence	ReIndigenization & Cultural Return	Living Practices	Material Shifts
Creation / Source / Spirit	Reflecting on our sacred relationship to land, place, and life itself. Practice: Speak or pray to the land you come from. What do you remember, and what remembers you?	Awakening to the original instructions of ecological interdependence and kinship. Practice: Facilitate a Creation Story circle on how life began and our role within the living world.	Restoring reverence for the land as elder, teacher, and relation. Practice: Spend one moon cycle offering daily gratitude to a local landform or species.	Restoring cosmologies rooted in land, water, sky, and the unseen. Practice: Support revival of Earth-based origin teachings through story, language, or ritual.	Daily rituals of land greeting, prayer, or offering to reconnect to ecological kinship. Practice: Create a daily Earth greeting ritual based on your own lineage or location.	Funding sacred ecological sites, protection of bioregional ceremonial lands. Practice: Advocate for legal protection of sacred natural sites and Earth-honoring cosmologies.
Worldview / Cosmology	Reflecting on inherited beliefs about nature, separation, and dominion. Practice: Journal on what you were taught about land, nature, and your place in it.	Recognizing the colonial worldview that separated humans from nature. Practice: Map where those beliefs show up in education, religion, or culture.	Reclaiming ecocentric ways of knowing. Practice: Create a learning circle on ecological cosmologies (e.g. water cycles, kinship networks).	Reviving worldview systems that place land and more-than-human life at the center. Practice: Translate a common cultural proverb or story into ecological wisdom.	Incorporating Earth-centered wisdom into daily thought and speech. Practice: Learn and use land-honoring language in your daily conversations.	Integrating Indigenous ecological knowledge into school curricula and policy. Practice: Advocate for TEK (Traditional Ecological Knowledge) in local education.

Generational Time / Chronosystem	Reflecting on intergenerational disconnection from land. Practice: Interview an elder about their earliest memory of land, food, or weather.	Awareness of ancestral land displacement or loss. Practice: Research how your family's or community's relationship to land changed over time.	Facilitating intergenerational knowledge exchange on land-based practices. Practice: Create a family seed library or garden using ancestral methods.	Reclaiming ancestral seasonal rhythms and ecological knowledge. Practice: Restore a forgotten harvest or planting tradition with your family.	Family rituals aligned with seasonal or lunar cycles. Practice: Create a moon or solstice calendar to guide collective rest and tending.	Policy that supports generational land return and food sovereignty. Practice: Support or propose intergenerational land stewardship legislation.
Systemic / Structural Governance	Auditing public policies for ecological harm and disconnection. Practice: Conduct a Relational Harm Audit across land, housing, and transportation systems.	Seeing how laws, zoning, and policy uphold ecological violence. Practice: Host a Map of Disconnection forum on systemic disconnection from land.	Building community power to co-create environmental and land-use governance. Practice: Form a People's Assembly for Relational Infrastructure.	Restoring land-based law and ecological rights in public systems. Practice: Enact Relational Justice Codes recognizing land and species as legal kin.	Embedding seasonal and bioregional time into civic rhythm. Practice: Create a Relational Governance Calendar based on local ecology.	Funding public land stewardship and ecological restoration by Indigenous or frontline communities. Practice: Pass a Commons Investment Act to shift funding into land return and repair.
Community / Collective Field	Group reflection on ecological disconnection and inherited hierarchy. Practice: Host a seasonal land-based storytelling or reflection circle.	Awareness of collective disconnection from land and ecological trauma. Practice: Facilitate a community mapping activity of local ecological loss and repair.	Co-creating community gardens, land rituals, and eco-healing spaces. Practice: Form an intergenerational group to design a neighborhood food forest or pollinator habitat.	Reviving communal land-based traditions and rituals. Practice: Re-establish local seasonal gatherings rooted in cultural or ecological history.	Seasonal land gatherings, shared nature walks, grief rituals in nature. Practice: Host a community ritual during solstice or harvest season.	Pooling resources for land access, ecological repair, and nature-based healing. Practice: Start a community land fund or cooperative stewardship initiative.
Inter-Organizational / Institutional Systems	Institutional reflection on environmental impact and ecological justice accountability. Practice: Launch a cross-sector working group to assess ecological harm and design collective repair.	Recognition of systemic ecological harm and colonial land extraction. Practice: Convene local orgs to study how their policies affect ecological wellbeing.	Co-governance with Indigenous and ecological communities in policy and planning. Practice: Develop shared stewardship agreements across education, health, and environment sectors.	Land back initiatives, legal recognition of Indigenous ecological knowledge. Practice: Partner with Indigenous nations to return institutional land holdings.	Public land healing events, ecological calendars, bioregional design. Practice: Create shared bioregional calendars for institutional planning and public observances.	Funding Indigenous stewardship, ecological repair, and land return. Practice: Establish joint impact funds to support Indigenous-led ecological restoration and climate adaptation.

Organizational	Institutional reflection on whether structures support ecological connection. Practice: Staff reflection on the ecological and relational health of the workplace environment.	Awareness of colonial values embedded in systems and workflows (e.g. urgency, output-focus). Practice: Conduct a workplace audit of policies that disconnect people from land, time, or care.	Redesigning organizational culture to reflect ecological principles. Practice: Form a relational stewardship team to align policies with seasonal and land-based rhythms.	Embedding ecological teachings, land rituals, and relational roles. Practice: Include Indigenous ecological educators and ceremony keepers in org development.	Organizational time aligned with ecological cycles. Practice: Create rest and renewal weeks that follow local growing or weather seasons.	Investing in community relationships and shared care economies. Practice: Redirect a portion of the budget to support communal ecological events and land-based care.
Civil Participation / Relational Networks	Exploring ecological grief, responsibility, and wonder in relationships. Practice: Share stories of childhood land memory or place-belonging with family or friends.	Recognizing how relational disconnection mirrors ecological disconnection. Practice: Facilitate a circle: <i>'How have we forgotten our relationship to land, and each other?'</i>	Building mutual aid networks, care pods, collective healing teams. Practice: Form a kinship pod focused on ecological tending, shared meals, and skill-sharing.	Practices of reciprocity, daily care gestures, relational rituals. Practice: Create neighborhood rituals for tree planting, creek tending, or collective harvest.	Rhythmic shared meals, care calendars, healing councils. Practice: Establish a lunar or seasonal care rhythm in your household or network.	Shared childcare, food distribution, accessible healing resources. Practice: Start or support a neighborhood food co-op or land-based mutual aid network.
Individual	Reflecting on ancestry, privilege, and trauma in ecological belonging. Practice: Journal: <i>What was your earliest experience of the land, and how has that shaped you?</i>	Awareness of land disconnection, ecological grief, colonial view of nature. Practice: Track your daily relationship to land (walking, eating, shelter, breath).	Rebuilding agency in land relationship (e.g. choosing how to connect with the land). Practice: Commit to one reciprocal act with the land each day for a moon cycle.	Remembering ancestral land practices, kinship with Earth. Practice: Learn one ancestral ecological skill (e.g. planting, tracking, storytelling).	Daily grounding with Earth, water rituals, reciprocal nature connection. Practice: Begin or end each day with barefoot contact, water offering, or land blessing.	Shifting lifestyle/material habits to align with ecological values. Practice: Choose one area of material life (food, energy, transport) to make more relational and regenerative.

Table S2. Pillar Healing Must Be Decolonial & Ancestral (Remembrance)

Ring	Reflexive Practice	Conscientization	Participatory Competence	ReIndigenization & Cultural Return	Living Practices	Material Shifts
Creation / Source / Spirit	Examining cosmological memory and internalized spiritual disconnection. Practice: Speak aloud what you were taught about where you come from. Ask: <i>Who taught that? What else might be true?</i>	Awakening to cosmological harm through colonization. Practice: Host a story circle on ancestral Creation stories and their absence.	Reclaiming the agency to seek and reweave origin connection. Practice: Spend one moon cycle in relationship with a Creation story.	Restoring ancestral cosmologies, ceremonies, and origin teachings. Practice: Support revitalization of cosmological ceremonies.	Daily rituals that center origin and spirit. Practice: Create a Creation Ritual toolkit: water offerings, prayers, altars.	Resourcing ancestral cosmology as core infrastructure. Practice: Fund cosmology education and protect sacred origin sites.
Worldview / Cosmology	Interrogating inherited lenses and internalized epistemic hierarchies. Practice: Journal what you've been taught is 'myth' that might be ancestral truth.	Recognizing the colonial construction of dominant worldviews. Practice: Map embedded worldviews in institutions and families.	Co-creating alternative cosmologies and reclaiming ways of knowing. Practice: Design a Cosmology Reclamation Board.	Restoring ancestral epistemologies and cosmological frameworks. Practice: Support language revitalization focused on worldview concepts.	Ceremonial Embedding relational cosmologies in daily interaction and time. Practice: Use land-based calendars, story-driven meetings, ancestor-first greetings., ancestor altars, cultural revival gatherings	Institutional validation and integration of diverse worldviews. Practice: Integrate Indigenous cosmologies into curriculum and charters.
Generational Time / Chronosystem	Exploring how intergenerational memory and trauma live within us. Practice: Map your family timeline, including unknowns.	Naming systemic origins of generational rupture and loss. Practice: Facilitate a lineage unpacking circle.	Becoming an active bridge across generations. Practice: Write a Healing Lineage Letter to ancestors or descendants.	Restoring ancestral roles, time systems, and ceremonial rhythms. Practice: Establish seasonal or moon-based healing circles.	Daily or seasonal rituals for honoring those before and after. Practice: Make a Memory Cloth that holds dreams and prayers.	Material investments in cultural continuity. Practice: Fund mentorships and reparative intergenerational policies.
Systemic / Structural Governance	Auditing public systems for colonial harm; institutional self-inquiry into who systems were built for. Practice: Systemic	Making visible the erasure of ancestral lifeways in systems of education, law, and public health. Practice: Truth	Creating co-governance structures and reparative policymaking. Practice: Cultural	Restoring Indigenous and ancestral governance, legal, and healing frameworks in state and national policy.	Embedding ancestral rhythms and ceremonial observance into systems. Practice: Living Calendar of Cultural	Redistributing land, money, and policy authority to support ancestral return. Practice: Cultural Reclamation Fund for

	Reckoning Report with land acknowledgment and pathways for return.	Curriculum Mandate to teach colonial history and suppressed knowledge systems.	Governance Commission where ancestral leaders co-author policy in major public systems.	Practice: Restorative Policy Framework integrating local Indigenous law and relational justice.	Return guiding public institutions through seasonal and cultural time.	language, ceremony, governance, and education.
Community / Collective Field	Examining how memory is held or erased collectively. Practice: Build a community memory wall or altar to honor what's remembered and forgotten.	Recognizing how colonization fractured communal memory and belonging. Practice: Host a 'Story We Were Never Told' event.	Co-creating shared remembrance practices across generations. Practice: Form a Memory Circle Collective for story-based community rituals.	Restoring communal ceremonies, kinship roles, and cultural structures. Practice: Rebuild seasonal rhythms rooted in cultural traditions.	Infusing community life with memory-based gatherings and rituals. Practice: Include remembrance tables and oral stories at community events.	Funding and infrastructure for communal memory and cultural continuity. Practice: Redirect arts and culture budgets toward community storytelling and remembrance.
Inter-Organizational / Institutional Systems	Naming how systems collectively enact erasure across sectors. Practice: Multi-sector historical reckoning across education, health, and justice.	Becoming aware of coordinated cultural suppression in institutions. Practice: Create a knowledge equity audit between systems.	Building capacity for co-governance with Indigenous and ancestral knowledge holders. Practice: Form regional councils for cultural stewardship.	Restoring traditional knowledge across systems: health, law, education. Practice: Cross-sector fund for elders and ceremonial leaders.	Creating rituals and shared calendars across institutions. Practice: Establish shared ancestral and cultural observances in public systems.	Reallocation of land, power, and legitimacy to cultural governance. Practice: Rematriate institutional lands for ceremonial and ecological healing.
Organizational	Interrogating the worldviews and norms embedded in org culture. Practice: Conduct a Cultural Memory Audit within the team.	Awareness of organizational complicity in erasing cultural knowledge. Practice: Map institutional history alongside local colonial history.	Including cultural stewards in leadership and design. Practice: Establish a Cultural Knowledge Working Group with budget and influence.	Embedding ancestral rhythms and protocols into organizational life. Practice: Plan staff cycles using ancestral time systems or moon phases.	Daily and seasonal memory rituals integrated into work culture. Practice: Open meetings with ancestor remembrance workers and healers. or ritual storytelling.	Funding memory as infrastructure, not decoration. Practice: Create a Cultural Continuity Fund supporting cultural workers and healers.
Civil Participation / Relational Networks	Examining what's silenced or passed down through family, peer, and local relationships. Practice: Facilitate 'What	Naming survival strategies and their impact on lineage memory. Practice: Host a	Co-creating remembrance in family and chosen kinship circles. Practice: Go on a	Reviving relational roles rooted in tradition: auntie, keeper, teacher, witness. Practice: Host a	Building remembrance into relational rhythms. Practice: Light a candle for ancestors at shared	Redistributing relational energy and resources for ancestral reconnection. Practice: Share material gifts that support each

	We Don't Talk About' reflections in relational networks.	Hidden Lineage Teach-In with recipes, songs, or objects.	Kinship Memory Walk in a site of cultural or familial history.	storytelling night about ancestral community roles.	meals, or tell lineage-based jokes or stories.	other's healing and cultural remembrance.
Individual	Naming what has been inherited or lost, and what wants to return. Practice: Journal: <i>What parts of myself have I been taught to leave behind?</i>	Awakening to the historical and systemic causes of disconnection. Practice: Draw a colonial impact map of your life and identity.	Reclaiming agency to engage cultural healing. Practice: Choose one small act of reconnection this week (a prayer, recipe, or word).	Restoring identity as a descendant and future ancestor. Practice: Ask: <i>How would I live if I were from somewhere?</i>	Crafting personal rituals of reconnection. Practice: Create a weekly remembrance ritual to speak, sing, or light for your lineage.	Investing time and money in cultural continuity. Practice: Reallocate a portion of your calendar or budget toward ancestral repair.

Table S3. Healing Must Be Communal & Interdependent (Relationality)

Ring	Reflexive Practice	Conscientization	Participatory Competence	ReIndigenization & Cultural Return	Living Practices	Material Shifts
Creation / Source / Spirit	Reflecting on the origin stories of connection and belonging. Practice: "What if creation began in relationship?" Journal, pray, or draw what that could mean.	Awakening to how colonization severed relational origin stories. Practice: Host a circle exploring dominant vs. ancestral creation stories and what they center.	Reclaiming the capacity to co-create and remember communal origins. Practice: Facilitate a Creation Circle sharing stories that center relationship as the root of life.	Restoring origin teachings that affirm interdependence and kinship with all life. Practice: Support revitalization of communal origin ceremonies with elders or storykeepers.	Ritualizing our relational origins in daily or seasonal practice. Practice: Create a 'Web of Origin' altar honoring the beings and forces that helped birth you.	Resourcing the return of relational cosmologies in sacred and civic spaces. Practice: Support a Creation Heritage Fund to revitalize story, ceremony, and gathering.
Worldview / Cosmology	Examining the worldviews we've inherited about self, other, and connection. Practice: Create a belief map exploring messages about care, dependency, and strength.	Understanding how dominant worldviews pathologize interdependence. Practice: Group dialogue on myths of individualism, control, and "strength."	Building fluency in relational worldviews. Practice: Co-create a relational lexicon with your community.	Restoring cultural and ancestral worldviews rooted in kinship and collective thriving. Practice: Gather sayings or teachings from your lineage that reflect relational truths.	Embodying relational worldview in daily perception and language. Practice: Begin each day naming three relationships you're in and how you'll tend them.	Institutionalizing relational worldview in education, media, and leadership. Practice: Advocate for programs centering kinship-based leadership and cultural frameworks.
Generational Time / Chronosystem	Reflecting on relational patterns we've	Understanding how systems have shaped	Claiming the agency to evolve relational	Restoring relational teachings, roles, and	Practicing interdependence	Resourcing relational continuity across

	inherited or adapted. Practice: Create a relational lineage map exploring patterns and disruptions across generations.	generational relational dynamics. Practice: Trace key moments or systems that impacted care, bonding, or trust in your lineage.	inheritance. Practice: Write a relational legacy letter to a future descendant or chosen kin.	responsibilities from ancestral cultures. Practice: Reclaim a traditional kinship role or ritual from your lineage.	across generations. Practice: Host a family/community relational ritual: check-ins, gratitude, accountability, and care.	generations. Practice: Start or support a Relational Inheritance Fund for ceremony, caregiving, or reconnection.
Systemic / Structural Governance	Interrogating the design and relational ethics of public systems. Practice: Conduct a Relational Policy Audit in housing, healthcare, or education systems.	Understanding how colonial and capitalist systems criminalize care and community. Practice: Document a Relational Harm Timeline in your region or nation.	Designing systems by and for communities that practice interdependence. Practice: Form a Care Justice Council to shape relational and equity-centered policy.	Restoring ancestral governance models that center communal responsibility. Practice: Develop a Relational Governance Charter rooted in kinship and care.	Weaving communal rhythms and rituals into the public realm. Practice: Propose a seasonal Community Care Day for collective tending and reconnection.	Resourcing communal life as essential infrastructure. Practice: Pass or support a Communal Infrastructure Act for healing houses, grief spaces, and kinship centers.
Community / Collective Field	Reflecting on the state of relational life in our local communities. Practice: Host a Community Reflection Circle around care, safety, and disconnection.	Naming how gentrification, trauma, and systemic harm fractured collective care. Practice: Co-create a 'Map of Collective Fracture' and name entry points for repair.	Building community capacity for trust, repair, and mutual care. Practice: Form a Relational Weaving Circle to tend communal tension and celebration.	Reviving communal traditions and structures rooted in kinship and mutual care. Practice: Gather elders to remember and restore communal rhythms and seasonal gatherings.	Creating consistent rituals of communal connection. Practice: Host a seasonal gathering (solstice, harvest, grief, joy) aligned with local ecology.	Investing in infrastructure that supports communal co-regulation. Practice: Launch a Community Care Cooperative to resource food, rest, housing, and healing.
Inter-Organizational / Institutional Systems	Reflecting on how institutions relate or fail to. Practice: Convene a cross-sector reflection circle to explore current relational culture.	Naming how siloed systems replicate fragmentation. Practice: Map the 'relational gaps' in your city. Where do systems fail to bridge care?	Building capacity across sectors for collaboration rooted in trust. Practice: Form a Relational Systems Cohort to redesign protocols through shared values.	Bringing ancestral models of council, rhythm, and stewardship into institutional life. Practice: Develop a Shared Stewardship Framework guided by cultural knowledge	Creating rituals of inter-system accountability, reflection, and gratitude. Practice: Design an Inter-System Ceremony Calendar for seasonal gathering and	Resourcing systems to collaborate instead of compete. Practice: Create a Relational Ecosystem Fund to support cross-sector healing work and relationship repair.

				keepers.	recalibration.	
Organizational	Reflecting on the relational health of the workplace or group. Practice: Conduct a Relational Culture Audit with staff or team.	Naming colonial norms that govern culture (urgency, hierarchy, disconnection). Practice: Map where professionalism undermines vulnerability or care.	Building shared leadership, conflict transformation, and care systems. Practice: Form a Relational Stewardship Team to guide culture, values, and accountability.	Restoring relational rhythms and cultural practices in organizational structure. Practice: Co-create seasonal cycles, healing roles, or ceremonial rhythms with elders.	Integrating rituals of care, presence, and shared responsibility into daily practice. Practice: Anchor weekly relational rituals like shared meals, silence, or storytelling.	Funding relational labor and care infrastructure. Practice: Create a Relational Culture Budget to support rest, healing, ceremony, and joy.
Civil Participation / Relational Networks	Exploring how we show up in close relationships: home, friends, chosen family. Practice: Write a Relational Snapshot of your current web: anchors, fractures, needs.	Recognizing how systems and trauma shape our relationships. Practice: Host a circle to reflect on what we learned about care, conflict, and trust.	Practicing relational agreements, repair, and boundary setting. Practice: Create a Relational Covenant for your household, friend group, or local pod.	Reclaiming ancestral wisdom about family roles, rituals, and kinship care. Practice: Choose a cultural relational role to reinhabit and embody with intention.	Creating rhythms of connection, reflection, and celebration. Practice: Start a monthly Relational Maintenance Circle for check-ins, gratitude, and repair.	Investing in shared space, time, and support for relational wellbeing. Practice: Build a Mutual Aid Pod for emotional, material, and ceremonial care.
Individual	Exploring how you've been shaped in how you relate. Practice: Journal your patterns when close or disconnected. What happens, what's familiar?	Understanding your behaviors as adaptations, not deficiencies. Practice: Trace a relational reflex back to its cultural, familial, or systemic root.	Practicing small acts of relational courage, presence, and repair. Practice: Try micro-brave moments: asking for help, saying no, staying present.	Reconnecting with ancestral teachings about love, kinship, and care. Practice: Research or remember a relational teaching from your lineage, and live into it.	Building rituals of relational awareness, reciprocity, and care. Practice: Name one relationship you're tending each day. Ask: <i>What does it need?</i>	Structuring life to support connection, not just survival. Practice: Reorient your week to center relationship (calls, walks, meals, touch, repair).

Table S4. Healing Must Be Embodied & Somatic (Rootedness)

Ring	Reflexive Practice	Conscientization	Participatory Competence	ReIndigenization & Cultural Return	Living Practices	Material Shifts
Creation / Source / Spirit	Reflecting on the sacredness of the body. Practice: Hand to heart	Recognizing how colonization severed the sacred from the	Reclaiming our capacity to participate in sacred	Restoring ceremonial and cosmological practices of	Honoring the sacred body in daily rhythm.	Resourcing sacred embodiment as essential to community life.

	or belly, speak aloud: 'You are sacred. You are of the Earth. You are not a mistake.'	somatic. Practice: Ask: <i>Where did my people lose sacred connection to the body, and what might have come before?</i>	embodiment. Practice: Daily ritual of movement, breath, or prayer offered to presence, not productivity.	embodiment. Practice: Join or support traditional body-based spiritual practices (dance, sweat, shaking).	Practice: Create a 'Body as Altar' space to begin the day with gesture and gratitude.	Practice: Support or advocate for a Somatic Spirituality Fund to resource movement-based spiritual leaders.
Worldview / Cosmology	Reflecting on inherited beliefs about embodiment. Practice: Map your body story. What shaped how you view sensation, expression, rest, and movement?	Understanding how dominant worldviews suppress bodily wisdom. Practice: Group dialogue: <i>Who taught you what it means to be in a body and why?</i>	Practicing a worldview that honors the body as intelligent and valid. Practice: Pause daily and ask: <i>What's happening in my body? What is it asking of me?</i>	Restoring cultural ways of knowing that center body wisdom. Practice: Explore metaphors, rituals, and phrases from your lineage that reflect embodied worldview.	Living with perception rooted in bodily truth. Practice: Use somatic language to describe experience: <i>'My chest says no.'</i> <i>'My gut says yes.'</i>	Resourcing the emergence of somatic worldviews in education and leadership. Practice: Advocate for somatic training in early education, public health, and leadership development.
Generational Time / Chronosystem	Reflecting on inherited somatic patterns. Practice: Create a Somatic Family Tree that maps physical and emotional habits passed through lineage.	Recognizing systems that shaped ancestral disconnection from the body. Practice: Ask: <i>What emotions or bodily expressions were silenced in our family?</i>	Interrupting inherited somatic cycles with love. Practice: In a triggering moment, pause and ask: <i>Is this mine or ancestral? What's a new choice I can make?</i>	Restoring ancestral somatic practices and healing roles. Practice: Learn or reclaim a lineage-based movement, sound, or grief ritual.	Creating body-based rituals of ancestral honoring. Practice: Create a movement or breath practice to bless and transform an ancestral burden.	Resourcing intergenerational somatic healing. Practice: Fund somatic modalities that support lineage repair and communal embodiment.
Systemic / Structural Governance	Reflecting on how systems suppress or ignore the body. Practice: Conduct a Somatic Systems Audit: <i>How does one system reinforce disembodiment?</i>	Naming systemic disembodiment as a colonial design. Practice: Host a public dialogue: <i>'What systems taught you to ignore your body?'</i>	Creating governance rooted in somatic dignity and care. Practice: Form a Somatic Justice Council to shape body-aware legislation and policy.	Restoring Indigenous ceremonial and embodied practices in public decision-making. Practice: Develop a Ceremonial Governance Framework rooted in rhythm, land, and body.	Embedding somatic rhythms into policy and public process. Practice: Adopt a Public Rhythm Protocol that builds in collective regulation and processing.	Resourcing somatic presence and healing as a structural right. Practice: Pass a Somatic Infrastructure Act to fund healing centers, grief houses, and body-based public programs.
Community / Collective Field	Noticing the state of embodiment in shared spaces.	Recognizing how trauma and cultural norms have shaped	Building communal capacity for co-regulation and	Reviving communal body-based traditions and grief rituals.	Creating rituals of collective embodiment.	Resourcing community somatic infrastructure. Practice: Start a

	Practice: Host a 'Body of the Community' reflection circle.	collective disembodiment. Practice: Explore together: <i>'What systems taught us not to feel in public?'</i>	presence. Practice: Train a Community Co-Regulation Team to support grounding in gatherings.	Practice: Invite elders to guide a Community Body Memory Gathering.	Practice: Establish seasonal somatic practices like solstice shaking or harvest rest circles.	Community Somatic Commons to host movement, rest, and grief spaces.
Inter-Organizational / Institutional Systems	Assessing how institutions reinforce somatic fragmentation. Practice: Host an Inter-System Somatic Dialogue across agencies.	Recognizing how systems pathologize, punish, and silence embodiment. Practice: Create a Somatic Impact Map showing cross-sector somatic harm.	Building collaborative somatic literacy and response. Practice: Form a Somatic Integration Taskforce across fields and disciplines.	Restoring cultural and land-rooted embodiment into institutional systems. Practice: Create a Shared Cultural Embodiment Framework for public care.	Creating inter-system rituals and reflection. Practice: Launch a Somatic Civic Calendar with grounding and grief events across agencies.	Funding somatic coordination across sectors. Practice: Launch a Public Body-Based Healing Fund for inter-system healing work.
Organizational	Reflecting on how people feel in their bodies within the org. Practice: Conduct a Somatic Culture Reflection with staff or team.	Recognizing how urgency and 'professionalism' enforce disembodiment. Practice: Map the patterns of disconnection built into the workplace.	Building body-literate culture through co-regulation and rhythm. Practice: Form a Somatic Stewardship Team to shape policy and ritual.	Restoring ancestral practices into org flow and governance. Practice: Embed seasonal rhythm, song, and silence with support from cultural leaders.	Creating daily and weekly rituals of presence. Practice: Begin meetings with body check-ins, shared breath, or stillness.	Funding somatic wellness and embodied leadership. Practice: Create a Somatic Wellness Budget for retreats, healing time, and rest space.
Civil Participation / Relational Networks	Noticing how the body shows up in close relationships. Practice: Reflect on your relational body reflexes (freeze, fawn, collapse, brace)?	Recognizing how systems and trauma shaped how we express or suppress sensation. Practice: Host a conversation: <i>'What did we learn about the body in our house?'</i>	Practicing co-regulation, body boundaries, and felt connection. Practice: Co-create a Relational Regulation Agreement in your home or pod.	Reviving cultural kinship practices that center the body. Practice: Reclaim touch, sound, and care traditions like lullabies, rocking, or body-blessing.	Creating somatic rituals in shared rhythm. Practice: Begin a Body Circle Practice in your household: breath, movement, quiet, and presence.	Resourcing body-honoring spaces and schedules in family life. Practice: Create a Somatic Rest Zone in your home or neighborhood for presence and safety.
Individual	Exploring your embodied relationship with self. Practice: Write a letter	Recognizing systems that taught you to override or mistrust your body.	Practicing somatic awareness, regulation, and choice.	Reclaiming ancestral embodiment practices. Practice: Create a personal ritual rooted in	Rooting into daily body-honoring rhythm. Practice: Design a 5-	Making life decisions that support somatic wellbeing. Practice: Audit your

from your body to you. What has it been holding?	Practice: Trace a pattern (e.g. freeze or overwork) to its systemic or cultural roots.	Practice: Do daily body check-ins: <i>'What am I sensing? What do I need?'</i>	lineage (e.g., foot washing, rocking, resting with soil).	minute Rooting Ritual that you can do each day (breath, movement, presence).	calendar. Where are you abandoning your body, and what can shift?
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Table S4. Healing Must Be Material, Systemic, Sumbiophilic & Future-Building (Regeneration)

Ring	Reflexive Practice	Conscientization	Participatory Competence	ReIndigenization & Cultural Return	Living Practices	Material Shifts
Creation / Source / Spirit	Reflecting on your spiritual relationship with land, life, and time. Practice: Write a prayer to future descendants. What kind of ancestor are you becoming?	Naming how colonization severed sacred relationships with land and future. Practice: Host a circle on how colonization disrupted cosmology and origin memory.	Claiming agency in co-creating future worlds rooted in sacred relationship. Practice: Vision a Sacred Infrastructure Dream Circle with friends or kin.	Reviving Earth-based cosmologies and future-facing ceremonies. Practice: Support or participate in traditional or Indigenous ceremonies with consent.	Daily or seasonal offerings to Earth and future. Practice: Build a Regeneration Altar honoring future generations and land.	Resourcing ceremony, cosmological education, and sacred leadership. Practice: Support a Public Cosmology & Ceremony Fund.
Worldview / Cosmology	Exploring the frameworks that shape how you see land, time, systems. Practice: Journal: <i>'What worldviews live in me? What do they serve?'</i>	Uncovering dominant myths of scarcity, control, ownership, and separation. Practice: Dialogue circle on <i>'What cultural myths shape our behavior and belief?'</i>	Practicing worldview literacy and regenerating collective imagination. Practice: Facilitate a Worldview Shift Lab to map values and alternatives.	Restoring cultural lenses rooted in relationship and reciprocity. Practice: Host a Cultural Worldview Weaving Circle led by elders or lineage holders.	Living from worldviews that center kinship and sumbiophilia. Practice: Begin each day by naming: <i>'What am I in relationship with today?'</i>	Embedding regenerative worldviews into public life. Practice: Support Regenerative Curriculum development for youth and professionals.
Generational Time / Chronosystem	Reflecting on what you inherited and what you're shaping. Practice: Write a Legacy Reflection on your roles as ancestor	Understanding systemic rupture of intergenerational continuity. Practice: Host a Generational Justice	Building the capacity to act as a future ancestor. Practice: Create a Living Legacy Project (letter, ritual, garden,	Reclaiming Indigenous and ancestral frameworks for time, care, and responsibility. Practice: Revive or	Marking rhythms of intergenerational reflection. Practice: Practice a 3-Generations Ritual each season: what you	Creating systems of reparations and legacy-based infrastructure. Practice: Support a Generational

	and descendant.	Circle on structural inheritance and repair.	vow).	support a seasonal calendar or coming-of-age ceremony.	carry, tend, and seed.	Reparations Fund for community-rooted healing.
Systemic / Structural Governance	Examining how policies uphold or interrupt disconnection. Practice: Audit a system or policy for alignment with care, dignity, and life.	Naming how laws and policies reproduce colonial harm. Practice: Host a Truth Circle on the roots of a governance structure.	Training communities to co-create governance. Practice: Form a Community Power Redesign Council with multigenerational leaders.	Reviving land-based, ceremonial, and consensus-based forms of governance. Practice: Support Land-Based Governance initiatives led by Indigenous nations.	Creating civic rituals and seasonal policy rhythms. Practice: Propose a Healing Governance Cycle with rest, reflection, and course correction.	Redirecting funding and policy toward justice-rooted infrastructure. Practice: Launch or support a Regenerative Systems Fund.
Community / Collective Field	Reflecting on your community's rhythms of care and extraction. Practice: Map the Resource Roots & Leaks: What nourishes? What depletes?	Naming how community life was fragmented by colonial violence. Practice: Host a Community Story Weaving to explore lost rituals, roles, and land ties.	Building local systems for co-care, governance, and reciprocity. Practice: Create a Regeneration Circle to implement one project (land, food, housing, ritual).	Reviving traditional economies, ceremonies, and communal roles. Practice: Build a Community Seasonal Wheel with elders and cultural keepers.	Practicing community-based rhythms of repair and joy. Practice: Design a Community Care Calendar with tending days, grief rituals, and celebrations.	Funding communal infrastructure: land trusts, kitchens, healing spaces. Practice: Launch a Community Regenerative Fund governed by local members.
Inter-Organizational / Institutional Systems	Reflecting on how institutions relate, or replicate harm. Practice: Conduct an Inter-System Relational Audit.	Understanding how fragmentation across systems compounds harm. Practice: Host a Truth-Telling session with multiple agencies about shared impact.	Building capacity for cross-sector collaboration rooted in care. Practice: Create an Inter-System Stewardship Network.	Uplifting Indigenous models of regional governance and stewardship. Practice: Support a Land-Based Relational Council including ceremonial authorities.	Practicing rituals across sectors: grief, grounding, recalibration. Practice: Establish a Cross-System Ritual Calendar for collective pause and process.	Funding bridge builders and shared resource ecosystems. Practice: Launch a Regenerative Systems Trust governed across institutions and communities.
Organizational	Exploring how your org functions as a living ecosystem. Practice: Facilitate an Organizational Ecosystem Reflection.	Naming internal patterns of extraction, burnout, and imbalance. Practice: Host a Truth-Telling session on inherited colonial	Co-designing policies and rhythms that reflect care and ecology. Practice: Form a Regenerative Org Culture Team to tend	Infusing ancestral and Indigenous wisdom into internal flow. Practice: Co-create a Seasonal Practice Framework with elders or tradition holders.	Embedding slowness, celebration, and repair into organizational rhythm. Practice: Create a Regenerative Workflow Calendar	Resourcing healing, justice, and regeneration within budgets. Practice: Build a Regenerative Operating Budget

		norms.	rhythm and policy.		with intentional pacing.	including rest, ritual, and equity pay.
Civil Participation / Relational Networks	Reflecting on how we design care, access, and power with our people. Practice: Facilitate a Relational Infrastructure Check-in with your pod or family.	Naming inherited beliefs about ownership, control, and success. Practice: Circle dialogue on what values shape your care systems.	Practicing mutual aid, shared decision- making, and consent in community. Practice: Co-create a Living Relational Agreement with your close group or household.	Reviving roles and rituals rooted in kinship, interdependence, and land. Practice: Map or reimagine Traditional Relational Roles within your community.	Making regeneration a rhythm in family, friendship, and civic life. Practice: Establish a Monthly Relational Ritual with shared food, stories, and support.	Resourcing community care and kinship economies. Practice: Pool resources into a Relational Commons Pot for mutual and emergent needs.
Individual	Reflecting on whether your life aligns with your regenerative values. Practice: Write a Regenerative Life Statement and name one new commitment.	Naming where extractive culture has shaped your reflexes. Practice: Trace a burnout pattern to its systemic roots and ask what healing looks like.	Practicing regenerative choices in time, money, rest, and relationship. Practice: Build a Personal Regenerative Practice Menu across daily domains.	Reclaiming ancestral practices of rhythm, ceremony, and relationship. Practice: Restore one ancestral rhythm (e.g. blessing, rest, ritual) into your week.	Integrating embodiment, ecology, and care into your daily rhythm. Practice: Design a Regenerative Daily Rhythm with three touchpoints of sacred presence.	Redirecting your time, labor, and energy toward futures you believe in. Practice: Audit your last 30 days of time/money and choose one alignment shift.

APPENDIX B

UNDERSTANDING THE NINE RINGS OF THE EUTIERRIA THERAPY MODEL

Eutierria Therapy operates across nine interconnected rings, from the most expansive spiritual dimensions down to individual healing work. These rings function as nested systems - individual healing occurs within relational networks, which exist within organizations, which operate within larger institutional and systemic contexts, all held within cosmological and spiritual frameworks. While practitioners may focus their work primarily at one or two rings, decolonial healing happens simultaneously across all rings as different people engage the work that calls to them.

Creation / Source / Spirit

This ring recognizes the sacred nature of all existence and centers spirituality as fundamental to healing work. It encompasses our relationship with the Great Mystery - the unifying life force that flows through all beings, connecting humans with plants, animals, elements, and the breath of life itself. Healing work at this ring involves remembering our place within this sacred web of existence and honoring the spiritual dimensions that colonization has systematically suppressed. When you're engaging with ceremony, recognizing the sacred in everyday life, or working to restore spiritual practices that acknowledge our kinship with all creation, you're operating at this ring. This foundational understanding that all of creation is sacred informs and holds all other rings of healing work.

Worldview / Cosmology

This ring addresses the fundamental frameworks and belief systems that shape how we understand reality, knowledge, and our place in the world. Worldviews and cosmologies are intrinsically tied to specific bioregions. They emerge from what the land itself teaches us about how to live in *right relationship* with particular places. Cultural stories, seasonal ceremonies, and traditional knowledge systems develop as communities learn from their local ecosystems over generations. Decolonial work here involves questioning Western epistemological dominance, which often ignores these place-based ways of knowing, and reclaiming Indigenous and ancestral cosmologies rooted in specific landscapes. When you're examining inherited beliefs about nature, challenging assumptions about what counts as valid knowledge, integrating Earth-centered wisdom from your bioregion, or learning from the land where you live, you're operating at this ring.

Generational Time / Chronosystem

This ring focuses on healing across time: connecting with ancestral wisdom, addressing intergenerational trauma, and taking responsibility for future generations. It challenges the Western colonial tendency to privilege the present moment as if it were separate from and more important than other times. Work here involves shifting from linear time concepts toward cyclical understandings where past, present, and future coexist and inform each other. This means recognizing that ancestral wisdom lives within us now, that our present

actions ripple across generations, and that future generations are already present in our decision-making. Healing work involves understanding how historical forces have shaped present conditions and reclaiming cultural practices that honor the continuity between all times. When you're exploring family patterns, engaging with ancestral healing, making choices that consider seven generations ahead, or practicing seasonal ceremonies that connect you to cyclical time, you're working at this ring.

Systemic / Structural Governance

This ring encompasses the policies, laws, and institutional frameworks that govern society. Decolonial healing work here involves transforming systems of governance to center Indigenous knowledge, community accountability, and ecological relationship. When you're engaged in policy advocacy, institutional reform, or creating alternative governance structures that embody decolonial values, you're operating at this ring.

Community / Collective Field

This ring addresses healing within local communities and collective spaces. Work here involves rebuilding communal bonds, creating mutual aid networks, and fostering collective practices that support shared wellbeing. When you're facilitating community healing circles, organizing neighborhood support systems, or creating spaces for collective cultural reclamation, you're working at this ring.

Inter-Organizational / Institutional Systems

This ring focuses on relationships and coordination between different organizations and institutions. Decolonial work here involves building partnerships that center marginalized communities and creating collaborative structures that challenge institutional hierarchies. When you're working on cross-sector initiatives, building coalitions between organizations, or creating networks that share resources and power, you're operating at this ring.

Organizational

This ring addresses healing within specific organizations, institutions, or structured groups. Work here involves transforming organizational culture, policies, and practices to embody decolonial values. When you're changing workplace policies, shifting organizational decision-making processes, or creating more equitable internal structures, you're working at this ring.

Civil Participation / Relational Networks

This ring encompasses healing within personal relationships, family systems, and chosen communities. Work here involves building authentic connections, practicing mutual care, and creating relational patterns that support collective thriving. When you're working on family healing, building chosen family networks, or creating intimate spaces for cultural reclamation, you're operating at this ring.

Individual

This ring focuses on personal healing, self-awareness, and individual transformation. While decolonial healing recognizes that individual wellness cannot be separated from collective wellbeing, personal work remains essential. When you're engaging in therapy, personal reflection, or individual practices that reconnect you to your cultural identity and Earth-based belonging, you're working at this ring.

Understanding the Interconnections

These rings are deeply interconnected. Transformation at one ring both supports and requires changes at others. Individual healing creates capacity for stronger relationships, which enables more effective organizational change, which contributes to systemic transformation. Similarly, policy changes at the systemic ring create conditions that support organizational shifts, which make space for community healing, which nourishes individual wellbeing. Eutierria Therapy recognizes that sustainable decolonial healing requires attention to all rings, even as individual practitioners may focus their efforts where they feel most called to contribute.

APPENDIX C

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Borikua. Derived from “Boriken,” the Indigenous Taino name for the island of Puerto Rico, “borikua” refers to the Indigenous peoples of Puerto Rico.

Collective Agency - The power that emerges when communities and groups join forces to create change and transformation. Within decolonial work, this kind of shared power develops as marginalized communities reclaim their cultural knowledge and healing practices, moving past individual empowerment toward the kind of collective strength that can reshape entire systems (Phillips et al., 2015).

Coloniallingualism - The persistence of colonial legacies and imperial mindsets in language and educational systems, creating inequitable practices where dominant linguistic frameworks silence or marginalize Indigenous and non-Western ways of knowing. This concept describes how language itself becomes a tool of ongoing colonization, privileging certain ways of speaking and understanding while devaluing others.

Coloniality - The ongoing structure of racialized, Eurocentric dominance that shapes knowledge systems, institutions, and subjectivities, persisting beyond the formal end of colonial rule. Unlike colonialism as a historical period, coloniality refers to the enduring patterns of power that continue to privilege Western ways of knowing and being while marginalizing Indigenous and other non-Western epistemologies (Readsura Decolonial Editorial Collective, 2022).

Communal & Interdependent - One of the five pillars of Eutierria Therapy that incorporates healing practices that focus on collective wellbeing rather than individual success. This pillar recognizes that we can't truly heal alone. Our personal healing is connected to the health of our communities. It emphasizes working together, sharing responsibility, and understanding that individual problems often reflect larger breakdowns in community connection.

Conscientization - A process of awakening critical consciousness in which individuals and communities recognize the oppressive structures shaping their lives and develop the capacity to act with purpose and solidarity to transform those conditions. Rooted in Paulo Freire's liberatory pedagogy, conscientization moves beyond individual awareness to collective understanding of how colonial, economic, and social forces perpetuate inequality, enabling people to shift from adaptation to oppressive systems toward active resistance and transformation (Freire, 1970/2005).

Critical Adult Learning Theory - A theoretical approach that positions adult learning as inherently political and contextual, emphasizing critical reflection as central to transforming experience and questioning assumptions that maintain oppressive systems. Rather than viewing education as neutral skills acquisition, this theory envisions learning as a site of democratic participation and liberatory action through dialogue and problem-posing education (Brookfield, 1986; Wilson & Kiely, 2002; Evans et al., 2022; Ismail, 2018).

Cultural Continuity Fund - A funding mechanism that supports cultural workers and traditional healers as equal partners in the healing process, recognizing their expertise alongside licensed professionals. This fund provides financial resources for cultural practices, ceremonies, traditional healing modalities, and the preservation of ancestral knowledge within therapeutic settings. Rather than treating cultural healing as supplementary to Western approaches, the Cultural Continuity Fund positions

Indigenous and traditional practices as core components of comprehensive care, ensuring that cultural workers receive fair compensation for their essential contributions to community healing.

Cultural Knowledge Working Group - A decision-making body that includes not only organizational staff but also community elders, traditional healers, and clients' family members, given real budget authority and influence over programming decisions. This group ensures that cultural wisdom and community voices have genuine power in shaping how services are designed and delivered, moving beyond tokenistic consultation toward shared governance rooted in community accountability and cultural knowledge systems.

Cultural Memory Audit - An organizational assessment process that examines how institutional practices reflect colonial values and perpetuate cultural erasure. This audit involves mapping the organization's history alongside local colonial history to identify where policies and procedures disconnect people from their cultural resources. Staff explore embedded assumptions about urgency, hierarchy, and disconnection, recognizing how organizational structures may inadvertently reproduce the same systems of harm that clients are healing from.

Cultural Return: The process of reconnecting with ancestral wisdom, practices, and ways of knowing that have been suppressed, interrupted, or lost through colonization, assimilation, or cultural disruption. Cultural return involves reclaiming traditional healing practices, languages, ceremonies, and worldviews while adapting them to contemporary contexts. It is a practice of integrating ancestral knowledge with present-day life to restore cultural wholeness and identity versus an attempt to return to an idealized past.

Curanderismo - A traditional Latin American healing system that blends Indigenous, African, and Catholic spiritual practices. Curanderismo involves the use of rituals, herbal medicine, massage, prayer, and ceremony to address physical, spiritual, and emotional ailments. Curanderos/as (healers) work with clients to restore balance through culturally rooted practices that view health holistically.

Decolonial & Ancestral - One of the five pillars of Eutierria Therapy that incorporates healing work that fights against colonial damage while helping people reconnect with their ancestral wisdom and cultural practices. This means both resisting systems that have cut people off from their cultures and actively reclaiming the Indigenous knowledge, ceremonies, and ways of life that colonization tried to destroy.

Decolonial Praxis - The active and ongoing relationship between action and reflection within the process of "disrupting colonial knowledge production and severing connections to colonial ways of being and knowing." This approach involves questioning Western knowledge assumptions, prioritizing marginalized voices and Indigenous knowledge systems, and fostering critical consciousness about structural causes of suffering while promoting collective action for broader well-being (Aladejebi, 2021, p. 17; Datnow et al., 2022; Phillips et al., 2015).

Earth-based Identity(ies) - A fundamental way of being where one's sense of self emerges through deep relationship with the natural world, understanding personhood as constituted through ongoing dialogue with land, water, and the more-than-human community. Unlike Western individualism, Earth-based identities position humans within an extended network of life rather than separate from it, often emerging from

local landscapes through extended collaboration with specific environments (Parker, 2012; Chan et al., 2019).

Earth-based Wisdom: Knowledge systems that emerge from direct, sustained relationship with specific landscapes and ecosystems. This wisdom recognizes the interconnectedness of all life and understands that human wellbeing is inseparable from the health of the natural world. Earth-based wisdom includes traditional ecological knowledge, seasonal practices, plant medicine, and ways of living that honor the reciprocal relationships between humans and the more-than-human world.

Ecological and Ancestral Sense-making - The process of understanding oneself and one's environment through relationship with land and cultural lineage, recognizing that the environments people must navigate include not only immediate social and political contexts but also the colonial legacies that have severed connections to land, culture, and ancestral wisdom. This extends beyond Brookfield's foundational understanding of critical reflection to include the recovery of Earth-based ways of knowing that position human identity within the web of life rather than separate from it, enabling healing through reconnection to place and cultural memory (Brookfield, 1986).

Ecological & Relational - One of the five pillars of Eutierria Therapy that incorporates healing that sees humans as part of nature, not separate from it. This approach recognizes that our wellbeing depends on healthy relationships with land, water, plants, animals, and the cycles of the natural world. Healing happens through rebuilding these connections and learning to live in right relationship with the earth.

Embodied & Somatic - One of the five pillars of Eutierria Therapy that incorporates healing work that brings the body back into the center of therapeutic practice. We hold our lived experiences, traumas, and wisdom in our bodies, and they can only be address in ways that go beyond just talking. Embodied and somatic work uses movement, breath, touch, and awareness of physical sensations to help people reconnect with their bodies as sources of knowledge and healing, challenging the Western split between mind and body.

Epistemic Injustice - The systematic devaluation and marginalization of knowledge from people in socially disadvantaged groups. Introduced by Miranda Fricker, this concept explains how dominant Western perspectives overshadow and devalue the knowledge and experiences of marginalized individuals and communities through structural inequalities in knowledge production and validation (Fricker, 2007; Samra, 2023).

Epistemic Privilege - The unquestioned credibility and authority granted to those in positions of power, where their knowledge claims are accepted without scrutiny simply through institutional position. This privilege reinforces existing hierarchies and perpetuates the marginalization of alternative perspectives, particularly affecting how Indigenous and other marginalized knowledge systems are received in academic and clinical settings (Hiebert, 2023; LeBlanc & Kinsella, 2016).

Espiritismo - A syncretic spiritual healing tradition blending Indigenous, African, and Catholic practices, particularly prominent in Puerto Rican and Caribbean communities. This tradition involves communication with spirits, ancestral guidance, and healing practices that integrate prayer, ritual, herbal medicine, and spiritual counseling to address both physical and spiritual ailments.

Eutierria Therapy - Our integrated decolonial healing framework that operationalizes Earth-based and Indigenous principles through five interconnected pillars: ecological/relational healing, decolonial/ancestral remembrance,

communal/interdependent connection, embodied/somatic rootedness, and material/systemic regeneration. Drawing its name from Glenn Albrecht's concept of "eutierria," ("the positive feeling of oneness with Earth and its life forces where the boundaries between self and the rest of nature are obliterated and a deep sense of peace and connectedness pervades consciousness"), this approach recognizes that healing cannot occur in isolation from land, community, and cultural wisdom (Albrecht, 2019, p. 199).

Hermeneutical Injustice - A form of epistemic injustice that arises when gaps in collective interpretive resources disadvantage someone's capacity as a social knower. This occurs when marginalized groups lack shared vocabularies and concepts to articulate their understanding in ways recognized by dominant perspectives, often because the available interpretive frameworks are shaped by the very systems that exclude them (LeBlanc & Kinsella, 2016).

Hoodoo - An African American folk magic tradition rooted in West and Central African spiritual systems, blended with Indigenous American plant knowledge and adapted through the experience of slavery and resistance. Hoodoo involves the use of roots, herbs, candles, and ritual practices for healing, protection, and spiritual work, passed down through generations as a form of cultural survival and empowerment.

Indigenous Data Sovereignty: The right of Indigenous nations and peoples to control the collection, ownership, and application of data about their communities, territories, and resources. This includes the authority to decide how Indigenous knowledge is gathered, stored, accessed, analyzed, and used, ensuring that data governance aligns with Indigenous values, protocols, and self-determination. Indigenous data sovereignty recognizes that data about Indigenous peoples should benefit those communities and be managed according to their cultural frameworks and priorities, rather than being extracted or controlled by external researchers or institutions.

Indigenous Knowledge Systems - Complex, sophisticated epistemologies developed through generations of careful observation and relationship with specific territories. These dynamic, evolving systems encompass values, worldviews, practical skills, and governance structures that have sustained communities over millennia. Unlike Western knowledge with rigid disciplinary boundaries, Indigenous knowledge systems integrate spiritual, ecological, social, and practical dimensions as interconnected rather than separate (Turner et al., 2022).

Indigenous Peoples - Throughout this paper, we use "Indigenous Peoples" to encompass the original inhabitants of lands across the globe who continue practicing distinct cultural, social, and political systems tied to their ancestral territories. We selected this term because it allows us to speak inclusively about Indigenous communities worldwide, and it carries recognition in international settings. Yet we know that language around identity remains complicated and often contentious. Different communities and regions hold strong preferences for terms like Native, First Nations, Aboriginal, Campesino, Traditional Custodians, among many others. These choices often signal crucial differences between political identity (like tribal citizenship), social belonging, and cultural connection. When we say "Indigenous Peoples," we aim to respect the sovereignty, self-determination, and rich knowledge traditions of these communities while acknowledging that every community deserves to name itself according to its own values and history.

Ketamine-Assisted Psychotherapy (KAP) - A therapeutic approach that combines the use of ketamine, a dissociative medication, with psychotherapy to facilitate healing from trauma, depression, and other mental health conditions. The ketamine creates an expanded state of consciousness that can help clients access deeper insights and process difficult emotions while working with a trained therapist in a controlled, supportive setting.

Land Back - A global movement to return stolen Indigenous lands back to Indigenous peoples as a way of restoring their sovereignty over traditional territories. Land Back aims to cultivate renewed awareness and practice of how we relate to land, by moving away from ownership and extraction towards Indigenous ways of caring for the earth. The movement acknowledges that true healing from colonization requires actual material changes, and not just acknowledgments or apologies.

Land-based Healing: Therapeutic practices that recognize the healing power of direct relationship with the natural world, including specific territories, landscapes, and ecosystems. This approach integrates connection to land, water, plants, and animals as essential components of wellness, drawing from Indigenous knowledge systems that understand healing as inseparable from place. Land-based healing may include activities such as ceremony on the land, traditional plant medicine, seasonal practices, gardening, time in nature, and learning from the land as teacher. This framework challenges clinic-based models by recognizing that disconnection from the natural world contributes to individual and collective trauma, while reconnection with land can restore balance and promote holistic wellbeing.

Land-based Practices - Healing and educational approaches that center direct relationship with land as fundamental to wellbeing and cultural continuity. These practices involve learning from and with the natural world through activities like seasonal ceremonies, ecological restoration, traditional food gathering, and spending time in nature for therapeutic purposes. Land-based practices recognize land as teacher and relative rather than resource, understanding that reconnection to place is essential for healing from colonial trauma and cultural disconnection. They integrate Indigenous knowledge systems that emerge from specific territories and bioregions.

Lao Theung: An ethnic group Indigenous to the mountainous regions of Laos, also known as "mid-slope Lao." The Lao Theung are one of the three main ethnic groups in Laos and maintain distinct cultural practices, languages, and traditional knowledge systems related to highland agriculture, forest management, and spiritual practices. They have historically faced marginalization and cultural suppression.

Liberatory Action - Collective practices that emerge from critical consciousness to actively challenge and transform oppressive systems rather than simply adapting to them. Unlike individual empowerment approaches, liberatory action recognizes that personal healing cannot be separated from community transformation and systemic change. This action is grounded in solidarity, cultural reclamation, and the creation of alternative structures that embody the values of justice, reciprocity, and collective care that oppressive systems have disrupted (Evans et al., 2022; Phillips et al., 2015).

Living Practices - The embodied integration of decolonial healing principles into daily rhythms, relationships, and ways of being. These practices emerge organically from the reconnection to ancestral wisdom and Earth-based identities, manifesting as ceremony, seasonal awareness, community care rituals, and cultural protocols that honor the sacred dimensions of life. Living practices are not techniques to be applied but organic

expressions of transformed consciousness that weave healing into the fabric of everyday existence.

Mad/Madness - Terms reclaimed by activists to resist the dominant medical framework that pathologizes alternative understandings of mental and emotional experiences. Originally referring to states that medical discourse labels as "mental illness," these terms have been reclaimed for self-identification and resistance against "psy discourses" that marginalize lived experience and alternative ways of knowing (LeBlanc & Kinsella, 2016).

Majority World - A term used to describe regions formerly called "developing countries" or "Third World," recognizing that these areas encompass the majority of humankind. Coined by Bangladeshi photographer Shahidul Alam, this term challenges Western-centric language that positions the Global North as the standard against which other regions are measured. (Shafaieh, n.d.)

Material Shifts - Concrete changes in structures, resources, policies, and power distribution that emerge from and support decolonial healing work. These shifts move beyond individual transformation to create tangible changes in how organizations operate, how resources are distributed, and how power is shared. Material shifts include policy changes, economic redistribution, governance transformation, land restoration, and the creation of alternative institutions that embody decolonial values rather than reproducing colonial hierarchies.

Material & Systemic - One of the five pillars of Eutierria Therapy that incorporates healing work that changes actual structures (policies, budgets, power arrangements) not just attitudes or awareness. This pillar recognizes that real healing requires concrete changes in how institutions work, how resources get distributed, and who gets to make decisions in organizations and communities.

Medical Deficit Model - A framework dominating medical and psychiatric discourse that systematically stifles the voices and interpretive tools of ill and disabled persons. This model assumes pathology rooted in individuals rather than examining social structures, leading to pathocentric testimonial injustice where experiences of marginalized groups are dismissed based on negative stereotypes (Chapman & Carel, 2022).

Medicine Stories - Healing narratives that carry wisdom through the integration of ancestral knowledge, land-based practices, community connection, embodied awareness, and structural transformation. Unlike Western case studies that extract and analyze experience, medicine stories preserve relationality, context, and cultural meaning, functioning as both historical record and visionary blueprint for decolonial healing.

Mental Decolonization - The process of reclaiming suppressed knowledge traditions and producing liberatory knowledge grounded in the lived experiences of oppressed communities. This involves questioning Western knowledge assumptions and reconnecting with cultural wisdom that colonization has systematically disrupted (Levin, 2022; Readsura Decolonial Editorial Collective, 2022).

More-than-human Community - An expression popularized by eco-phenomenologist David Abram referring to the worlds of different beings co-dwelling on Earth, including and surpassing human societies. This concept recognizes the agency and relationality of animals, plants, landscapes, and natural forces as active participants in the web of life rather than passive resources (Abram, 1996; Lainé & Morand, 2020).

Mother Earth: A relational understanding of the planet as a living, breathing entity deserving of respect, care, and reciprocity rather than exploitation. This concept, found across

many Indigenous cultures using various names, recognizes Earth as the source of all life and emphasizes humans' responsibility to live in harmony with natural cycles and ecosystems. Mother Earth represents a fundamental shift from viewing land as property or resource toward understanding it as sacred relative and teacher.

Nine Rings of Relational Engagement: The integrated structural architecture and active therapeutic pathway within Eutierra Therapy designed to analyze systemic colonial harm and mobilize holistic healing. Moving away from Eurocentric psychological models that isolate the individual psyche at the center, this framework introduces a relational, nested structure that positions Creation (The Existence & Mystery of Life) as the foundational core from which all life and humanity radiate. The framework utilizes non-hierarchical, concentric rings to operationalize an egalitarian order, reflecting the paradigm that because all Creation is sacred, mutual equilibrium and relationship are its natural consequences. Functioning bi-directionally, the rings serve as both an analytical tool to map institutional or structural violence and a clinical mechanism where balance continuously ripples outward to transform systems, and inward to restore individual wellbeing (Blume, 2020).

Oppressive Structures - The interlocking web of colonial, economic, political, and social forces that perpetuate inequality and keep certain communities marginalized while others maintain dominance. Within decolonial frameworks, these structures include both visible institutions and the less obvious forces: embedded ways of thinking, cultural assumptions, and everyday practices that elevate Western knowledge while pushing Indigenous and other marginalized wisdom to the margins. Through conscientization, individuals and communities develop awareness of how these structures shape their lived experiences and gain the capacity to challenge and transform them. Oppressive structures operate at multiple levels, from individual internalized beliefs to organizational policies to broader societal systems, requiring both personal and collective action for meaningful change.

Participatory Competence - The capacity to actively engage in co-creating healing processes and transformative structures rather than remaining passive recipients of intervention. It requires building the muscles for collective decision-making, tackling challenges side by side, and creating accountability that serves the whole community. Participatory competence emerges as individuals and communities move beyond conscientization to become active agents in designing the solutions, practices, and structures that will support their healing and liberation.

People of the Global Majority - A collective term coined by Rosemary Campbell-Stephens that refers to Black, Asian, Brown, dual-heritage, and Indigenous communities who represent approximately eighty percent of the world's population yet face marginalization under Western-dominated power structures. Campbell-Stephens developed this language to challenge deficit narratives by recognizing these communities' numerical strength rather than accepting "minority" status imposed by colonial frameworks. The term disrupts Western-centric perspectives that position whiteness as the norm, acknowledging instead that white, European-descended populations constitute the global minority. Campbell-Stephens intended this empowering terminology to help people connect with their heritage and authentic power rather than viewing themselves through marginalized identities. We affirm that individuals should control how they identify themselves. We support individuals' right to self-determination in how they wish to be identified. Our usage of "People of the

Global Majority" aims to challenge colonial thinking while respecting the diverse experiences within these communities (Campbell-Stephens, 2020).

Positionality - The web of social, political, and cultural circumstances that form a person's identity, worldview, and relationship to power structures. Within decolonial practice, grappling with positionality requires honest, ongoing examination of how your place in society shapes what you see and understand, as well as the ways you might be entangled in systems that cause harm to others.

Professional Healing Apartheid - The systematic separation and hierarchical ranking of healing knowledge that fragments healing into disconnected, colonized compartments. This system creates artificial boundaries between "evidence-based practice" and cultural healing, forcing practitioners to abandon their ancestral wisdom to gain professional legitimacy. Professional Healing Apartheid maintains Western epistemological dominance by treating Indigenous and traditional healing practices as inferior or illegitimate, while presenting this structural violence as personal and professional inadequacy rather than systemic discrimination.

Psychocentric View - A perspective that assumes mental and emotional distress comes from individual pathology rather than social structures or systemic harm. This view, common in Western mental health approaches, treats psychological differences as problems located within the person rather than examining how oppressive systems create conditions for suffering.

Psychological Contracts - The frameworks or understandings that organizations construct regarding mental health and wellness, often viewed through a colonial lens. In colonized contexts, these contracts can inadvertently perpetuate colonized mindsets and accommodate oppressive agendas rather than challenging them (Masud, 2019).

ReIndigenization - The active process of reconnecting with and revitalizing Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and healing that colonization has systematically disrupted or suppressed. This involves both individual and collective work to reclaim ancestral wisdom, cultural practices, land-based relationships, and traditional governance structures. ReIndigenization is not about returning to a romanticized past but about integrating ancestral knowledge with contemporary realities to create regenerative futures that honor Indigenous sovereignty and ecological relationships. **Note:** *"Indigenous" is intentionally capitalized to honor it as a proper identity and to disrupt standard colonial grammar conventions.*

Reflexive Practice - The foundational stage of decolonial healing that involves honest, ongoing examination of one's positionality, assumptions, and complicity within oppressive systems. This practice creates space to trace the roots of personal and collective wounds without judgment, exploring how colonial structures have shaped individual experiences and professional practices. Reflexive practice differs from simple self-reflection by explicitly connecting personal experience to broader systems of power and oppression, creating the foundation for deeper transformation (Freire, 1970/2005).

Relational Stewardship Team: An organizational governance structure that prioritizes relationships, community wisdom, and collective care over hierarchical decision-making. This team guides organizational culture and accountability through principles of shared leadership, consensus-building, and responsibility to both human and more-than-human communities. It represents a shift from top-down management toward governance models rooted in Indigenous and community-based approaches to collective stewardship.

Re-membering - The process of reconnecting with suppressed knowledge systems and cultural wisdom that colonization has systematically disrupted. This involves both individual and collective work to reclaim ancestral connections and Earth-based identities as part of decolonial healing practice.

Right Relationship - From an Indigenous American Psychology Paradigm, this concept refers to proper connections with community and place, interpreted through both the life experiences of Elders and "the collective body of experiences that have been passed down through the stories of ancestors." Right relationship recognizes that wellbeing emerges through fostering appropriate connections rather than individual achievement (Blume, 2020).

Sense of Self - The fundamental understanding of what constitutes individual identity and personhood. Western psychology has traditionally operated from a "separate self" paradigm that views individuals as bounded, distinct entities separate from their environment; what Indigenous psychology recognizes as an artificial construct unsupported by scientific evidence of our constant molecular exchange with the world around us. In contrast, Indigenous and Earth-based perspectives embrace a "relational self" that emerges through ongoing connection with land, community, and the more-than-human world, where boundaries between self and nature dissolve into interconnectedness. This shift from separate to relational selfhood is central to Eutierria Therapy, which recognizes that healing occurs through reconnection rather than individual "fixing." Understanding selfhood as relational transforms therapeutic practice by moving from individual symptom focus to addressing disconnection from land and community as sources of suffering, shifting the locus of healing from internal pathology to relational restoration (Blume, 2020; Albrecht, 2019).

Sobadora - A traditional Mexican healer who works with physical and spiritual ailments through massage, energy work, and bodywork techniques. Sobadoras use their hands to diagnose and treat conditions, combining physical manipulation with spiritual healing practices, often serving as community healers who address both bodily pain and spiritual imbalances.

Socially Critical Consciousness - Awareness of the structural causes of suffering combined with commitment to collective action for broader well-being. This consciousness emerges through decolonial praxis and challenges mainstream perspectives that advise adaptation to oppression rather than transformation of oppressive systems (Phillips et al., 2015).

Sumbiophilic - Relating to sumbiophilia, the love of living together and recognition of the interconnected nature of all life, including the microscopic organisms that live within our bodies. This concept, from Glenn Albrecht's work, extends beyond simple love of nature to embrace the understanding that humans are ecosystems themselves, home to trillions of bacteria and fungi that shape our health, moods, and wellbeing. Sumbiophilic practices honor these symbiotic relationships and our fundamental interconnectedness with all life forms (Albrecht, 2019).

Testimonial Injustice - A form of epistemic injustice where someone's ability to share knowledge gets undermined because of the listener's prejudices about their identity. In mental health settings, this shows up when people from marginalized backgrounds find their experiences dismissed or treated as less credible simply because of who they are (their race, class, diagnosis, or other aspects of identity that trigger bias in those with power) (Chapman & Carel, 2022; LeBlanc & Kinsella, 2016; Samra, 2023).

White Body Supremacy - A system of oppression that positions white bodies and white ways of being as the standard of normalcy, health, and acceptability while pathologizing or marginalizing other forms of embodiment and cultural expression. This concept, developed by Resmaa Menakem, describes how racism operates not just through ideas but through the body, creating somatic patterns of dominance and trauma that get passed down through generations and embedded in institutions (Menakem, 2017).

Xicano - A term for Mexican-American identity that centers Indigenous ancestry and rejects colonial Spanish influence. The "X" replaces the colonial "Ch" to honor pre-Columbian Indigenous languages and represents a political identity that emphasizes connection to Indigenous roots rather than European colonial heritage.

Zero-point Ontology - A Western philosophical perspective where individuals are seen as isolated entities existing prior to and separate from their environment. This contrasts with relational ontologies common in Indigenous worldviews, where identity emerges through relationship with place, community, and the more-than-human world (Readsura Decolonial Editorial Collective, 2022).

APPENDIX D

AUTHORS' POSITIONALITIES

The authors approach this work from diverse professional backgrounds that span clinical practice, organizational development, and community psychology, positioned across different colonial contexts while maintaining shared commitments to decolonial healing and community accountability.

Javier Omar Meléndez-Vega is a licensed clinical social worker (Texas and California) and the founder of Eutierria Therapy. He provides individual and group therapy, ketamine-assisted psychotherapy, clinical supervision, and coaching services through a decolonial framework. His practice integrates Indigenous American Psychology Paradigm principles with nature-based and somatic approaches. As a Borikua Taino, he works at the intersection of clinical practice and cultural reclamation, serving diverse communities while honoring ancestral wisdom and supporting land-based healing approaches.

Josephine Palermo is an organizational and leadership development consultant, Director of Geared for Growth, and former senior leader in multinational corporate environments. With a Ph.D. in Organisational Psychology, she specializes in building strong leaders, teams, and culture in organizations, particularly during large-scale change and transformation. As a Partner in 6 Team Conditions Australia and Founder of Geared for Growth Consulting, she champions purposeful business leadership and cultural transformation. Her work extends beyond corporate consulting to include master executive coaching, teaching bellydance, and facilitating women's empowerment retreats, reflecting her commitment to holistic approaches to leadership and feminine power.

Iain Butterworth has some 35 years' experience in bringing planners, policymakers, researchers and citizens together to build more liveable, healthier cities and communities. Born in England, he and his family were able to migrate to Australia in 1967 for £10 under the then 'White Australia' Policy. He grew up in Boorloo/Perth, on the unceded lands of the Whadjuk Nyoongar People. With a PhD in community psychology (environmental adult education), Iain has extensive experience working within and across government, higher education, and the community sectors. A Fulbright Scholar, he has expertise in the WHO Healthy Cities program. He was also an Urban Scholar with the UN Global Compact - Cities Programme, from 2017-2021. He helped to establish the Victorian Liveability research program led by RMIT's Healthy Liveable Cities Group in Melbourne, Australia. He is past President of the Australian Fulbright Alumni Association, and is a member of the Society for Community Research and Action (Division 27 of the American Psychological Association). In recent years, Iain has been working closely with First Nations consultants and NGOs to identify opportunities for Indigenous Nation Building and self-determination.

Iain is editor and lead author of *The Psychology of Place: Rebuilding Sense of Place in a Postcolonial World*, to be published in mid-2026 by Cambridge University Press. Using Indigenous worldviews, psychology, population health, architecture, and planning, this cross-disciplinary book explores our 'sense of place' to address climate, environment, liveability, and reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples.

Collaborative Approach: In relation to this specific work: Javier approaches this research as a practicing therapist actively implementing Eutierria Therapy frameworks in clinical settings; Josephine contributes as an organizational consultant facilitating decolonial transformation processes within institutions; and Iain engages as an academic-community

partner documenting and evaluating these collaborative healing approaches. Our medicine stories and organizational examples draw from these direct practice experiences while maintaining appropriate confidentiality.