

Resisting the “attachment disruption” of colonisation through decolonising therapeutic praxis: Finding our way back to the Homelands Within

 pacja.org.au/2020/12/resisting-the-attachment-disruption-of-colonisation-through-decolonising-therapeutic-praxis-finding-our-way-back-to-the-homelands-within-2

[Return to Articles](#)

Riel Dupuis-Rossi

Introduction

Whether it concerns matters as sweeping as governance or as intimate as loving ourselves and others, colonisation forces a model of relationship on Indigenous Peoples that is fundamentally about domination and subjugation. This form of genocidal violence infuses every level of our existence. There is no consent. We have never—nor will we ever—consent to the theft of our lands, relatives, and ways of being. This is at the very heart of the “attachment disruption” of colonisation and, with it is instilled a deep, and often unidentified, power wound in our Indigenous hearts, minds, spirits, and bodies. From this place of power wounding, our relational and social options are quite stark: (1) we can remain in a state of terror and disempowerment for the majority of our lives; (2) we can reach for colonial forms of institutional and relational power in an attempt to fill the void where our Indigenous power once was and, in so doing, try to defend against the incessant fear and terror caused by it; or, (3) we can defy all genocidal odds and attempt to reclaim a sense of Indigenous power that is based in respect, honouring, love, and courage. This article is about the latter. It is about developing therapeutic responses to the “attachment disruption” of colonisation that support Indigenous Peoples—with a particular focus on Indigenous clients—in finding our way back to ourselves by reconnecting to our Indigenous identity, ways of being, and relationships, and, by extension, to our Indigenous power. Decolonising means finding our way home to our own hearts—what I refer to as the *Homelands Within*—and to the ancestral territories and cultural ways of relating to them that are based in love and respect (Brendtro, Brokenleg, Van Bockern, & Bird, 1991; Brokenleg, 2012; Brokenleg & James, 2013).

Through attempted annihilation and assimilation, colonisation’s main purpose is to force us into a state of forgetfulness about who we are and where we come from—if we survive to see another day, that is. Under colonisation, we have been knocked down, repeatedly. It is this repeated violence that mirrors the relationship imposed by the settler state on Indigenous Peoples. Under colonial rule, we have not been free to be our genuine and authentic Indigenous selves, let alone thrive as nations and confederacies of Peoples (Brokenleg & James, 2013; Alfred, 2005).

Colonisation attacks all that is sacred about our relationships and infuses them with forms of hierarchical power that are extensions of the settler state that has dominated much of our existence. The terror, despair, anguish, sense of helplessness, and hopelessness, as well as the deep shame that we experience in relationships, are a result of this colonial domination and violence. With that said, it is important to acknowledge that our relational imprints go back further and much deeper than the last 500 years. Thousands of years of governance, community, and culture based in respect for the Earth and *all of our relations* live in the deep recesses of our consciousness. It flows in our blood and it lives in our bones. It is the essence of how we stand in our Indigenous power and how we relate to one another authentically and genuinely. I believe this is why there is such a deep sense of connectedness among Indigenous Peoples across Turtle Island: thousands of years of love and solidarity do not get erased by 500 years of colonial violence, no matter how systematic the attack (Dupuis-Rossi, 2018).

The “Attachment Disruption” and Chaos of Colonisation

Colonial domination, desecration, annihilation, and assimilation violate Indigenous understandings and beliefs about natural law and defy the basic sense of order, honour and trust that our ancestors developed over thousands of years on Great Turtle Island (Alfred, 2005; BraveHeart, 2003; Duran, 2006). As *Onkwehon:we* Peoples, this sense of order guides us to live in respectful relationships with *all of our relations* in our own Homelands. But, genocidal warfare and attempted annihilation brutally and violently disconnected us from our lands, relations, relatives, and ourselves. Within the therapeutic relationship, this is what Eurocentric psychology refers to as “attachment disruption” (Carriere & Richardson, 2009; Choate, Crazybull, Lindstrom, & Lindstrom, 2020; Keller, 2018; Timimi, 2014). Although this psychological concept is useful in acknowledging the individual distress caused by disconnection in our relationships with caregivers and family, it is limited and limiting as it concerns Indigenous Peoples and decolonising psychology (Choate et al., 2020; Timimi, 2014). There exists a vast body of literature critiquing the limitations of attachment discourses and research (Keller, 2018). For our purposes, however, it is important to clarify the limits of the concept of “attachment” in that it both: (1) conceals the violence of colonisation by locating relational distress in individual pathology occurring within the limited and limiting social construct of the European nuclear family (Carriere & Richardson, 2009; Reynolds, 2010); and, (2) obscures Indigenous sacred connections and relationships to land, culture, spirit, community, and the interconnectivity to all our relations (Choate et al., 2020; Dudgeon, Bray, D’Costa, & Walker, 2017).

The ways that colonial violence invades and occupies (Hill, 2009) our Indigenous relations creates layers of chaos for Indigenous Peoples. We are now living with the consequences of all that we hold sacred being systematically attacked over the last 500 years. We may use different words to describe this anguish and despair. Some of us call it “anxiety” or “depression”. Others refer to it as “trauma” and still others refer to it as a “sense of worthlessness” and “failure”. Regardless of the colonial words and concepts we employ to try to describe our deeply felt collective pain, we all know it in one shape or

form (Dupuis-Rossi, 2018). As we will see in the following case illustrations, the impossibility of internally managing the disruptive chaos of historic and current colonial violence is often what underlies “dissociative defenses” (Brantbjerg, 2015), “lateral violence” (Duran, Duran, & Brave Heart & Yellow Horse-Davis, 1998) and “addictions” (Brave Heart, 2003).

A Decolonising Therapeutic Practice: Central Principles

Mainstream trauma literature describes the energetic structure of trauma as both a powerful vortex and an *eternally present past* (Levine, 2011). Accordingly, the safe harbour of a supportive therapeutic relationship creates a counter vortex to the trauma, and the moments of being held, relationally, allow our systems to reorganise by re-establishing the sense of connectedness and order that was lost when we were violated (Brantbjerg, 2008; Brantbjerg, 2015; Fosha, Siegel, & Solomon, 2009; Levine, 2011; Ogden & Fisher, 2015; Schore, 1994; Siegel, 2010; van der Kolk, 2014). Indigenous clients have shared with me, time and time again, the importance of working with an Indigenous therapist who has not only directly experienced the oppression and suffering of colonisation and racism but is also able to offer culturally-centred and decolonising ways of facilitating their healing from these forms of violence. This is a central principle in structuring safety in decolonising therapeutic work. It is another way to counter the systematic attempts to annihilate us as a People and to disrupt our abilities to be connected to each other in safe and culturally-centred ways. The importance of creating a decolonising therapeutic alliance based on safety and respect cannot be overstated.

Another aspect of the mainstream trauma literature that I have found useful is the emphasis on supporting a client’s autonomic nervous system in orienting to the fact that the trauma has ended (Fosha, et al., 2009; Hart, Nijenhuis, & Steele, 2006; Levine, 2011). Supporting an Indigenous client’s system to orient to the fact that the abuse they suffered in childhood has ended has proven effective when done with humility and in a non-authoritative way. In my practice, I have learned from clients that the pain and distress related to the abuse they suffered in childhood, which is a direct consequence of colonialism, is so overwhelming that it is re-experienced on a daily basis and comes to control and limit their very participation in life itself. It is the eternally present past (Levine, 2011). Indigenous clients are often quite alone, isolated, and overwhelmed in their attempts to internally manage the impacts of this form of colonial violence. For those Indigenous clients who have suffered prolonged and severe abuse and neglect in childhood (the effects of which are defined by mainstream psychology as “complex trauma”), supporting and assisting their systems to orient to the fact that the childhood abuse has ended and they are relatively safe at present can bring a great deal of relief. Living in a constant state of survival, terror, and fear is extremely taxing energetically and physiologically—especially when the abuse began at the most vulnerable time in people’s lives. Providing Indigenous clients some relief from these states by orienting to the relative safety of the present also frees up their energy and can help ground them in their skills and capabilities as adults. This is a necessary starting point from which to begin the deeper healing work.

While this mainstream therapeutic approach of orienting to the cessation of violence has its usefulness, it does not acknowledge that the violence of colonisation and the attempted genocide against Indigenous Peoples is actually ongoing. Yes, the violence endured in childhood may have ended but the incessant colonial attacks on our persons and communities still continues to overdetermine our daily existence. The need to focus therapeutic attention on the impact of both historical and ongoing colonisation adds a great deal of complexity to our work as Indigenous therapists; however, it is a critical aspect of supporting a client's healing process. For an Indigenous client to begin to trust themselves again—to trust their instincts, intuition, their own knowledge, judgement, and capacities (Brantbjerg, 2015)—it is critical that all of the ways that they suffer the effects of ongoing colonial violence are named and witnessed (Dupuis-Rossi, 2018). This is a vital step in orienting to what has happened and continues to happen to us as individuals who are members of a collective of Indigenous People.

Incorporating an analysis of historical and ongoing colonisation is the basis of a decolonising therapeutic integrity. As such, it is crucial to realise that the “attachment disruption” of colonisation is both historical and contemporary, complex, and multifaceted. Within the first 100 years of colonisation, 95 percent of our Indigenous relatives, who numbered in the many millions across Turtle Island, were massacred (Alfred, 2005; Brave Heart & DeBruyn, 1998; Monture-Angus, 1999; Thorton, 1987;). The “prison of grass” (Cardinal, 1969) that is the reserve system, which was established by way of brutal genocidal warfare, forced dislocation from our vast traditional territories, and mass starvation, cut us off from our Homelands and our ways of sustaining ourselves (Alfred, 2005; Monture-Angus, 1999; Thorton, 1987;). The *Indian Act* of 1876, which created reservations, suppressed our governance systems, disinherited our traditional matriarchal leaders, and imposed membership and status requirements that disrupted our kinship systems (Lawrence & Anderson, 2005; Monture-Angus, 1999). The profound grief and pain of these violations continues to be felt but is often unacknowledged in mainstream therapy. Creating space in session for the connections Indigenous clients have to their ancestors is important both in addressing the pain of disconnection and loss but also to reclaim the cultural inheritances contained in these connections. The “attachment disruption” of colonisation, which is the forced disconnection from land, community, and culture imposed on Indigenous Peoples needs acknowledgement in decolonising therapy sessions. Making space for this pain is critical in order to facilitate a process of reclamation whereby Indigenous clients are supported in reconnecting to a sense of belonging in our own ancestral and traditional Homelands (Brave Heart, 2003; Brave Heart & DeBruyn, 1998; Dudgeon et al., 2017; Duran, 2006).

The residential school system and the “sixties scoop”—two governmental policies that interned Indigenous children in public institutions and private settler homes with the sole purpose of forced assimilation (Coates & Wade, 2007)—stole children from their parents, extended family, and communities. The theft of Indigenous children left subsequent generations struggling to feel safe, loved, valued, and connected to their closest relatives. The theft of children is the form of colonial violence that is most acutely felt by Indigenous clients, in part because it is more recent, but also because it was a wholesale

institutional attack on our closest and most intimate familial and community bonds. It is the violence of assimilationist policies and practices that most directly attacked Indigenous people's right to love and to be loved within our families and by our communities. Reclaiming our right to love and be loved within the safe harbour of a decolonising therapeutic approach is a form of resistance to the colonial invasion and occupation of our closest bonds (Wade, 1997). Decolonising our hearts from this colonial invasion, theft and occupation of our Indigenous love is imperative. In order to understand our greatness as a People, the magnitude of what we have been through over the last 500 years must be acknowledged and validated. From there, we can reclaim the truth of how much greater we are than the atrocities we have suffered (Dupuis-Rossi, 2018; Hill, 2009).

My therapeutic practice has taught me that violence embeds itself deeply in our consciousness, more so when it is unacknowledged and uninterrupted. The totalising power of state violence on Indigenous collectives has been particularly impactful and far reaching. It seeks to teach us that relationships are about power and that power is about domination. When we are subjected to domination, we become (at least temporarily) disconnected from ourselves. Our attention, our life force, the use of our capacities, are focused on surviving the violence. If we are not provided the safety, *the refuge*, the support and the acknowledgement to really know how we have been affected and to heal from those effects, unconscious patterns set in that reference the experience of domination (Brantbjerg, 2015; Duran, 2006; Hart, et al., 2006). When the "attachment disruption" of colonisation is not named then we conflate the chaos of colonisation with who we are as Indigenous persons or who we have become as a People. This is why it is so important that therapeutic work focus on orienting to the fact that colonisation and attempted genocide are ongoing and to discern and differentiate their impacts from who we truly are as a people (Dupuis-Rossi, 2018).

To this end, the mainstream literature on complex trauma underscores the therapeutic value in developing skills of differentiation and discernment. These skills are crucial when it comes to reclaiming our ability to orient ourselves and become present to our lives in the wake of "trauma"—which for our purposes concerns colonial violence (Ogden & Fisher, 2015; Siegel, 2010; van der Kolk, 2014). For Indigenous people, developing these skills is important on an individual level; but, perhaps even more importantly, these skills are critical at a collective and cultural level. At this historical juncture, we are called upon to identify the chaos of colonisation and how it lives in us. To truly be free of the ways that colonisation becomes internalised, and then re-enacted on ourselves, our families, and our communities, we are tasked with discerning what is the toxicity of colonial power and differentiating it from what is our authentic Indigenous power (Dupuis-Rossi, 2018). From this place, it becomes possible to externalise the burdens of colonisation and to give them back to where they belong—which is with the forces of colonisation (Monture-Angus, 1999). This process is quite unique to each Indigenous client, as is illustrated in the case vignettes described in the following section.

Finding our way back to our own ways, as Indigenous Peoples, functions in the same way that a counter vortex of a safe decolonising therapeutic relationship does— only on a collective level. This entails reconnecting to a felt sense of knowing what the days before colonial occupation and war were like and who we were as Indigenous Peoples at that point in time. The knowledge of this time lives within us; more often than not under layers of pain and betrayal, but it is there. And it is this ancestral, territorial, cultural, and relational knowing that must become the point of reference. It is this experience of our existence on our own terms that must be recalled and centred. As Indigenous Peoples, it is a way of asserting the truth of our authentic selves in the face of colonial violence and it is a way of asserting that we continue to exist in the face of ongoing attempted annihilation (Alfred, 2005; Dudgeon et al., 2017; Duran, 2006). To *call forward the greatness of our ways* and the peace and respect that lay at the foundation of our traditional self-determining Indigenous societies references and enlivens a cultural and ancestral relational imprint that becomes the foundation of our healing—a cultural and relational imprint that is no longer about colonial violence and domination (Dupuis-Rossi, 2018).

Case Illustrations

In this next section, I draw on several composite case presentations to illustrate the key concepts introduced so far (Barnes, 2018; Pillay, 2017). The applications of these concepts will be elaborated upon through a concise engagement with various clinical issues that are common to many Indigenous clients (Brave Heart & DeBruyn, 1998; Dudgeon et al., 2017).

Cathy

Cathy presented for counselling having experienced childhood sexual abuse by multiple perpetrators during a prolonged period of time. These atrocities were unknown to Indigenous Peoples before colonisation (Duran, 2006; Brendtro, et al., 1991; Brokenleg, 2012; Brokenleg & James, 2013) and for Cathy, the way that the vestiges of this colonial violence showed up in adulthood was in a deep-seated belief that she was a failure. On a daily basis, Cathy found herself living in a state of terror and post-traumatic activation. She would cycle through states of aggression and states of helplessness and collapse (Brantbjerg, 2015; Hart, et al., 2006). After spending several sessions listening to Cathy share what she had gone through, one day she said:

There's no other place but with an Indigenous counsellor where I feel like I can speak about what happened to me without worrying that I'm going to break someone or traumatise them. I know you're trained and I know you can handle it.

In that moment, I came to the realisation that what we have in common is that we are both survivors of attempted and ongoing genocide. We are both here despite the whole-scale efforts to annihilate our Peoples. This is the therapeutic ground upon which we

work. We are united in both our common resistance and in the experience and knowledge of the depth of the pain that flows from genocidal violence (Richardson & Reynolds, 2014; Wade, 1997).

With the centrality of the decolonising therapeutic alliance affirmed, we worked to provide Cathy's autonomic nervous system some relief by orienting to the fact that the abuse she suffered in childhood has ended and that she has survived it. As was described in the previous section, differentiating between childhood states of terror and helplessness and her current adult capacities and the relative safety of her current life was another fundamental component of the recovery work. Discerning what is colonial violence and differentiating that from who Cathy is as an Indigenous person was another fundamental goal of the therapeutic process.

One of the themes that emerged consistently in earlier sessions was the different situations and life circumstances in which Cathy felt a profound sense of failure. Often this sense of failure was activated in intimate and familial relationships and within her career. Cathy connected this sense of failure to her experiences of childhood sexual abuse. She "owned" these violations as her "failure" to be loveable enough to deserve and be worthy of protection and her "failure" to protect herself. In response to Cathy, I extended enormous respect to the child that endured that pain and I honoured her for her ability to survive. Together in session, we generated deep compassion for Cathy at that time in her life. I then introduced a reframe of the sense of failure that she lives with:

Colonial capitalism fails to respect the sacredness of life and people and instead steals, exploits, oppresses, and commits unspeakable violence against all levels of Creation. What greater failure is there than capitalism and colonialism desecrating all life on earth for profit and power? Capitalism and colonialism have been forcing us to "own" their failures for over 500 years.

Cathy was crying but sensed the attunement to her in my voice. I concluded with a calm assertion: "We, Indigenous People, are not the failures. We have lived connected to the land and to each other in ways that are respectful and loving since time immemorial". Crying openly, Cathy responded, holding her heart:

I needed to hear this. There are not many places where I can talk about my trauma and also talk about the connections to colonisation and to capitalism. And yet, they are so connected. To be able to name it and then work on externalising how the abuse, colonisation, and capitalism make me feel negatively about myself is so important.

I continued by affirming the importance of acknowledging the impact of systematic child sexual abuse that was enacted on Indigenous Peoples through the residential school system:

Not only does colonisation "let" this kind of horrific abuse happen to whole generations of Indigenous children, but it actually unleashed the institutional forces that caused it. For us, as Indigenous Peoples and survivors of the residential school system, it's important to

discern that the childhood sexual abuse that we've suffered en masse is political torture. This kind of political torture in childhood threatens to obliterate our sense of selves and our very basic sense of connection to others, including our communities. It's genocide.

The reframe I offered Cathy was pivotal. It resists mainstream psychology's individualisation and privatisation of child sexual abuse and connects it to the systems of colonial oppression that cause this suffering for Indigenous people. Cathy understood that she has been the target of a collective attack on Indigenous children that is rooted in the state-based violence of the residential school system (Coates & Wade, 2007; Richardson & Reynolds, 2014; Reynolds, 2010). For Cathy, the understanding that the violence she suffered originated, not with her community and family, but with colonialism opened up internal space for the next layer of healing.

Ceremony with the Grandmothers: Invoking the Power of our Homelands and Spirit World

One day in session, Cathy opened up about the deep *toxic shame and toxic guilt* that she felt around the abuse (Dupuis-Rossi, 2018). At this point in the therapy, Cathy chose to do the essential work of making contact with the frozen child state within (Brantjberg, 2015). With a great deal of courage, she prepared herself by grounding in her adult self and orienting to the strength of her adult body and the capacities she now has at this stage of her development. She spent time recalling a place in her territories that felt safe.

Cathy invoked the spirit of a sacred place deep in the mountains by a hot spring. Firmly grounded in her adult self, Cathy brought her little girl there and I supported her in calling on the spirit of her grandmothers to be with them. In previous sessions, Cathy had identified how strong her grandmothers were and spoke at length about how they too had suffered the *political torture* of childhood sexual abuse. She also spoke of the ways that they attempted to address the "attachment disruption" of colonisation by trying to intervene in the sexual abuse being perpetrated against the younger generations. Whether they were successful in accomplishing the task of stopping the forces of genocide on their own was secondary to the therapy. What mattered most is that they took a stand against it and made every effort to protect the future generations. This was the way that their Indigenous power was alive in challenging the cruelty of colonisation against Indigenous children. Their resistance, courage, and love were profoundly meaningful to Cathy.

The grandmothers took the little girl to the water and bathed her in a ceremonial way. They washed her wounds and wiped her tears with their gentle strength. The grandmothers gathered around Cathy and purified her heart and her spirit of the chaos of colonisation: they bathed Cathy's young wounds in the spirit of the waters of her Homelands, braided the young one's hair and dressed her in the traditional regalia of her People. The grandmothers stood beside Cathy's younger self and honoured her as a strong Indigenous warrior. Cathy's dignity and her wholeness were being restored as this ceremonial work guided her back to the Homelands Within.

Reclaiming Our Ancestral and Cultural Connections

What helped Cathy to free herself of the toxic shame and toxic guilt associated with childhood sexual abuse was the understanding that her abuse was political torture. Understanding the pain of child sexual abuse as a genocidal attack on her because she is part of an Indigenous collective was the major reframe that allowed Cathy to reclaim her sense of self in relation to her People. When it became clear that the attacks on her person by multiple perpetrators did not originate with her People but were the devastating consequences of colonisation, she was able to reclaim her ancestral and cultural connection (Dupuis-Rossi & Reynolds, 2018).

Rendering visible the multiple manifestations of the ongoing war on our People is fundamental in doing therapeutic work with Indigenous clients. The problems and struggles of Indigenous clients are rooted in colonisation, capitalism, and patriarchy, and these systems of oppression must be named and their impacts clarified for therapy with Indigenous people to be effective. This is the fundamental difference in doing therapeutic work with Indigenous Peoples. Once the nature of child sexual abuse is defined as political torture directly connected to the state violence of the residential school system, the pain can be processed and the reclamation of one's authentic Indigenous self in relation to our collectivity can begin. It cannot be understated that when it comes to childhood sexual abuse in Indigenous communities, the "personal is political" (Dupuis-Rossi & Reynolds, 2018; Richardson & Reynolds, 2014). Furthermore, the fact that our Indigenous ways of redress have also been attacked and undermined adds another layer of complexity that must be addressed.

Traditionally, if a community member violated the safety, trust, integrity, and personhood of another, there would be measures taken within the community to address the transgressions. Often, it was the women of the community who would proceed to re-establish justice and peace and this would occur in a public community forum. Violence that took place was not relegated to the margins but centred as an important communal issue. The families of both the victim and the offender would work collectively to redress the harms caused to or by their relative. Unlike settler societies, which individualise and privatise violence that is societal and systemic in nature (Herman, 1992; Timimi, 2014), Indigenous societies have diverse ways of rectifying the harms caused so that the victim is not left alone, marginalised, shamed, and disconnected. In contrast to patriarchal societies, the women of the community hold the knowledge of how to heal the violence that has occurred (Lawrence & Anderson, 2005; Monture-Angus, 1999). Even the mere mention of this in a therapy session can bring some relief to an Indigenous client's autonomic nervous system. No longer are they alone to hold the violence. They are supported, in heart and in spirit, by the traditions of their people and culture as well as the wisdom of Indigenous women to carry out justice where justice is needed. This can be a powerful way to enliven our collective sense of how to be active, effective, and competent, which we inherited from our ancestors. This inheritance enables us to

redress the violence and injustice that we have endured. The overwhelming and disconnective forces of colonial violence recede as our Peoples' competence and ability to address injustice become the prominent points of reference.

To Love and Be Loved: A Radical Act in the Context of Ongoing Attempted Genocide

When we love and are loved as Indigenous Peoples, we are able to stand in both our power and our vulnerability. When our power and our vulnerability are integrated, we can truly be our whole selves. Identifying colonial and capitalist oppression is central to any and all anti-oppressive counselling with Indigenous Peoples. However, our therapeutic understanding and attunement to the intimacy of colonial oppression is vital. Along with the theft of our lands, our right to love and be loved was also stolen. This is also a matter of political torture. In this case, as in many others, once the forces of colonial oppression are named and the work of reclaiming the knowledge and wisdom of our Indigenous ways has begun, the next layer of therapy entails actively supporting Indigenous clients to reclaim their right to love themselves and to learn what this means to them, uniquely. In the context of ongoing attempted genocide, this is a radical act (Dupuis-Rossi, 2018; Dupuis-Rossi & Reynolds, 2018).

Rachel

Rachel presented for counselling after having a “breakdown” at work and being directed by human resources to seek mental health support. In the first session, Rachel explains that she has managed an extensive trauma history through the development of dissociative defenses. Throughout most of the literature on dissociation, there is a common understanding that dissociative defenses, whether secondary or tertiary structural dissociation, are the result of one's personality structure being so threatened and overwhelmed that one's consciousness becomes fragmented and polarised (Hart et al., 2006). This is how we understand the impact of ongoing and severe violence, which is commonly referred to as “complex trauma” (Herman, 1992). For Indigenous therapists working with Indigenous clients, it is important to understand that dissociation happens in relation to societal, economic, and political forces that have and continue to threaten our very survival as a People. The violence is collective in nature. It is profoundly fragmenting and polarising. And, it threatens to annihilate our very sense of ourselves and others as Indigenous Peoples. In many instances, this violence is so overwhelming and threatening that we are barely even recognisable to one another.

Much of the extreme pain that Rachel has experienced in her life has been shrouded in silence. She explains that she is tired of “going away” for hours and sometimes days at a time (this is her language for dissociation). For Rachel, the “attachment disruption” of colonisation plunged her into a state of persistent despair by robbing her of a mother who was able to provide safety and love. This was further complicated by that fact that Rachel felt self-loathing for loving her mother, a survivor of residential school, despite the pain

she had caused her. The internal conflict that resulted with being so deeply at odds with herself has been a heavy burden for Rachel and the way that she learned to defend against it was now unraveling.

The therapeutic work we engaged in became a dynamic interplay of skill building and of learning to differentiate between past and present. Rachel developed the capacity to ground herself in her present adult self while simultaneously containing and soothing her past states of childhood distress (Brantjberg, 2015). In Rachel's case, as well as in many others, orienting to the fact that the abuse suffered in childhood has ended was necessary in order for her to feel safe enough and adult enough to remain present to her current life. Through the layers of therapeutic work, Rachel began to open up about what she suffered as a child, describing experiences of extreme physical and sexual abuse, as well neglect and abandonment. The more Rachel began to trust and be assured that I would be attentive to and respectful of her as she shared her history, the greater her ability to name and identify the heart of the issue that remained unresolved.

As noted previously, Rachel suffered from a profound conflict within. She explained how, on the one hand, she deeply loves her mother and, on the other hand, she is "beyond herself" in the face of this love given the terrible abuse and neglect she suffered as a young child at her mother's hands. I was moved by the courage it took for Rachel to acknowledge her deep love for her mother. I marveled at the intense work she has been doing for the last year and how much resolve it took for her to be able to speak to the truth of her love for her mother given the unresolved conflict that had left her at odds with herself for decades.

Capitalism, colonialism, and patriarchy have a way of conspiring to invite us as therapists to individualise problems and issues of abuse. We frequently succumb to taking the "easy street" by keeping the therapeutic focus on individual acts of abusiveness. I felt firsthand the intensity of that invitation throughout the development of my therapeutic relationship with Rachel. I felt the pull and the promise of some relief and resolution that would occur if Rachel's issues remained individualised and focused solely on her mother's abusiveness toward her as a child. However, Indigenous therapists working with Indigenous clients are called upon to resist taking the "easy street". We are required to demonstrate courage and integrity by making visible the political context in which individual acts of violence occur (Dupuis-Rossi & Reynolds, 2018; Richardson & Reynolds, 2014). We must remain attuned to how colonisation and patriarchy show up in the therapeutic process and how they have the potential to rob us, time and time again, of our connections to each other as Indigenous Peoples.

As an Indigenous therapist, I am resolved to make visible the socio-political and historical context in which individual situations of abuse take place. It is my responsibility to match Rachel's courage by naming what she experienced at the hands of her mother as political torture that occurred transgenerationally. At a certain point, the "attachment disruption" and chaos of colonisation takes the form of *lateral violence* wherein the dynamics of state-based violence are re-enacted in our families and communities (Duran, 2006; Duran et al., 1998). Discerning this is important.

I sat quietly in my chair cognisant of the battle of forces within me, struggling with the invitation to take the “easy street” or to speak the truth of transgenerational political violence. I called on our ancestors in that moment and with all of the might entrusted to me by them, I asked: “Did your mother go to the residential school?” I asked this as a way of naming the source of her most painful and profound inner conflict. Rachel was silent and I did my best to try to stay present and contain my fear that this question may not have landed well. This fear is what surfaced for me when directly challenging and resisting the ways that colonisation shows up in the sessions. It is a struggle to free our hearts of the vestiges of this violence and in some pivotal moments it simply comes down to two Indigenous people in a room together. Although colonial forces that are present can easily remain unseen it is our responsibility, as Indigenous therapists, to make it visible (Coates & Wade, 2007; Richardson & Reynolds, 2014). “Yes, my mother did attend the residential school,” Rachel answered after a long moment of deep silence. “What she went through was horrible and she subjected me to every last bit of it. I hate her for that”. Rachel’s anger was palpable. It was essential to direct the force of that righteous anger in the right direction so that it could be productive and healing as opposed to destructive and deflating.

In the mainstream literature on complex trauma, what surfaced in therapy is identified as one manifestation of “disorganised attachment” (Hart et al., 2006; van der Kolk, 2014). However, as Indigenous therapists, we know that the fear that has been injected into how we experience our life-givers and relatives originates in state-based violence. As Indigenous therapists, we are required to bring this into our understanding of “disorganised attachment” so that we can begin to re-conceptualise the suffering that we are witnessing. We must always go further by engaging with the history and socio-political context of colonisation (Dupuis-Rossi, 2018; Dupuis-Rossi & Reynolds, 2018). The journey back to reconnection to our Indigenous ways of relating and caring is where the healing begins. As vital as an anti-colonial and anti-oppressive analysis are, we must also be able to guide and journey with our clients as they return to the knowledge of safety and connection that predates colonisation—which in reality is not that long ago (Dupuis-Rossi, 2018).

The theories of “disorganised attachment” are useful in that they identify the importance of clients developing the ability to hold multiple truths at one time and to create the internal space for them to be held (Brantbjerg, 2008; Fosha et al., 2009, Levine, 2011). I understand this as being at the heart of healing from abuse at the hands of those who are supposed to love, care for, and protect us when we are at our most vulnerable. Indigenous clients are often quick to visit extremes in such cases, either extending unconditional compassion to their abusive parents in an attempt to retain some connection to them or directing outright hatred toward them. In both extremes, we are left isolated and alone—either disconnected from ourselves and our own truths or disconnected from our life-givers (Ogden & Fisher, 2015; Porges, 2011; Schore, 1994). This is both a demonstration of the way that trauma polarises and a relational impact of the “attachment disruption” of colonisation.

In many cases, the violence of colonisation is so completely overwhelming that it makes our own caregivers unrecognisable to us. It requires a great deal of complex work to discern who they are as Indigenous people from the way that colonisation dominates their being. Colonisation often distorts and obscures the humanity of our life-givers and caregivers. It constructs them as abusive caricatures incapable of love, care, and compassion. From this extreme position, the work of therapy is to discern and differentiate their individual actions from who they are as Indigenous people whose lives have been devastated by colonisation. The therapeutic challenge becomes creating the internal space for the client between the extremes of unconditional compassion and outright hatred. Integrating the whole of our internal experience related to both our vulnerability and our power while simultaneously externalising the toxic remnants of colonial violence is central to the therapeutic process with Indigenous clients (Brantbjerg, 2008; Levine, 2011; Ogden & Fisher, 2015; van der Kolk, 2014).

As noted, healing from the “attachment disruption” of colonisation requires the ability to hold multiple truths while identifying, differentiating, discerning, and, ultimately, externalising the vestiges of colonisation. To this end, Rachel and I began to name all of the factors that took her mother away from herself and disrupted her ability to be a safe and loving parent. Rachel acknowledged the devastating consequences of the residential school system that her mother was forced to attend. She named the absolute poverty that her family and her community were thrust into after the reserve system was imposed upon them. She named the vile and incessant racism of the neighbouring town, the brutality and the cruelty of her mother’s non-Indigenous male partners, and the addiction to alcohol and crystal methamphetamine that ensued.

“Rachel,” I said after listening deeply to what she shared, “I want you to know that I trust the love that you have for your mother as much as I trust all the reasons you feel hatred toward her given what you’ve just shared with me”. Here, I worked to simultaneously support the connection Rachel has to herself and to her mother in those moments where she was able to provide safety to her child. “How often was your mother able to act towards you in a way that was worthy of the love you have for her?” I asked. Rachel responded with a laboured honesty: “three per cent of the time”. “What was she like in that three per cent of the time?” I asked. As Rachel recalled, a smile came to her face: “My mother was really smart, loving, warm, and playful”. She recounted some very moving memories. Rachel was able to enliven her felt sense of the Indigenous love her mother could give to her in very rare but deeply significant moments. In the process of these recollections, Rachel was able to connect with how the love she feels for her mother is justifiable when associated with the three per cent of the time when she was able to be present for and provide safety to her child. From this vantage point, there was no need to discard that love or to reject it or to believe something is wrong with her for having it. Rachel was able to contextualise the abuse she experienced and associate it to the compounding institutional factors that made it impossible for her mother to be there for her in a consistent manner. Rachel affirmed both the love in her heart for her mother and the truth of colonialism’s responsibility for her mother’s incapacity to parent. Rachel found some freedom from the grip of the abuse and the horror, the terror and the torment

of it. She was able to see the moments of her mother's heroism and the love her mother had for her: "I want to hold on to those moments where my mother found a way to defy all odds and to be there for me. In those moments I felt on top of the world," she explained. Rachel took time in session to take the essence of her mother into her heart and to differentiate the impact of colonisation from who her mother truly is as an Indigenous woman and life-giver.

Two weeks later, I met Rachel in the waiting room for our next session and could see that she was really struggling. As she walked into my office, she said, "I feel like I'm about to explode with hate". As she sat down, she exclaimed, "I hate myself for loving my mother. It's not even so much that I hate her. After all that she did to me, it's not even her that I hate! I love my mother. But after all that she did to me, after all that she put me through, I hate myself for loving her!" This is a recurring issue in my practice. Indigenous clients struggle with the very fact that they love. They hate themselves for loving their life-givers. This can be very confusing for Indigenous clients. Culturally speaking, we have inherited profound love in our hearts. It is a testimony to how 500 years of colonisation do not efface thousands of years of love and connectedness. And yet, under colonial rule, Indigenous Peoples often experience violence in our own families. This is why discernment and differentiation are vital to reclaiming our wholeness and are central to healing from the "attachment disruption" of colonisation.

In these moments, I have found it helpful to provide some perspective to Indigenous clients suffering in this way. I humbly explained to Rachel:

When we're children we're in a most vulnerable time of life and in a state of dependency on our caregivers and the adults around us. In our traditional societies, as children, our needs were and are centred. We're supported and surrounded with love by our close kin, our clans, and our communities. This is not the case under colonial rule. Where we once were protected, cared for, and prioritised by the adults in our communities, we're now often exploited, intruded upon, hurt, or debased in our state of dependency, and we learn that it's not safe to be vulnerable.

I continued:

We often look back at ourselves without realising our developmental state or the context of colonial oppression that surrounds it. We re-experience ourselves as if we had all the abilities, capacities, choices, and options that we now possess as adults. But the fact is that our very survival often depended on keeping the love for our parents alive in our hearts despite the horrors to which we were subjected. In childhood, our attachments are our survival responses, no matter how ravaged they are by colonisation.

For Rachel, the work of the last session unearthed all the dissociated rage, anger, grief, and layers of hatred she felt (Hart et al., 2006; Ogden & Fisher, 2015). These emotions were expressed with an incredible energetic force. As I bore witness to Rachel's profound pain, I was deeply grateful for the teachings about how our emotions and survival responses are our life force and that this energy, or life force, must be channeled and

supported in a way that is affirming of the client's true and authentic self. I was taught to honour the rage, the anger, the grief, and the hatred, and to realise that when they show up in session, this is a very good sign. It reveals that the trapped and truncated survival energy is starting to move in a direction that enables healing and resolution of internal conflict. For Rachel, reconnecting to her own experience of her mother meant integrating the conflicting emotions related both to her vulnerability and to her power (Brantbjerg, 2015; Fosha et al., 2009).

The Sacred Circle Around Our Own Hearts: Creating Internal Space for Multiple Truths

In that moment with Rachel, the challenge was to stay connected in a gentle, caring, genuine, but very strong and brave way. It is the way of our People to remain present for one another as we suffer. Suffering is not to be pathologised or made into an object of clinical dissection. Rather, it is a transformational moment of integration into the wholeness of who we are: powerful and vulnerable beings affirmed by our Indigenous love. I asked Rachel, who was in tears and overwhelmed and activated, if she could call upon the spirit of her territories. I let her know that we were going to find a place of healing for all that she was feeling right now. I honoured each one of her emotions and states and extended faith in the profound truth that they held. I asked her to ground herself in her adult self and to invoke a sacred fire. I asked her to create an internal village of teepees that would surround the sacred fire. In each teepee, I asked her to place an emotion; to put the hate in one teepee, the love in another, the fear in its own teepee, and the anger in another. We went on this way until each emotion and internal state had its own home around the sacred fire. "This way," I explained, "there's no need for one to override the other, they can all co-exist. There's a place for, there's space for and there is a sacred traditional home for all that you experience". This traditional knowing is an antidote to how colonisation teaches us domination and isolation in our own internal worlds (Dupuis-Rossi, 2018).

I sensed how hard Rachel was working internally. The silence echoed through time and space. There were many strong and conflicting emotions being integrated, and internal space needed to be created to accommodate them. The rigid internal boundaries constructed to survive colonial violence were all being renegotiated. The way trauma polarises was being transformed. Rachel was expanding internally to allow for all of it to exist in the Homelands Within: the love, the hate, the shame for loving and hating, the grief, and the fear. In that moment of healing work, all of Rachel's internal experiences were being witnessed and held by the spirit of her territories and the transformative power of a sacred fire. All of her experiences were legitimate. She did not have to hate herself for loving and she could feel her hate knowing that it did not mean she was "evil". Rachel was learning to return home to herself, to accept and provide refuge to the breadth of her internal experience, no matter how painful and previously conflicted she was. And she was doing this within the context of the relational holding of a safe decolonising therapeutic relationship.

Many of us who are transgenerational survivors of the residential school system live with hatred for our life-givers. A great deal of a decolonising therapeutic praxis is to discern and differentiate what is hatred of the residential schools and what they did to our loved ones from the way we feel about and experience our close relatives. This can open up internal space for us to reclaim and experience the love that we have for them and our deep longing to have been safely connected with them. In many cases, the moments of love, kindness, and heroism that they did show, the moments where they provided safety, begin to surface. This is a very intimate form of decolonising our hearts and it begins the work of re-establishing a sense of order amidst the endless chaos of colonisation. To find our way back to ourselves and to each other, the chaos of colonisation cannot remain lodged in our relational fields and within our connections with each other. The pain of colonisation must be acknowledged and processed for the purposes of reclaiming ourselves. Reclaiming ourselves, our worth, and our love requires that we externalise the burdens and the chaos of colonisation (Dupuis-Rossi, 2018). By externalising these burdens, we free ourselves of the victim-blaming responsibility that has been foisted on us. We return the burden to its rightful owners—the forces of capitalism, colonialism, and patriarchy.

Tyrone

Decolonising our hearts and reclaiming our right to love and be loved has proven to be an effective therapeutic response to the “attachment disruption” of colonisation. This next case example demonstrates the immense power that resides in this reclamation process. Tyrone presented for counselling to address his “addictions”. He recounts that he grew up in his community on a poverty-stricken reserve where he survived severe childhood neglect. Tyrone lost both his mother and his father to overdoses when he was fifteen years old. Tyrone is forthright about his “addictions” history. He talks about how, in his late teens, he got into using crystal meth and crack cocaine: “I would stay up all night and use lots of drugs just so that I could be around people and have a chance to feel connected”. Tyrone shared that he would try so hard and used so much energy just trying to stay awake and engaged. He would more often than not wake up the following day feeling awful from the drugs and deflated from his “failed” attempts to connect. No matter what he did, he explained, “I felt unvalued and unloved, which was far worse than any comedown or hangover”.

At a certain point, Tyrone turned to heroin, a drug that did not leave him dependent on other people but provided some measure of “attunement” (in the context of a complete lack thereof) to his state of isolation and “aloneness”. In a sense, the nature of the heroin and the effect of the substance filled the relational void and soothed the pain of the unmet need for love and the sheer desperation that it caused (Brave Heart, 2003; Maté, 2010). “I decided not to need anyone. I decided not to ever open up to anyone ever again,” he explained in session. In response, I offered the following to Tyrone in order to reach through his defenses:

Sometimes when we've gone through neglect, trauma, and profound loss in childhood and adolescence, we end up making unconscious decisions about the world, about other people and ourselves that, at the time, are a direct reaction to our life circumstances and which, in a way, serve to help us survive. But, later in life these decisions can overdetermine our experiences, perceptions, choices, and sense of possibilities in a way that becomes constraining, limiting, and even further isolating.

He responded, "Yes, I can see that. I think underneath it all I hated myself for needing love and failing so badly at it". Tyrone lived many years feeling like he was a failure at relationships. A pivotal point of the therapy was to make conscious the unconscious decisions that Tyrone made about himself and others that created obstacles to him forming healthy and sustainable relationships (Brantbjerg, 2008, 2015).

Transgenerational "addiction" is one form of the collective post traumatic reaction to the "attachment disruption" of colonisation (Brave Heart, 2013). "Addiction" often serves to contain, cover up, defend against, and conceal the profound sense of despair and anguish that is caused by this "attachment disruption". The closest approximation that I have found in the mainstream complex trauma literature is the concept of the "unbearable weight of aloneness" connected to developmental trauma (Fosha, Siegel & Solomon, 2009). It is within the context of loss of relationship, connection, attachment (and the sense of belonging, safety, and stability that follows) that we turn to drugs and alcohol in order to cope (Brave Heart, 2003; Brokenleg, 2012; Duran, 2006; Duran, Firehammer & Gonzalez, 2008; Maté, 2010).

Tyrone's experience reveals how our struggles with "addictions" as Indigenous people are directly connected to the "attachment disruption" of colonisation. Elders from different nations across Turtle Island teach us that we did not have alcohol or drug abuse before the invasion and occupation of our lands over five centuries ago. It was only with the creation of the reservation system, the criminalisation of our healing ceremonies, and the attacks on our sacred relationships, that our people were forced to use alcohol and drugs to cope with the pain of colonial violence and the losses connected to it. Sharing this information with Indigenous clients can help externalise the burden of "addiction". Naming the context of "addiction" provides a major reframe of how we understand the use of substances among Indigenous Peoples (Brave Heart, 2003). For example:

Given everything that you've gone through, Tyrone, and given everything your parents went through in their lives, it's incredible that you were still trying to connect and still trying to love in those moments you were high. I see courage there. Addiction is one form that the ongoing war on our People now takes. You are a survivor of that war. The fact that you are working to reclaim your need to love and be loved by healing from your "addiction" makes you a warrior in your ancestor's eyes. In our traditional ways, you would be held up and honoured for the warrior that you are.

Healing from the neglect he suffered as a child and the "addictions" that helped him cope with this pain was Tyrone's way to decolonise his own heart. Acknowledging the cultural and historical significance of his struggle gave Tyrone the inspiration and the context that

he needed to be at home with the fact that he is capable of and deserving of love. Rather than remaining stuck in a perpetual state of disempowerment, rejection, desperation, and deprivation, he saw himself as an Indigenous warrior capable of a powerful act of resistance to colonisation through the reclamation of his Indigenous love. Decolonising his heart in this way was an act of cultural reclamation and affirmation of who he is as an Indigenous person in his own Homelands. Loving deeply has been a time-honoured tradition on Turtle Island. To make this a focal point in therapy is crucial amidst centuries of genocidal war. Validating the need for love and connection is pivotal for loosening the grip of “addiction” (Brave Heart, 2003; Dupuis-Rossi, 2018; Duran et al., 2008; Maté, 2010; Porges, 2011; Scaer, 2012; Siegel, 2010).

Conclusion

In our hearts lives a longing to be on our lands in our own ways. Affirming our relationship to our ancestral and traditional territories is important. So, too, is acknowledging the anguish and the despair that reside in our hearts as we are forced to endure relative degrees of disconnection from the land and 500 years of ongoing attempted genocide. This disconnection from our Homelands is the original layer of the “attachment disruption” of colonisation that must be addressed. As an antidote to all of the ways that we are erased in our own Homelands by settler society, decolonising therapeutic praxis situates and centres us as *Onkwehon:we* in our own lands. We are here. We have survived. We are still surviving and resisting attempted and ongoing genocide. By centring who we are in our own Homelands, we reclaim our Indigenous power: (1) by affirming our existences here since time immemorial, which addresses the attempted annihilation that happens on so many levels under colonial rule; (2) by grounding us in our own ways, which stand in stark contrast to the chaos of colonisation; and, (3) by centring ourselves as the Original Peoples, knowledge-keepers and leaders in our own lands, which serves as healing medicine to the “attachment disruption” of colonisation.

The Indigenous clients featured in this article each stood uniquely in their Indigenous power. They did so by identifying their own internal struggles, discerning what were the forces of colonisation and differentiating their “failures” as the misplaced internalisation of these forces. They took brave steps to externalise those burdens. The power of the determination they each demonstrated in loving themselves despite the transgenerational impacts of colonial oppression, points the way back to the Homelands Within. Centring our own felt sense of the territories, relationships, and cultural ways that have sustained our lives since time immemorial becomes an important point of reference in relation to our Indigenous power. Making internal space for it becomes the foundation of a decolonising therapeutic practice.

In each of these cases, I learned that we need to make space to feel our pain and our hurt. We need to know ourselves and have an understanding of who we are. There is strong medicine in our wounds. The grief, the fear, the anger, the rage, the sadness, the anguish and the despair are important forces of healing. They point the way home. They guide us back to our *Onkwehon:we* hearts and spirits. We are powerful enough to feel our own pain and we are connected enough to heal it. This is how we return to the

Homelands Within. We live in connection to our ways of relating to our lands even in the context of colonial occupation. We can honour the spirit of our ways and this is a way of making our Indigenous power a point of reference and, as a result, more central.

As Indigenous therapists, we have a sacred cultural duty to journey with our Indigenous clients to the depths of their pain and to be there for them so that they can be held in connection. We facilitate the reconnection to their People, their lands, and traditions, as well as to their authentic Indigenous selves. To truly heal from the “attachment disruption” of colonisation, we must find a way to be present to our own pain, present to our own strengths, and present to our relationship with ourselves while engaged in relationship with safe Indigenous others. This is a deep ceremony that brings us in from the long, cold relational winter of colonisation. As Indigenous therapists, we can uphold a sacred tradition of our Peoples when we remain deeply and respectfully present to our Indigenous clients. As I have been taught, in many cultures, our People were never left to be alone in grief and pain. This is a wise tradition that we have the good honour of upholding in our decolonising therapeutic practice.

References

Alfred, T. (2005). *Wasáse: Indigenous pathways of action and freedom*. Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press.

Barnes, B. (2018). Decolonising research methodologies: Opportunity and caution. *South African Journal of Psychology*, 48(3), 379-387.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0081246318798294>

Brantbjerg, M. H. (2008). *The relational aspect of resource oriented skill training*. Copenhagen, DN: Moaiku.

Brantbjerg, M. H. (2015). *About Survival Reactions-in Relational Trauma Therapy*. Copenhagen, DN: Moaiku.

Brave Heart, M. Y. H., & DeBruyn, L. M. (1998). The American Indian holocaust: Healing historical unresolved grief. *American Indian and Alaska Native Mental Health Research*, 8(2), 60-82. <http://dx.doi.org/10.5820/aian.0802.1998.60>

Brave Heart, M. Y. H. (2003). Historical trauma response among Natives and its relationship with substance abuse: A Lakota illustration. *Journal of Psychoactive Drugs*, 35, 7-13. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02791072.2003.10399988>

Brendtro, L., Brokenleg, M., Van Bockern, S., & Bird, G. (1991). The circle of courage. *Beyond Behavior*, 2(2), 5-12.

Brokenleg, M. (2012). Transforming cultural trauma into resilience. *Reclaiming Children & Youth*, 21(3), 9-13.

Brokenleg, M., & James, A. B. (2013). Living in Balance: A Lakota and Mohawk Dialogue. *Reclaiming Children & Youth*, 22(2), 51-55.

Cardinal, H. (1969). *The unjust society*. Vancouver, BC: Douglas & McIntyre.

Carriere, J., & Richardson, C. (2009). From longing to belonging: Attachment theory, connectedness, and indigenous children in Canada. In S. McKay, D. Fuchs, & I. Brown (Eds.), *Passion for action in child and family services: Voices from the prairies* (pp. 49-67). Regina, SK: Canadian Plains Research Center.

Choate, P., Crazybull, B., Lindstrom, D., & Lindstrom, G. (2020). Where do we go from here? Ongoing colonialism from attachment theory. *Aoteaora New Zealand Social Work*, 32(1), 32-44. <https://doi.org/10.11157/anzswj-vol32iss1id702>

Coates, L., & Wade, A. (2007). Language and violence: Analysis of four discursive operations. *Journal of Family Violence*, 22(7), 511–522. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10896-007-9082-2>

Dudgeon, P., Bray, A., D'Costa, B. & Walker, R. (2017). Decolonising psychology: Validating social and emotional wellbeing. *Australian Psychologist*, 52, 316-325. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ap.12294>

Dupuis-Rossi, R. (2018). Indigenous historical trauma: A decolonizing therapeutic framework for Indigenous counsellors working with Indigenous clients. In S. Collins (Ed.), *Embracing cultural responsiveness and social justice: Re-shaping professional identity in counselling psychology*. Victoria, BC: Counselling Concepts.

Dupuis-Rossi, R., & Reynolds, V. (2018). Indigenizing and decolonizing therapeutic responses to trauma-related dissociation. In N. Arthur (Ed.), *Counseling in cultural context: Identity and social justice*. Cham, Switzerland: Springer.

Duran, E., Firehammer, J., & Gonzalez, J. (2008). Liberation psychology as the path toward healing cultural soul wounds. *Journal of Counseling & Development*, 86, 288-295. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/j.1556-6678.2008.tb00511.x>

Duran, B., Duran, E., & Brave Heart, M. Y. H., (1998). Native American and the trauma of history. In R. Thorton (Ed.), *Studying Native America* (pp. 60-76). Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press.

Duran, E. (2006). *Healing the soul wound: Counseling with American Indians and other Native Peoples*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Duran, E., Duran, B., Brave Heart, M. Y. H., & Yellow Horse-Davis, S. (1998). Healing the American Indian soul wound. In Y. Danielli (Ed.), *Intergenerational handbook of multigenerational legacies of trauma* (pp. 341-354). New York: Plenum.

Fosha, D., Siegel, D., & Solomon, M. (Eds.). (2009). *The healing power of emotions: Affective neuroscience, development and clinical practice*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company.

- Hart, O., Nijenhuis, E. R. S., & Steele, K. (2006). *The haunted self: Structural dissociation and the treatment of chronic traumatization*. New York: W.W. Norton.
- Herman, J. (1992). *Trauma and recovery: The aftermath of violence*. New York: Basic Books.
- Hill, G. (2009). *500 Years of Resistance*. Oakland, CA: PM Press.
- Keller, H. (2018). Universality claim of attachment theory: Children's socioemotional development across cultures, *PNAS*, 115 (45), 11414-11419.
- Lawrence, B. & Anderson, K. (2005). Indigenous women: The state of our nations. *Atlantis: Critical Studies in Gender, Culture & Social Justice*, 29(2), 1-162.
- Levine, P. (2011). *In an unspoken voice: How the body releases trauma and restores goodness*. Berkeley, CA: North Atlantic Books.
- Maté, G. (2010). *In the realm of hungry ghosts: Close encounters with addiction*. Berkeley, CA: North Atlantic Books.
- Monture-Angus, P. (1999). *Thunder in my soul: A Mohawk woman speaks*. Nova Scotia, Canada: Fernwood Publishing.
- Ogden, P. & Fisher, J. (2015). *Sensorimotor psychotherapy: Interventions for trauma and attachment*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company.
- Pillay, S. (2017). Cracking the fortress: Can we really decolonize psychology? *South African Journal of Psychology*, 1(6). <https://doi.org/10.1177/0081246317698059>
- Porges, S. (2011). *The Polyvagal Theory*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company.
- Reynolds, V. (2010). Doing justice: A witnessing stance in therapeutic work alongside survivors of torture and political violence. In J. Raskin, S. Bridges, & R. Neimeyer (Eds.), *Studies in meaning 4: Constructivist perspectives on theory, practice, and social justice* (pp. 157-184). New York: Pace University Press.
- Richardson, C. & Reynolds, V. (2014). Structuring safety in therapeutic work alongside Indigenous survivors of residential schools. *Canadian Journal of Native Studies*, 34(2), 147-164.
- Scaer, R. (2012). *8 Keys to Brain-Body Balance*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company.
- Schore, A. (1994). *Affect regulation and the origin of the self: The neurobiology of emotional development*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Inc. Publishers.
- Siegel, D. J. (2010). *The mindful therapist: A clinician's guide to mindsight and neural integration*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company.

Thornton, R. (1987). *American Indian holocaust and survival: A population history since Norman, OK*: University of Oklahoma Press.

Timimi, S. (2014). No more psychiatric labels: Why formal psychiatric diagnostic systems should be abolished. *International Journal of Clinical Health & Psychology*, 14, 208–215. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijchp.2014.03.004>

van der Kolk, B. (2014). *The body keeps the score: Brain, mind and body in the healing of trauma*. New York: Penguin Books.

Wade, A. (1997). Small acts of living: Everyday resistance to violence and other forms of oppression. *Contemporary Family Therapy* 19, 23–39. <https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1026154215299>

[Return to Articles](#)