

Trickster Spirits and the Opioid Response: Cultural Considerations in Addressing Substance Misuse



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Objectives

Participants will

Overview of Tribal Opioid
Strategic Agenda

Overview of the Trickster
Stories

Connection of trauma and
substance misuse

Overview of historical
trauma and ancestral
wisdom

Overview of Indigenous
Wellness and healing



Tribal Opioid Response Agenda

- The goal of the Tribal Opioid Response Agenda is to support tribal communities in healing our relatives and relations
- We have worked alongside tribal policymakers, national experts, service providers, and community members, developed this strategic agenda.



Culture is Medicine



TRICKSTER

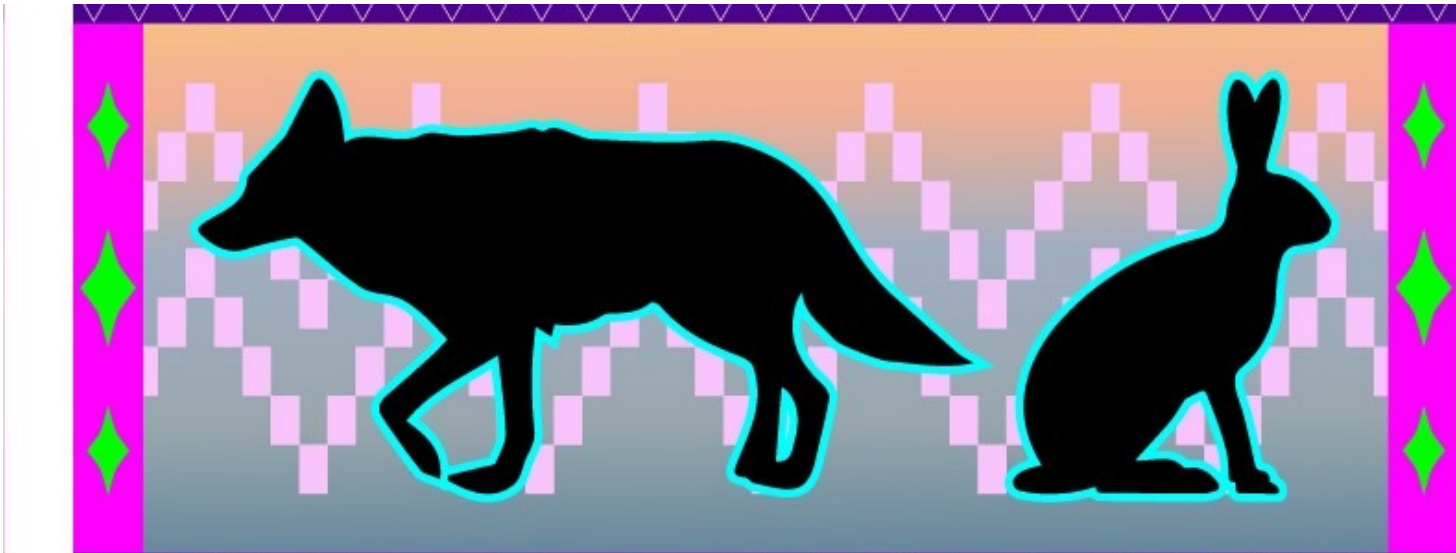
NATIVE AMERICAN TALES

A GRAPHIC COLLECTION

“Meet the Trickster, a crafty creature or being who disrupts the order of things, often humiliating others and sometimes himself in the process. Whether a coyote or a rabbit, raccoon or raven, tricksters use cunning to get food, steal precious possessions, or simply cause mischief.”



Trickster Spirits and the Opioid Response



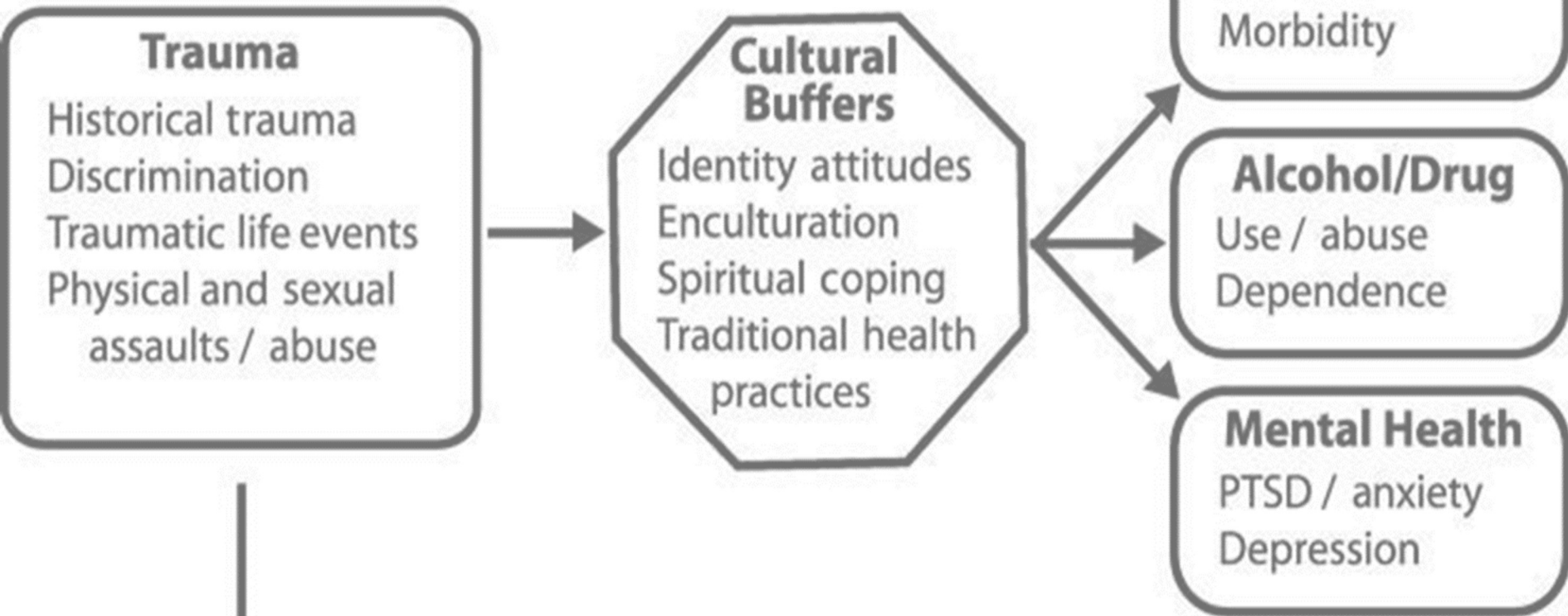
Coyote wanders into your life...he'll lend you a pair of eyes ...he'll burn a hole in the darkness.... He is the smoking mirror, night and sorcery, ancestral memory, the enemy on both sides, the crossroads, the compass, the silent wind and thunderous war inside you. ... He holds up the mirror relentlessly until you staring back at yourself....that seems alright to him - Diary of a Dog

STRESS

COPING

HEALTH OUTCOMES

Indigenist Stress Coping Model



Walters, Karina L, Simoni, Jane M, & Evans-Campbell, Teresa. (2002). Substance Use Among American Indians and Alaska Natives: Incorporating Culture in an "Indigenist" Stress-Coping Paradigm. *Public Health Reports* (1974), 117(Suppl 1), S104–S117.

Trauma

“Using trauma terminology implies that the individual is responsible for the response, rather than the broader systemic force caused by the state’s abuse of power”

Linklater, 2014

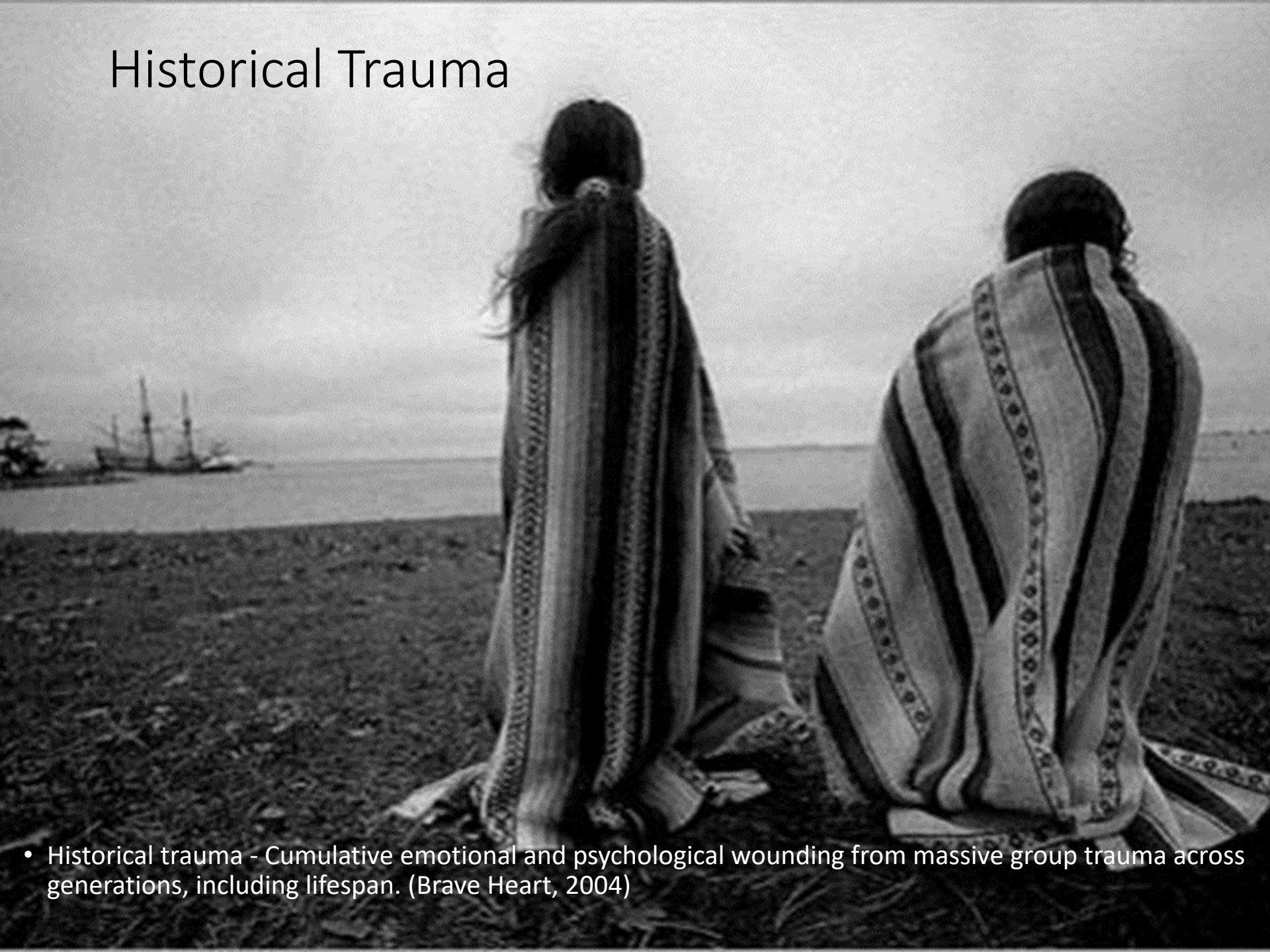




Our bodies are designed to remember danger

Each of us begins to maintain a database of threats in the environment.

Historical Trauma

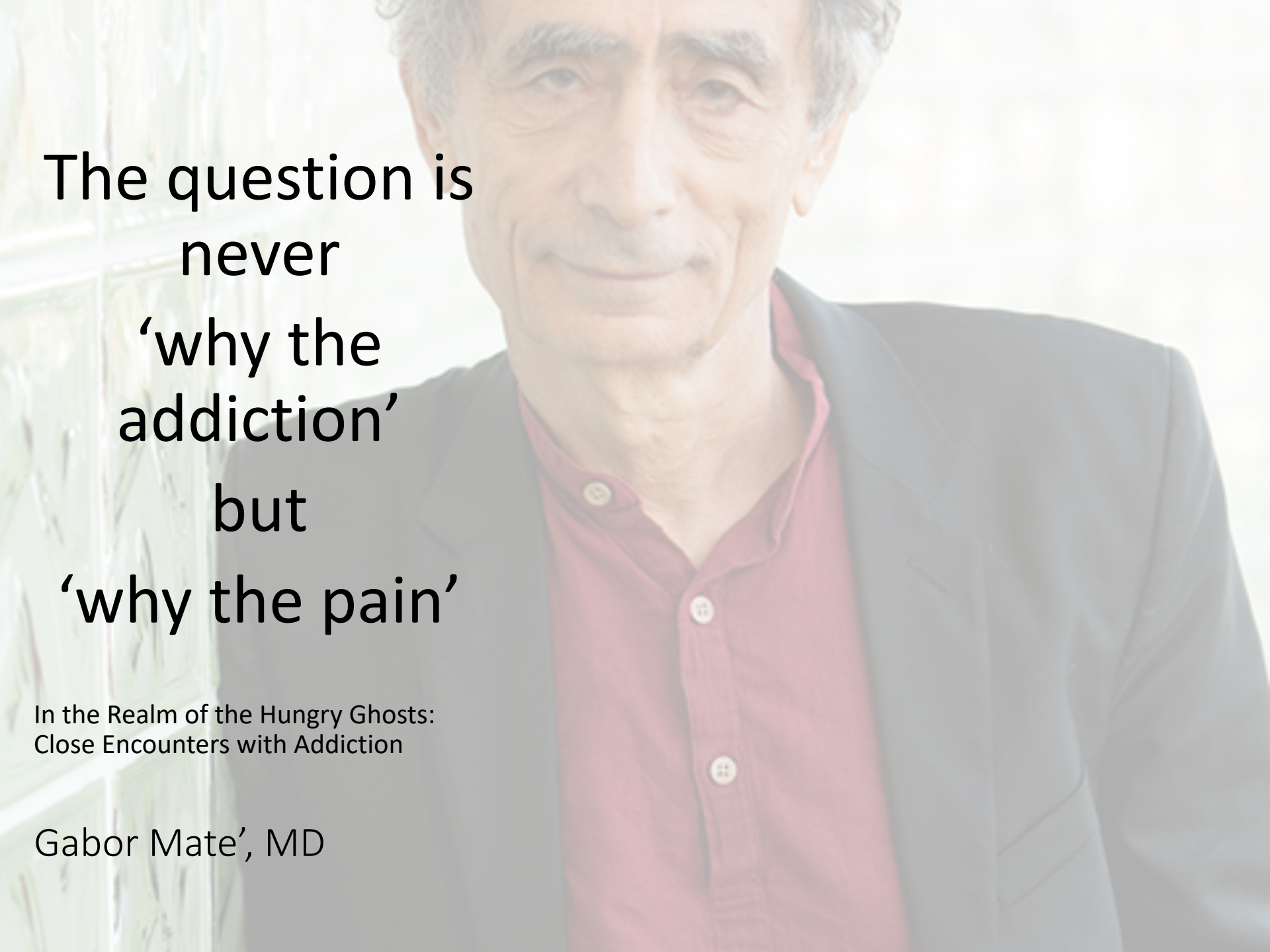


- Historical trauma - Cumulative emotional and psychological wounding from massive group trauma across generations, including lifespan. (Brave Heart, 2004)



**“The memories of our
ancestors are passed
down on our blood”
Little Joe Gomez**

Hamby, Sherry, Elm, Jessica H L, Howell, Kathryn H,
& Merrick, Melissa T. (2021). Recognizing the
cumulative burden of childhood adversities
transforms science and practice for trauma and
resilience. *The American Psychologist*, 76(2), 230–
242. <https://doi.org/10.1037/amp0000763>



The question is
never
'why the
addiction'
but
'why the pain'

In the Realm of the Hungry Ghosts:
Close Encounters with Addiction

Gabor Mate', MD

Resilient Responses to Trauma

- Increased bonding with family and community.
- Redefined or increased sense of purpose and meaning.
- Increased commitment to a personal mission.
- Revised priorities.
- Increased charitable giving and volunteerism.



Center for Substance Abuse Treatment , issuing body, publisher. (2014). *Trauma-Informed care in behavioral health services : A treatment improvement protocol*. (Treatment improvement protocol (TIP) series ; 57). Rockville, MD: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Center for Substance Abuse Treatment.

Wellness

Sacred Tree: Four Worlds
International Institute.
<https://www.fwii.net/profiles/blogs/the-story-of-the-sacred-tree-1>



COMMUNITY CARE IN INDIAN COUNTRY

- CONNECTION & BELONGING
 - CULTURAL CONNECTION
 - ANCESTRAL CONNECTION
 - LAND CONNECTION
 - COMMUNITY CONNECTION
- SACRED SPACE
- STORYTELLING/STORY LISTENING
- PRAYER/MINDFULNESS/CONTemplation/MEDITATION
- CREATE



Relationship with Medicine

- Reestablish our relationship with medicine
- Change our relationship with medicine people
- Develop a relationship with the spirit of substances and substance misuse



RESILIENT

HAVE BEEN HERE BEFORE

