

Presentation Paper on : Spiritual Healing

A very warm hello to all of you, my brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus. May His Holy Name be forever and may He guide you to understand the challenges that lay ahead for you all this coming week.

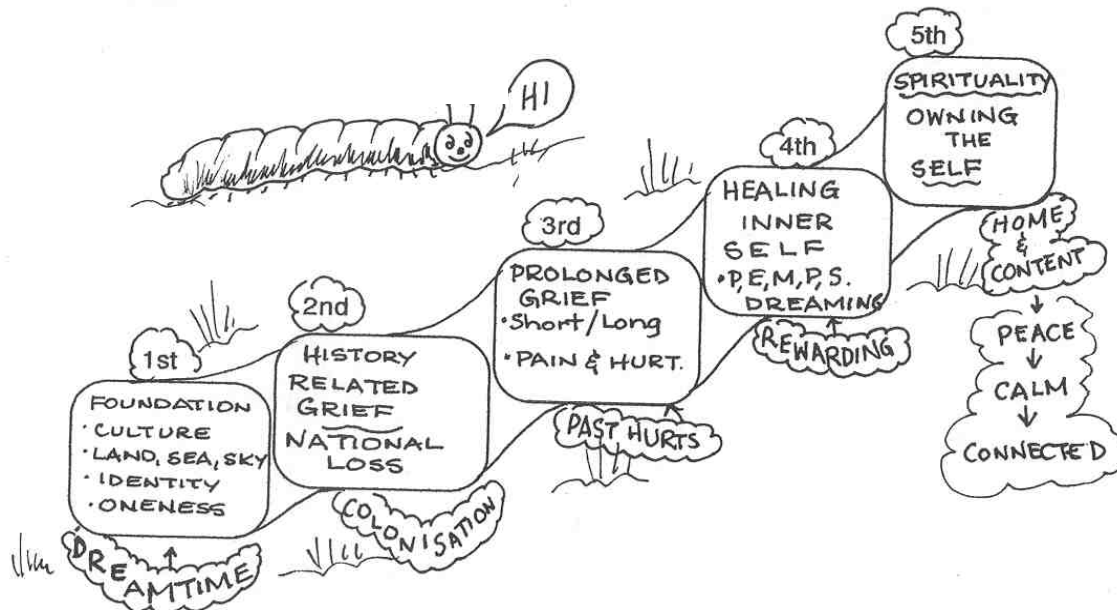
Firstly, I would like to acknowledge the Kaurna Nation, especially their Elders for welcoming us as we come together as Aboriginals and Islanders and other visitors who may be here with us today and for the rest of the week.

I extend a very warm hello to all the Elders today and I honour your journeys wherever your journey has taken you.

And a special “thank you” to our National Body ... National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Catholic Council and a very special “thank you” to my sister and friend Vicki Walker who persistently followed her heart and placed our footprints firmly in the foundation of the church. Thank you sis. Thanks everyone, especially thanks for allowing me to come and speak on “Spiritual Healing”.

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My presentation is focussed on the many personal dilemmas we encounter in our daily life and on the spiritual deterioration of life and the healing of that life. So to make it plain and simple, we will follow a five stepping stone style so that you may better understand this paper.



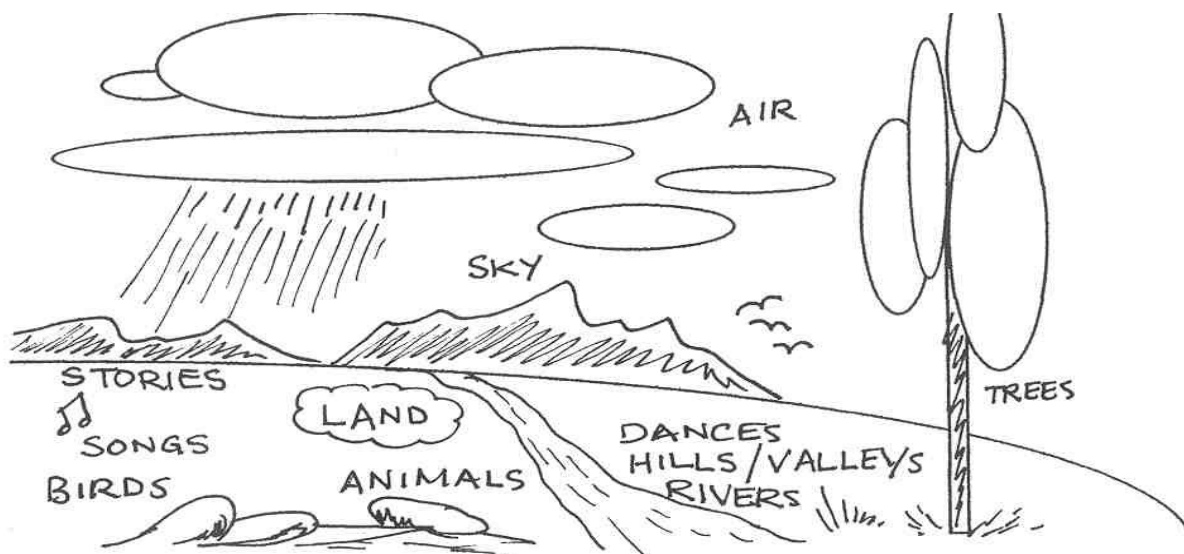
1st Stepping Stone

Question: Where is my Foundation ?
What is it ?
What does it look like ?
Where do I find it ?
How do I find it ?
What will I do with it when I find it ?

So many questions ! Do you want to ask yourself these questions ?
In trying for find the answers all by yourself, you will find that you are on the way to discovering some movements within yourself. This is what happens when you start something and it begins to move forward within you. It may come in small ways or it may come to you in a big way, in many different shapes and sizes. Some of you may already know the answers to these questions and are possibly firmly grounded and some of you may find that you really have nowhere to start. If you find that you haven't got a place to start, then start here, right now. As you listen to the words that I speak, something may trigger from within you. So good luck.

Our foundation started in the Dreaming, with a Creator who created a power-filled system that is still present today. It does not matter where I am or where we are right now. All that matters is the Dreaming is always present. This is a Spiritual Movement that is unstoppable. This movement is forever, and we will always be in that movement, forever moving forward. If we are not moving forward from within us then something is not right. We will look at that later on.

Our foundation is grounded in everything in us, around us, on the land, in songs, in dances, in joy and everything imaginable. It is not something that we should take for granted but we should be deeply embedded in it, body, soul and spirit.
Now let's take a look at the Dreaming.



The Dreamtime must always be the starting point for all of us. If we have lost our way, then we must try to do our best to come back to it. This is not to say that because all our worries and our troubles are so big that we cannot find this other place within us. Believe me when I say “we can”.

Our Dreaming is our Identity. Where we can find within ourselves the opportunities and abilities in abundance that all the lectures in the world cannot give to us. The Dreamtime cared for us and now we must take more care of it too.

The Land is like the Bible.

Every event that has happened on the land has happened. As the sun rises in the east, it is the dawning of a New Day.

Every New Day that arrives is like turning over a new page of a New Day.

Everything that happens in the New Day has happened and has been told.

That is what God’s Gift of Life means to us.

The Land is our Bible.

Everything that has happened in our Dreaming Time is God’s way of showing us how much He wants us to carry out His Great Plan. All the Dreaming Spiritual Ancestors were moved greatly by God’s Great Spirit to move this Great Plan into action.

Our Dreaming stories are like the parables that Jesus told in His time on earth.

The Elders held these stories with great respect and honour and told them to their children and their grandchildren. The stories never lost their true meaning and were never told differently. The stories never changed. They were like mysteries and the Elders had to find the true meaning within them. These mysteries were then unravelled and then they found the real meaning of Life.

They found a Spiritual belief system so powerful that that is what has been handed down from generation to generation (show diagrams).

Stepping Stone 2

History related grief – National grief

Our History is one that we have always and continuously talked about ever since time began for us (Colonisation).

We have experienced a massive grief on a large scale, as much as that of other indigenous groups throughout the world, perhaps more. That does not mean that we have to stand on the sidewalk and sulk. We have been very busy following in the footsteps of other brothers and sisters who have struggled to pave a clearer way for us to continue.

One of the greatest of these is the grief we hold for our brothers and sisters who are now known as the Stolen Generation. The great loss of Identity is felt on a national level, even so now. This gives us the incentive to get a move on – to show that we really do have a lot to give to the non-indigenous brothers and sisters in this country (show diagram).

This national loss is often felt very deeply within our country we call Australia, especially when History keeps repeating itself. For example, the welfare system is still around but with a much more subtle approach. We still remain marginalised, ridiculed in some way, discriminated against. Some racial tensions between people or groups of people are still felt in some areas of Australia. What I am saying about this is that whatever future developments may occur, our future generations will still feel this loss. It is up to us to set our children back on the right track and get them back to our Foundation.

Stepping Stone 3

Prolonged grief short / long
 pain / hurts

GRIEVANCES – HOW TO DEAL WITH GRIEF

There are two different kinds of grief – **major grief** and **minor grief**.

The major grief consists of past history and what happened in the past. Some of these major grief issues are mistaken for grievances and is taken out and acted upon accordingly.

Listed as follows :

- HISTORY
- FAMILY HISTORY
- FAMILY STORY
- RELIGIOUS HISTORY
- RELIGIOUS TEACHINGS
- RELIGIOUS BELIEFS & VALUES
- ALCOHOL HISTORY
- ALCOHOL STORY
- ALCOHOL BELIEFS & VALUES
- ALCOHOLIC'S STORY
- CHILDHOOD STORIES
- DIFFERENT ABUSES ... physical, mental, emotional etc.

CORE OF GRIEF

DIFFERENT PATTERNS OF GRIEF

DIFFERENT LEVELS OF GRIEF

GRIEF ... CONTROLLED BY FEAR

GRIEF ... UNCHARTERED WATERS OR TERRITORY

GRIEF ... TOO PAINFUL

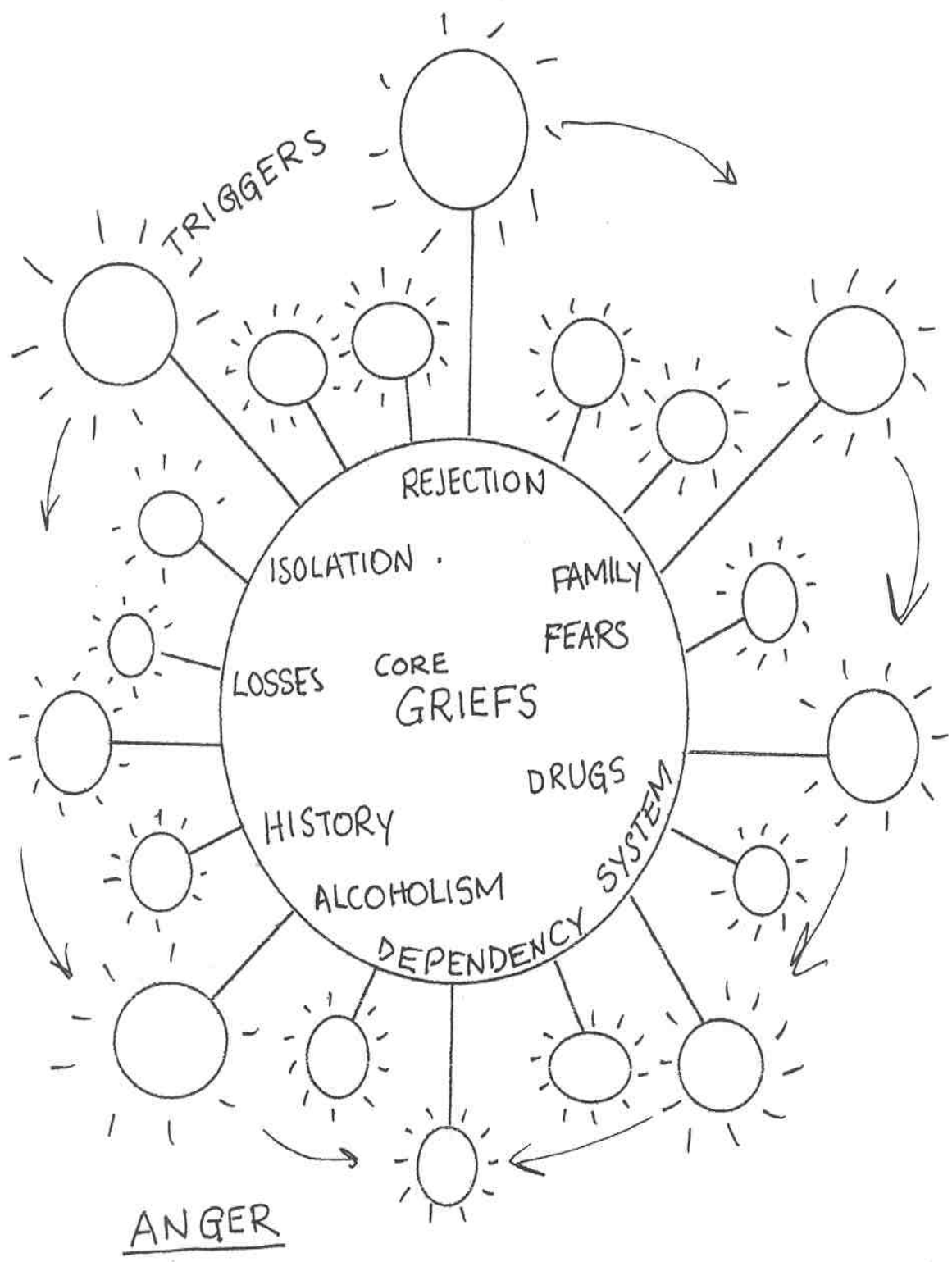
Don't want to touch that – not yet anyway !

MAJOR GRIEF

- **Prolonged grief**
 - **war**
 - **long term illness**
 - **losing a loved one**
 - **displacement ... loss of homeland**
 - **buried grief**

MINOR GRIEF / everyday grievances that are triggered off by history

- **Little things**
 - **name calling**
 - **regret**
 - **disappointments**
 - **quarrels or arguments**
 - **disagreements**



- Some people are quite open to their healing process.
- Some people want to have their problems sorted out straight away.

MENTAL

- Confusion
 - so many thoughts
 - so many issues
 - so many feelings
 - so many people involved
- Frustration
 - can't stand this anymore
 - want everything sorted out now
 - go and get this done for me today
- Angry
 - I'm angry at so and so because he/she did this to me
- Anxious
 - sick feeling
 - fidgety
 - jumpy/uneasy
 - ready to jump at someone (no matter who it is)
- Paranoid
 - someone is speaking about me; I know they are
 - they're thinking things
 - they want to hit me; that's why I'm afraid
 - I know what they're thinking about me but I don't care. Let them think things about me. I'm not worried (worry shows on the face)
 - they're working something out for me; I don't know what

- Psychological
 - suicidal thoughts
 - someone talking to me – a voice
 - I saw someone in my dreams and now he's out to get me
 - my life is over – I don't care to live anymore
 - my family doesn't love me anymore – I'll show them – they won't miss me when I'm gone
 - I'll show them – see if they care
 - don't cry for me when I'm gone
 - I had a bad dream last night and I saw that thing ... pray for me

- Utarre-utarre
 - I wish I had a mother like you
 - I want you to be my mother
 - I wish I was there again. I know I won't have any problems
 - If we moved to Darwin, things will be better for us. We'll make things work for us
 - I know that I can do better
 - I wasn't like this before. I wonder what made me like this
 - I wish I knew how to change and make things better for me
 - I remember you can remember a lot of things of the way things were in the past and how you were once happy

- Spirit – irrernte-arinye mape (spirits on the land)
 - alone
 - waiting to hear the right talk
 - patient
 - many gifts / talents
 - inspirations
 - lies dormant within – no movement
 - goes to sleep – he/she is sleeping within

* Waiting to reward that person/individual.

HEALING MODEL / METHOD OF HEALING

In this section we will follow these diagrams so that we can see where we are in terms of the healing process.

Let's take a look at each of these areas in terms of what the person would bring to a Healing Centre.

PHYSICAL

- Body is under stress and pressure
- Eyes look sunken
- Face worn out and not much life showing
- Body language – in the way that they sit
- Eyes not focussed but talks another hidden language
- Words that come out are not linked with their body
- Words that come out are usually tied with others
- Worry on the face that normally says much more than what they bring

EMOTIONAL

- some present fears about :
 - what family will say
 - what the husband will say
 - what the wife will say
 - afraid about what they say
- some bring an issue and talk about it and then talk about everything else and the issue gets lost in all of that talk
- some bring tears
- some bring confusing issues
- some cannot really understand the healing process, and so question it
- some are very angry about everything
- some are cold and don't want to go any further
- some are very confused and don't know how to express their feelings

Diagram 1.

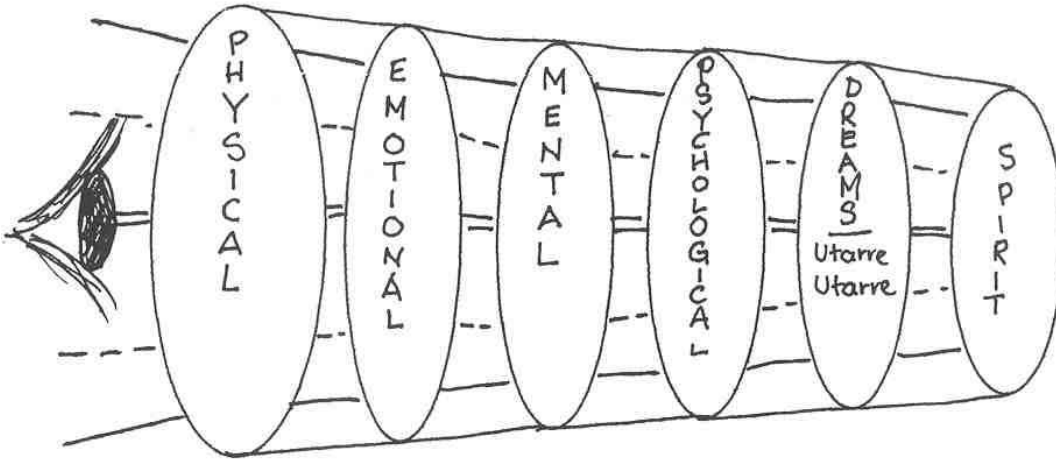
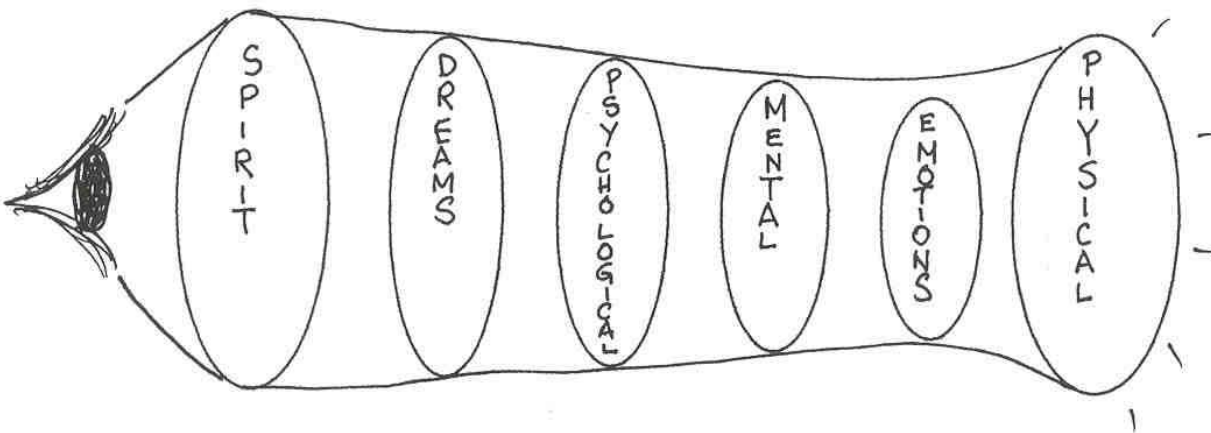


Diagram 2.



Will they continue to believe that these beliefs and values of alcoholism and drug addition become their daily life and live according to those beliefs. I say “No, definitely not”. There is a far greater meaning to life than the destruction of life. Adults are supposed to be the care-givers and must give to each child and other family members the right information about like and how each must behave with each other.

Diagram 1 shows all the inner areas of our whole being and every living essence of each of these areas that has broken down due to the dysfunctions of alcoholism and/or drug addiction.

We can sometimes worry about the physical part of the person because we can see them in their physical form, but what is going on inside ? Sometimes we cannot probe into other people’s affairs but we can offer them a safe environment so that they can feel safe to talk about whatever it is they want to talk about.

In diagram 1 we can see the eye and with this eye we can look into the very core of our being. When there is a force playing heavily against life and breaking these important areas down, we will then begin to see the deterioration of all these areas.

In my line of work I have begun to recognise different individual’s spirits who have shown me what it feels like to have sunshine within, the light within. Others have shown to me a different tone of the spirit and that is that I cannot feel the life essence of this individual and that worries me.

In diagram 1 there are different lines running inwards towards the spirit of the person. The outer lines indicate that we can focus on all the different levels equally, provided that the person stays true to the essence of the life energy force around us.

The lines above and below the eye indicate that a person can spend time looking into their own being but sometimes does not make these areas important and so brushes them away. It can sometimes mean that they can spend the time, but only when it suits them. We haven’t yet begun to touch the very core of our being.

The lines in line with the eyelashes indicate how we take care of our being less and less. Sometimes, or most times, we are in turmoil and hurtful things are happening. We haven’t any space to move around within ourselves and so the space within becomes crowded and we find it hard to breathe.

The faint broken lines looking directly through the eye indicates how we can look at issues with a “narrow view”. Looking at our issues with our “blinkers on”. This does not help us to look at everything with an open mind to consider all of our issues (whatever they may be) and do something positive about them. Our personal lifestyle and our issues can get lost in our every day living as we continue to live a type of lifestyle that alcoholism and/or drug addiction leads us to. We can very easily get caught up in all the “hum-drum”. Living just for material things cannot give us vital information for living our life, they are only part of it.

In diagram 1 we are able to tell if a person was not focussed in the spirit because of the certain unspoken facial expressions and body language. These are like “eyes not connecting with the words of the speaker”. We tried to make this known to them and it opened up another area of questioning such as “WHY ?”. This was good in the way this helps to bring the issues more into the open for the person.

DIAGRAM 2

Diagram 2 allows us to focus on the spiritual aspects of our life. If we are strong in spirit then we are better able to focus on all the possibilities and potential we have which are contained in the spirit.

There are three important aspects of the spirit (as we know them) and these are :

1. It is a total entity on its own.
2. It is a connection of the whole of life energy force within.
3. It brings information through our cultural/spiritual beliefs and through dreams.

The spirit is a total entity on its own. It does not need to be told anything. It will show us another world and another way of looking at things around us, especially in nature. Our spirit entity is one with nature.

This is what our people have moved away from and need to come back to. That very basic understanding of our existence.

In nature we are calm and still.

In nature we become totally different.

We feel nature and the spirits on the land.

In nature we are being guided by spirits on the land.

In nature we are being watched.

In nature the spirits place things in our paths, if we are open to nature.

If we are closed to nature we cannot see anything or feel anything other than feeling quiet and still.

If we take a lot of noise to natural settings we cannot see or feel the land and the spirits.

In nature we are given gifts, especially in our dreams. Our irrernte-arinye mape (the cool spirit people) will come into our dreams bearing symbols/signs that tell us that they are watching us all very carefully in our journey of life. They tell us that we are not alone when we are in nature with them. The irrernte-arinye mape bear the same faces as the ones who are living. It is their job to look after us.

In dreams we have symbols/signs for death, for life, for laughter, for learning, for teaching and for caring about other life and life forms.

Out in the bush here at Ltyentye Apurte the children have heard the irrernte-arinye mape talking. We can hear them but we cannot clearly hear what they are saying. I have heard them and I felt warm, knowing that they were looking after us. If we bring hostility to the bush or nature, they sometimes disappear but sometimes they can make people sick as a way of teaching them not to be nasty.

On one occasion a man who had a habit of drinking and walking off from the group walked off and nobody saw him or heard from him. His wife was worried and went looking for him but she couldn't find him. She asked all of the people who drank with him that night if they had seen him but they hadn't. Someone said that he had seen him earlier on that night but his wife was afraid that something may have happened to him and that he might be lying down somewhere in the scrub. She eventually gave up and went home where she couldn't forget about him. Her mind was giving her different kinds of images about what might happen to him. She let it rest in the hope that he would turn up any minute at the door and that she would be happy to see him.

Two days passed. It was a Wednesday morning when she went to her sister's place and sat and talked for a while. When she went home, there he was sitting at the table. He had made breakfast for himself although he said that he wasn't hungry. She was so happy to see him until she started to question him about where he had been.

This is his story ... I walked away and I didn't know where I was going. These people were taking me away to feed me and look after me. His wife said "What people?" and he said the irrernte-arinye mape. They took me cross country and even the children in the group were feeding me and making me laugh. I was happy with them. He said that they fed him so many bush tomatoes but he didn't feel sick or anything.

A few days later he took his wife, his children and a few family members to show them where they had taken him. They had covered a lot of country in just a few days because they came out at one of the bores to the north of us here. They also saw the outer skins of the bush tomatoes as they sat on the side of the road. They spotted his tracks where the irrernte-arinye mape had brought him back to the main road and left him to follow the road back home. The others couldn't see any other tracks. In all of this time, he did not speak but they communicated with him through his mind. So when he came back to the main road he said that his mind had clicked back to reality and he was then able to recognise the main road back to Ltyentye Apurte.

The spirit people can come to anyone because they are helping us along in our journey. They can see us but we cannot see them.

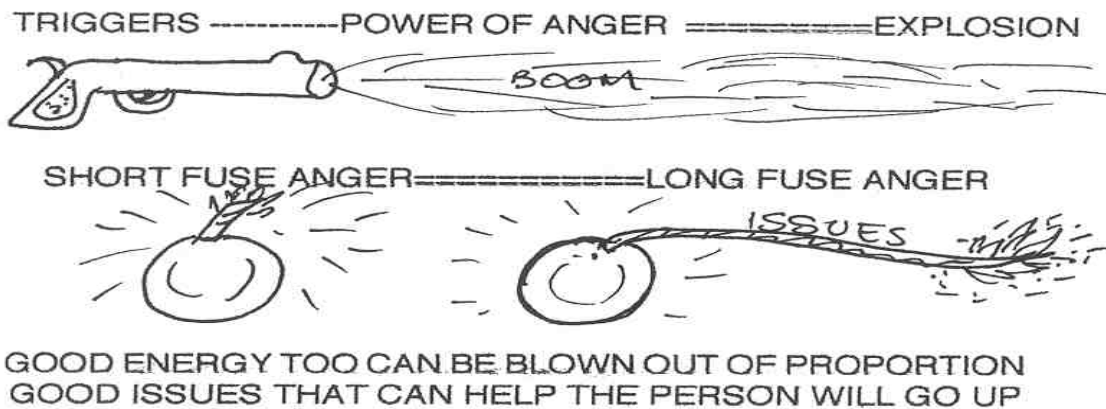
Out in nature all our worries dissolve into nothingness but when we come back to the community all our worries return.

In our dysfunctions we cannot see anything clearly or hear anything. All we hear about these days is "have you got some money", "get some grog while you're in town". These are some of the kinds of things said to families that hurt them because all families are struggling every day.

In alcoholism/drug addiction or any other kind of addition we are powerless and out of touch with reality.

In cultural/spiritual way of life we are in touch with power, with knowledge and with understanding. This makes it important not just for the individual but also for the whole family and the community as a whole.

- If issues are fired up with anger, the counsellor will calm that person and allow that person to look at the issues surrounding the anger.
- That anger will be dealt with in the appropriate manner in order to allow the person to feel the energy that the emotion brings.
- If other members of the family are present, that person must not direct that anger to them even if the family member/s is/are directly involved with the person's anger.
- A positive mechanism be placed to help people deal with anger as a way of releasing the energy that the anger brings.
- The counsellor makes the person aware of the dangers of carrying around the energy of anger within themselves. This will cause friction within the person and can be very explosive which will stop the healing process. It is a very destructive energy when used in the wrong way.



GOOD ENERGY CAN BE BLOWN OUT OF PROPORTION TOO
GOOD ISSUES THAT CAN HELP THE PERSON WILL GO UP

Diagram 3

**LIFE – TAKE IS SPIRIT-TALK
SPIRIT – TALK IS LIFE-TALK**

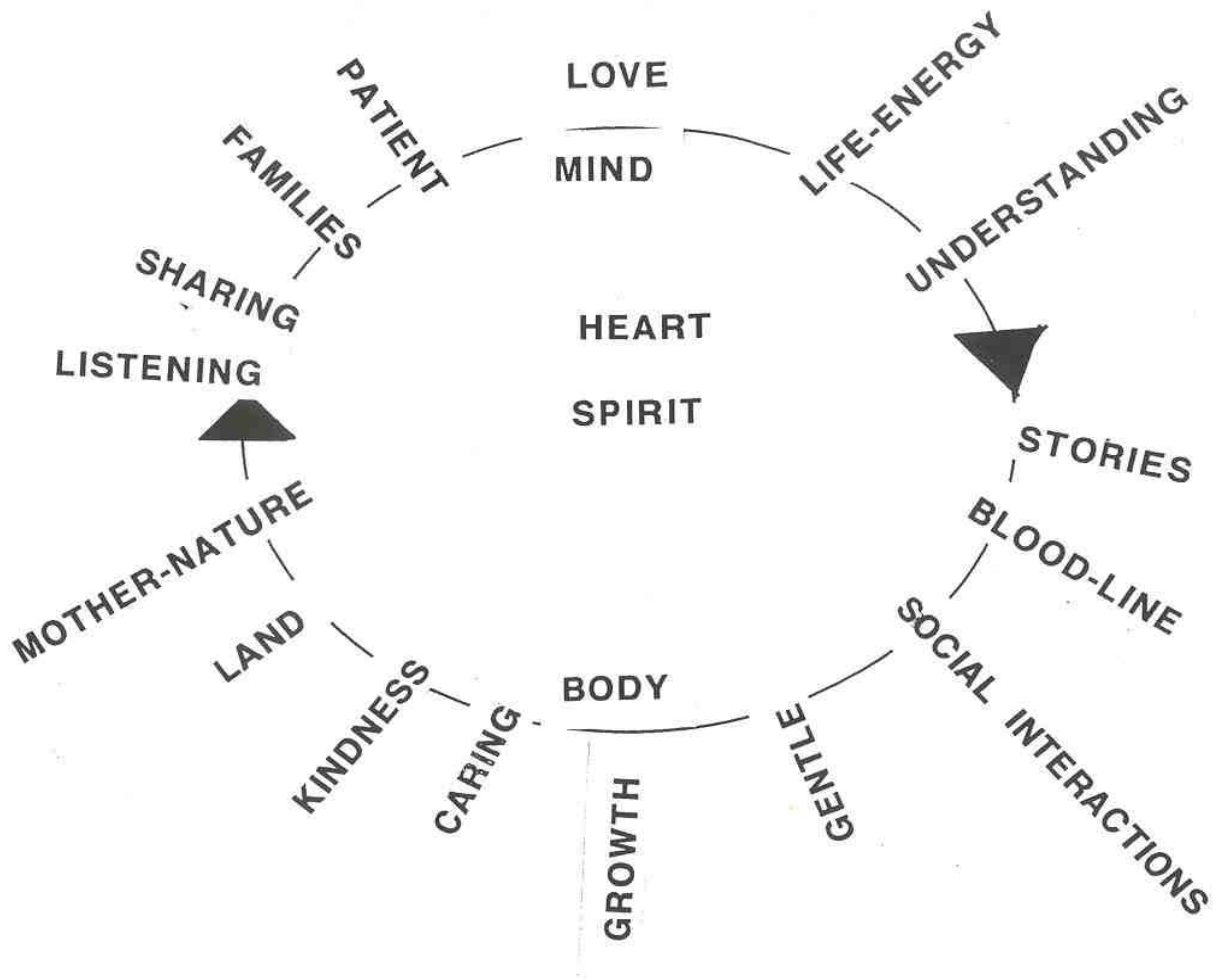


Diagram 3 talks about :

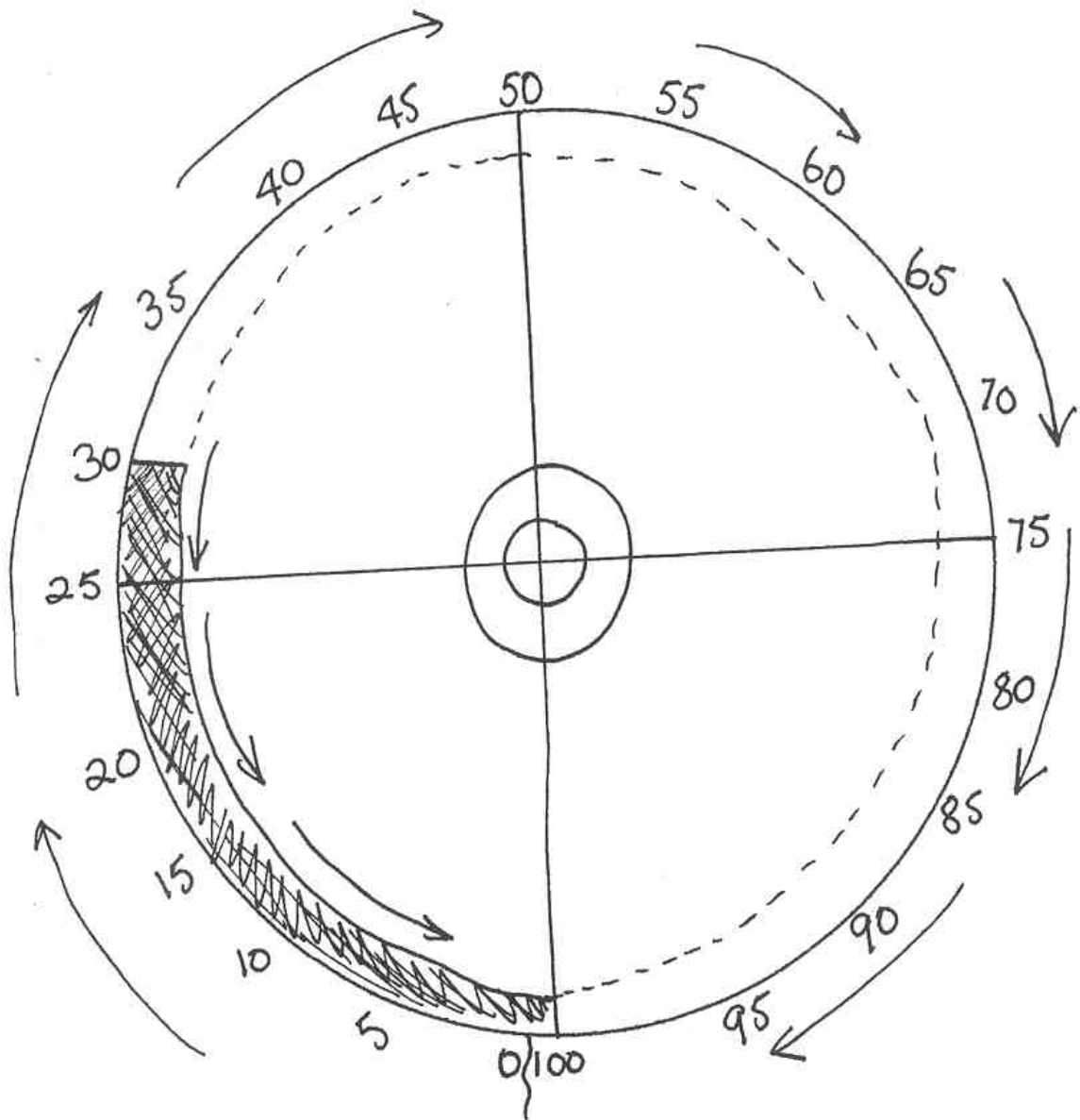
MIND BODY SPIRIT

**CONNECTING OR RE-CONNECTING SO THAT
ALL THREE AREAS WORK TOGETHER**

**ALL THREE AREAS HAVE THE VERY ESSENCE OF
LIFE-TALK & SPIRIT-TALK GROUNDED WITHIN EACH PERSON**

AGE TIMELINE

Life can stop at any age and if this happens then it's time to seek help.



- To enhance and empower individuals to find “self-worth, self esteem and confidence” as a member of a community.
- To enhance means to “raise in importance, to heighten one’s expectations of one’s self”.
- To empower means to “give to one’s self the power to see the importance of the Self. To see, feel, act and interact with others around you and feel comfortable doing so”.

What is “**self-worth**” ? What is “**self esteem**” ? What is “**confidence**” ?

Sometimes we hear these words all the time during our training, perhaps when participating in a self-development program or in our daily lives.

In this section we will look at this more deeply to try and understand what they are and what they are telling us.

SELF-WORTH	SELF ESTEEM	CONFIDENCE
To honour the Self.	To know that we can achieve what we are trying to achieve.	The ability to overcome difficulties with courage and faith in one’s whole Self.
Respecting one’s Self.	To believe that we can have the power to do what we are aiming for in this life.	To have the power to believe that we can do things with confidence and not cover them with shame.
To find the gifts within to help us in this journey.		

There may be some words and understanding about self-worth, self esteem and confidence building that we can think of. Here we will outline what is happening in this community concerning the above mentioned.

Over the years we have been trying to make people aware of themselves and to teach them to see things differently. The amount of shame that we have come across amongst people here is that there are stigmas attached. These stigmas have continued through generations of children and still continue to stick to them.

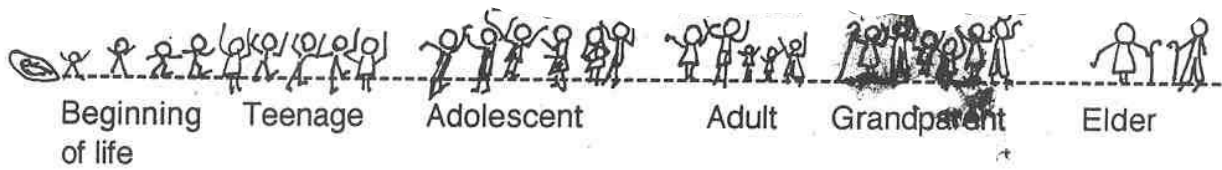
SPIRITUAL ASPECTS OF HEALING

Spiritual aspects of healing have three components. These are :

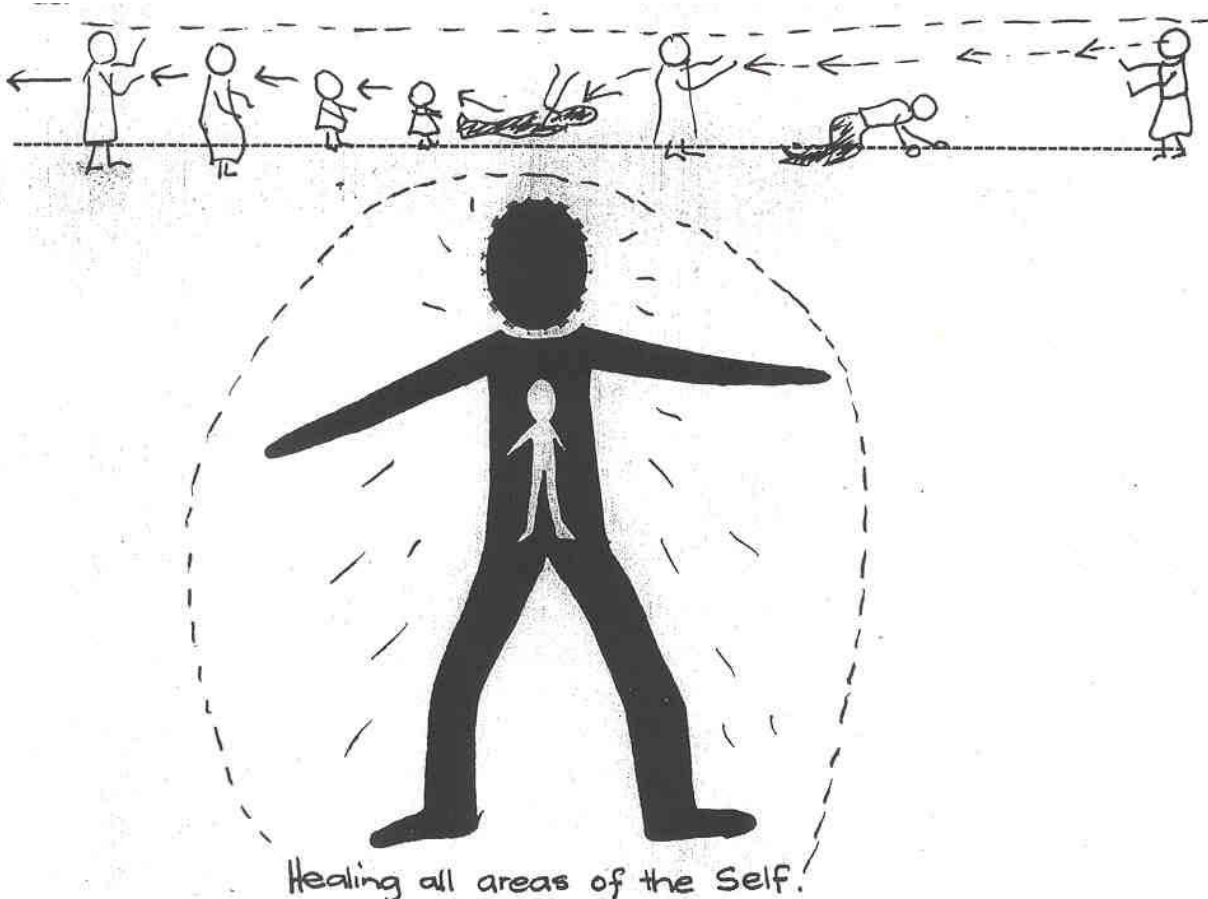
1. Re-connection to their individual spirit.
2. Dreams ... dreams interpret their inner turmoil.
3. Healing of their spirit and re-affirming own self-worth.

An example :

This is life directed by Culture, Language, Law, Kinship, Stories, Songs and Dance



Life affected by alcohol and/or other addictive lifestyle including material things of life and the placement of the spirit. This kind of lifestyle forgets the spiritual side of us.



1. RE-CONNECTION TO THEIR INDIVIDUAL SPIRIT

Re-connecting to the spiritual side can be difficult because most of us have never experienced gentle care and love. It would probably depend on who cared for us in our earlier years. Maybe sometime way way back in our lives we experienced love and care but we cannot feel this now. It is difficult to imagine that we could change the clock-work back to how things used to be and then just forget that these things just happened. In re-connecting with the spiritual side we are saying that it is those very things from the past that can help us to heal our whole self and we can learn from them and, most importantly, we can change “what we feel is important” and let go of “what is not important”.

Letting go of the many things that are attached to us makes it a little bit harder for us because some of us may carry a heavy burden. Sometimes a heavy burden such as being abused physically or sexually or perhaps we have been traumatised badly by some other means such as an car accident, prolonged illness or history etc.

In re-connecting to the spirit self, it can sometimes cause us to feel inadequate or that we are not worth it. We may be ashamed of what we may find within ourselves. We want to forget about everything and don't want to touch the things from the past. With this kind of thinking we are not allowing ourselves the opportunity to rediscover who we really are and what good lies within us.

Many of our people today just live for the physical living of life and nothing beyond that. The reason why this can be dangerous is that if we only focus on the physical side of life we are then prone to illnesses such as cancer, asthma etc.

Re-connection to the spirit can have its benefits but it must also be taken at its own cause or pace.

Sometimes we may have to wait a long time to have any results and because this whole process of re-connection takes some time before we can feel different, the need to go along gently is important.

Re-connection to the individual spirit can move in three different stages :

1. Reflection – remembering some or most of the past lifestyle.
2. Thought patterns consistent with experiences experienced.
3. Hanging on or letting go.

2. REFLECTION – REMEMBERING SOME OR MOST OF THE PAST LIFESTYLE

Reflecting back on one's lifestyle can be seen differently as is seen in today's living and lifestyle.

Things have changed and so we look at life differently today. For example, fashion has changed, types of housing, laws are changing, our parental roles have changed. There are now more and more women in the workforce and men are staying home and taking care of the home. This is not to say that this is wrong – this is just the way society is at that this present time and it will continue to change.

Reflecting on the Old People's way of life and how it was for them can be very rewarding because the teachings of life came subtly. As children learned about them they carried these teachings into their adulthood and found the skills were already in place. Copying and imitating !!

In reflection there may be some very disturbing experiences or traumas that people may have experienced. These just need to take a little time, walking through them with sensitivity, gentleness, love and care for one's self.

In reflection there may be some very rewarding experiences and these are the ones to channel into in order to retrieve some of that energy that's stored there. There is energy in abundance in each of these spaces and, with time, as we move through each of these issues, we will find more energy to focus on more positive things to do.

In reflection the spirit comes into focus and we sometimes become numb and feel a void in place ... kind of like saying "where do I/we go from here?".

For many years (depending on how long we have neglected our individual spirit) we come face to face with our spirit person and if we have not told ourselves or given ourselves any love for our being, we become complacent. We don't know quite what to say to our inner self. This is the time to use many affirmations to the inner self. It is very affirming to the individual spirit person and it will respond.

Aboriginal people have a very good way of communicating their past stories and talking about how things used to be for them even if it was hard at times. During those times we heard many personal stories but the hurt is sometimes (or most times) not felt as much as when it happened. Usually there would be a lot of giggles or even loud laughter but it is happy to remember things that have happened. Sometimes these stories that hurt the most are not spoken about and the ones that are easier to talk about are usually safe to tell.

3. **DREAMS ... DREAMS INTERPRET THE INNER TURMOIL**

Dreams are seen as a reflecting mirror. It can reflect back to us how we really are within ourselves. If we are having nightmares or very bad dreams, it is showing us that something is not right within us and we have to take a closer look at the symbols and meanings of the dream.

These images usually represent the turmoil, especially if the person has been isolated from their spirit for so long and feel so far away from themselves. Sometimes these images stand in the shadows and the person cannot find the real interpretation of the dream.

The true meaning for having dreams is that the Aboriginal people have what we call "The Dreamtime". It is believed that during the Dreamtime many ancestral spiritual beings travelled the earth and left behind their meanings of Life. The Beginnings, the Middle and the Endings of Life.

This is why Aboriginal people relate so well with every living life-form. These spiritual creator beings brought with them a Set of Wholeness and Completeness. This was directed by a very powerful Spirit of Creation. This Completeness and Wholeness comprised of a set of beliefs and values and laws relating to "how every living thing must relate and interact with each other".

The family symbols in the dream can identify each family and can predict to the families "what is to happen". Each family is connected to some life form eg. a sign of blood represents danger for that family, water is significant for another family, and so forth. If all these were written down we would probably end up writing a book.

I am just explaining this to try and see what is happening to people in terms of trying to understand what is actually happening to them when they are experiencing nightmarish dreams.

Everything was made possible in the dream, the Great Creator, relating to creation in the way that made the connection so powerful and so complete and in motion all the time. It never stops.

What I am now finding is that movement stops when life is in turmoil or a person is experiencing a feeling of life-less. The need becomes so much greater then to pick the person up and step backwards into their pain and hurt.

To provide an wholistic approach that is culturally and spiritually directed towards healing.

There are 3 components to the above :

- **WHOLISTIC APPROACH**

- physical
- emotional
- mental
- psychological
- Utarre-Utarre (the space where we daydream, contemplate, meditate etc)
- spirit
- environmental
- social

- **RESPECT FOR AVOIDANCE RELATIONSHIPS**

- using a third party
- breaking new grounds
- using family members to intervene

- **USING ABORIGINAL DOCTORS (Angangkere)**

- recognition of Aboriginal doctors and bringing them into the program to help
- recognition of their specific powers of healing

The wholistic approach must cover all aspects of a person's life because all areas are affected. If all these areas are covered during the healing processes, we then have a clearer and better way of healing the whole of the person and not just bits and pieces of the person.

Physical

- * **Position**
 - in the family
 - where they live
 - how many children are involved

- * **Physical Damage**
 - physical features
 - body organs
 - facial damage
 - whole of the body

- * **Emotional**
 - fears
 - anger
 - hurt
 - pain
 - guilt
 - grievances
 - mourning – loss of a loved one etc

- * **Mental**
 - thoughts, thinking patterns
 - headaches
 - dreams
 - nightmares
 - hallucinations
 - paranoia

- * **Psychological**
 - seeing shadows that are very haunting
 - that someone had sung the person
 - getting paranoid about others
 - seeing their own hanging
 - fore-telling their own fate
 - shadows that follow

- * **Utarre-utarre** (the space where we daydream, contemplate, meditate etc)
 - wishing that things could be better
 - thinking of old times when things were different
 - space where one can sit quietly
 - thinking hard about what it would be like if I changed
 - a space where one has a conversation with one's self

- * **Spirit**
 - empowering energy
 - hidden talents
 - gifts unfolding
 - higher power
 - self empowering power within
 - trust
 - acceptance
 - serenity

- * **Environmental**
 - health issues
 - one's own home
 - community – the community as a whole
 - rubbish issues
 - nature
 - re-cycling plastics, paper etc

- * **Social**
 - behaviour
 - interaction with others
 - fashion behaviour
 - interaction laws from Elders

* **Respect for avoidance relationships**

- using a third party / respect
 - because the Old Laws are still strong in this community, we use a third party to come between the counsellor and the person.
 - if the issues involved are great and the person is in need of counselling, then the whole family becomes involved.
 - if the family okays the person to receive counselling, then it is okay to counsel that person.

- breaking new ground
 - the spirituality centre is for everybody and it must be so in order for everyone to receive help. It is difficult to do a one-on-one with a person with avoidance relationships, but it has been done. Breaking new ground on a cultural level has been tough-going but it has been done and now we must move on.
 - the spirituality centre must always be a neutral ground so that people can see that this Healing Centre is for them and that it is their's.

- using family members to intervene
 - this has been a difficult area because the person sees the family members as sticking up for him whereas he/she feels that they should be able to make decisions for themselves and that the family members don't really help him/her at home.
 - this causes more distress for the family rather than it being a useful mechanism for intervention.

The process to make the person strong enough to share their stories is to have a small Smoking Ritual.

To help build a more trusting relationship with the person.

To help break down the fears that the person may have about themselves for being in this Healing Centre, the fears they have about themselves and others.

The Smoking Ritual only opens the door a little way for what the person is going to experience for the rest of the way.

It is just one way of showing what the Old People used to do to help clear the air and/or the way for comforting that person.

There have been many incidences whereby people have shown us what the Smoking Ritual can do for them eg. a young person came to us to tell us what it felt like for her. She said "You know that time when you smoked us. I felt really good and it was like you were touching me right inside and it made me feel really good".

The Smoking Ritual is also a way to help build stronger and more trusting relationships between those who come to us and help to build a better understanding between people who are feuding.

The Smoking Ritual is a purification ceremony, a celebration for the individual to finally come to that space where they can learn about themselves.

Here is some further information about the Smoking Ritual and its purposes over the years which now play an integral part in the healing processes of this Healing Centre.

SMOKING CEREMONY

The Smoking Ceremony is an important part Aboriginal people's spiritual lives. It relates specifically to our spiritual contentment and connectedness with everything around us. Many of our people used this ritual and performed it in many different ways.

Smoking Babies

The Old People smoked newly born infants/babies to protect them from unseen bad spirits, illness and, most importantly, so that a young baby will begin its journey in life with a strong spirit and that no harm will come to the baby.

Smoking Sacred Objects

The Old People smoked sacred objects that family members and individuals kept in their belongings. This was significant in the sense that these objects were valuable to them. These objects were usually used at sacred ceremonies and other important meetings and it meant a great deal to those individuals who owned these objects. These objects connected them to their land, their stories, their songs and their own family heritage.

Caves

When the Old People smoked caves inside and outside, it was to mark a special occasion that something important had happened there, but also to remember that someone may be buried in those caves. The caves played an important part in Aboriginal people's lives because it was a place where they were safe and out of danger from the natural disasters and the elements such as storms, dust-storms etc.

Homes

The Old People also had homes smoked. This was to signify that the home must be kept sacred at all times. If someone was becoming sick all the time, they would come and smoke the home. Usually burning some bushes and walking around inside the home to hunt away bad spirits that might be dwelling there. In many different parts of Australia many Aboriginal people had different ways or methods. Even different plants or bushes are used for the smoking ceremony.

Ourselves

As Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders descending down from a generation of very strong powerful and spiritual people, we too gained a powerful knowledge, understanding and wisdom about "who we are and where we are going". The smoking ceremony is one way that can learn to re-connect spiritually with the Old People, the Land, our families and ourselves.

Sick People

When people got sick, the Old People believed that bad unseen spirits made that person sick. They also believed that these unseen bad spirits entered through the person's body via their joints or limbs. When a person was smoked they carefully smoked each connecting joint, the top of the head, naval and they blew into each of the person's ears. They then smoked the immediate surrounding. They also believed that when an old member of the family died, they were afraid that perhaps the spirit of the old person might come back and make a baby or person sick.

So here we have a whole range of ways this smoking ritual was performed. We believe this plays an important part in re-connecting individuals to take up their journey, strengthened and to help them to seek answers within themselves.

It has a very calming effect on people and helps to clear the air sometimes.

The smoking ritual can only take place when the need arises.