

EXPLORING THE RELEVANCE OF CULTURAL SAFETY FOR REMOTE YOUTH SERVICES IN CENTRAL AUSTRALIA

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Abstract

This thesis aims to determine whether Cultural Safety is conceptually understood and practically implemented by organisations providing services for Indigenous youth living in remote communities in Central Australia. This thesis found that services for Indigenous people continue to be delivered predominately through a western paradigm. Building on a constructivist paradigm, post-colonial standpoint and influenced by a strength-based approach, this thesis challenges colonial systems which perpetuate inequality and points towards culturally safe services that enable service providers to work together with young people to create effective services that can foreground their capabilities. A literature analysis shows the discourses of Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars, evolving models of cultural training, and emergent research on Cultural Safety. This determined that Cultural Safety can be used as a model to decolonise individual and institutionalised attitudes and actions that compound the disadvantages that Indigenous youth face due to harmful systems, legislations and cultural hegemony. Linking these findings to the youth sector, primary qualitative data discerns the varied contextual understandings of Cultural Safety from interviewees working within this domain. The results highlight the strengths and challenges that act as enablers and barriers to formally implement Cultural Safety, overall finding substantial relevance of Cultural Safety in this context.

Chapter One: Introduction

Missionaries, Mercenaries and Misfits is a tripartite stereotype that often depicts the motivations of international and community development workers around the world. It is a trope well known of development workers in the remote regions of Central Australia, where Indigenous people living in culturally rich and diverse communities continue to see waves of non-Indigenous people entering their traditional lands and communities to contribute to the ever-growing social development sector (Sometimes 2018). While employment opportunities in this sector increase, so too does the gap that measures western standards against Indigenous disparities in economics, health and welfare (Martin 2020). This has become a space where many individuals who come to work in this region hold 'complex motivations, aspirations and ethical ambiguities arising from the legacy of colonialism' (Kowal 2015, p. 22). Kowal, an anthropologist who has researched the demographic of 'white anti-racists' in the Northern Territory, describes it as a space where the benevolent motivations of people with progressive worldviews and good intentions may still cause harm (2015, p. 22). In this context, often non-Indigenous individuals have come to *help* Indigenous people, and this creates an unequal relationship that reinforces marginalisation by favouring the dominant cultures knowledge and resources over Indigenous knowledges and capacities (Australians Together 2020). Additionally, this may act as barrier to access of services for many Indigenous people and hinder the opportunity for genuine community development that utilises local, cultural and contextual knowledges.

The researcher's positionality is located as a non-Indigenous person living in the Arrernte country of Mparntwe/Alice Springs in the Northern Territory, Australia; with over twenty years' experience of living in remote communities with Indigenous families and of working in youth and community development. Recognising the unearned privilege that is afforded to non-Indigenous white settlers in Australia and in the face of this inequality, this research also acknowledges the generosity and resilience of Indigenous people from many nations within Australia.

Building on this epistemology, this thesis focuses on issues of power located within broader dominant power structures in society, and the conceptual and

practical aspects of decolonisation. This research explores the effectiveness of cross-cultural training models as a tool for those within the dominant culture to recognise unequal power relations at individual, community and societal levels. Specifically, this research seeks to find out the applicability of the health-based concept of Cultural Safety as a model for cultural training in the youth sector in Central Australia, by focusing on its suitability for the context each service provider works within. Emerging from this problem, the primary research question considered is this:

Is Cultural Safety relevant for organisations who provide services to Indigenous youth living in remote regions of Central Australia?

Cultural Safety was developed by New Zealand/Aotearoa Indigenous scholar and healthcare professional Irahepati Ramsden (2002). Ramsden primarily addresses the connection between harmful colonial processes resulting in the deprivation of land, resources and cultural identity to negative health outcomes such as major health and disease outcomes experienced by Maori patients (2002, p. 5). Ramsden describes how culturally unsafe practices 'diminish, demean or disempower the cultural identity and well-being of an individual' (Nursing Council of New Zealand 2002, p. 9). A Cultural Safety model identifies how an imbalance of power is reinforced in healthcare by valuing dominant western systems over Maori systems of knowledge. This model shifts the power so that the recipient decides whether the service is culturally safe, and the health care service provider has an awareness of their positionality within this paradigm.

Cultural Safety has since been applied in Australia with Indigenous scholars 'adapting the concept to fit their particular socio-cultural and historical circumstances' (Australian Human Rights Commission [AHRC] 2018, p. 4). The Australian Royal Commission and Child Safe Standards address the importance of Cultural Safety within justice and welfare systems in relation to cultural identity and Indigenous youth. This is in response to the increasing rates of Indigenous youth suicide, incarceration and placement of children in out-of-home care away from their families and culture (AHRC 2018, p. 9). This thesis analyses the importance of Cultural Safety, focusing on the demographic of young Indigenous people in the Central Australian region affected by the impacts of intergenerational trauma as a result of a

history of colonisation and ongoing discriminatory legislation (d'Abbs et al. 2019, p. 9).

An example of a successful Cultural Safety framework that specifically focuses on the challenges facing Indigenous youth in Central Australia is the documentary *In My Blood It Runs*, released Australia wide this year. It is a film made in genuine partnership with local Indigenous Arrernte families and a team of non-Indigenous producers. Its central themes show the impact of Australia's colonialist history that affects Indigenous youth today through institutionalised discrimination in the justice system and education in the Northern Territory. Both the film and the making of the film advocate strongly for Cultural Safety practices based on 'deep equity orientated collaboration [that] is fundamental for social justice' (Newall 2017). Using this practice model, Indigenous allies walk in solidarity with Indigenous people to share their insights, and reinforce their strengths, cultural identities and narratives, often overlooked in the deficit discourse cited as *Indigenous issues* in mainstream media (Maddison 2019, p. 105). This model also establishes a realignment of motivations so that development workers can become allies alongside Indigenous people, in position with the Indigenous activism standpoint, addressed by Indigenous scholar, Watson, 'If you have come here to help me you are wasting your time, but if you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together' (cited in Leonen 2004, para. 2). From this position, there can be meaningful dialogue about equity and the current challenges that Australia and Indigenous people face together (Land 2007).

This thesis is grounded in post-colonial theory and underpinned by a community development strength-based approach, which recognises the assets within a community as a foundation to address disadvantage. Furthermore, it acknowledges the diversity and uniqueness of multiple Indigenous ways of knowing beyond the dominant western paradigm (Ife 2016, p. 6; Stake 2010, p.14). Based on the researcher's community development values and lived experience, a constructivist paradigm was selected for the methodology to build new knowledge in an analysis of primary and secondary data.

An analysis of literature from Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars deconstructs privileges and power to understand the impact of colonisation for many

Indigenous youth living in remote regions of Central Australia. The literature review builds a foundation for transformative practice by clarifying evolving concepts and practice models of cultural training. It contributes to emerging understandings of the suitability of Cultural Safety models for organisations providing services for Indigenous people beyond the health sector. Specific to the research question, the analysis identifies a gap in the existing literature of effective cultural training in the youth sector. An analysis of the primary data addresses this gap, by applying qualitative research methods to garner insights from staff working for organisations in the youth sector in Central Australia. Hence, this thesis elicits information about the current situational context of the sector in relation to the research topic.

Accordingly, this thesis is structured as follows: Chapter Two reviews the key literature specific to youth in Central Australia, the impact of colonisation linked to the efficacy of cultural training models; Chapter Three outlines the theoretical framework underpinned by a constructivist paradigm and an overview of the methodology and qualitative data methods used to collect data; Chapter Four interprets the results of the primary data; and concludes the thesis by discussing the key findings and implications for Cultural Safety as relevant for the youth sector in Central Australia, thus answering the research question.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

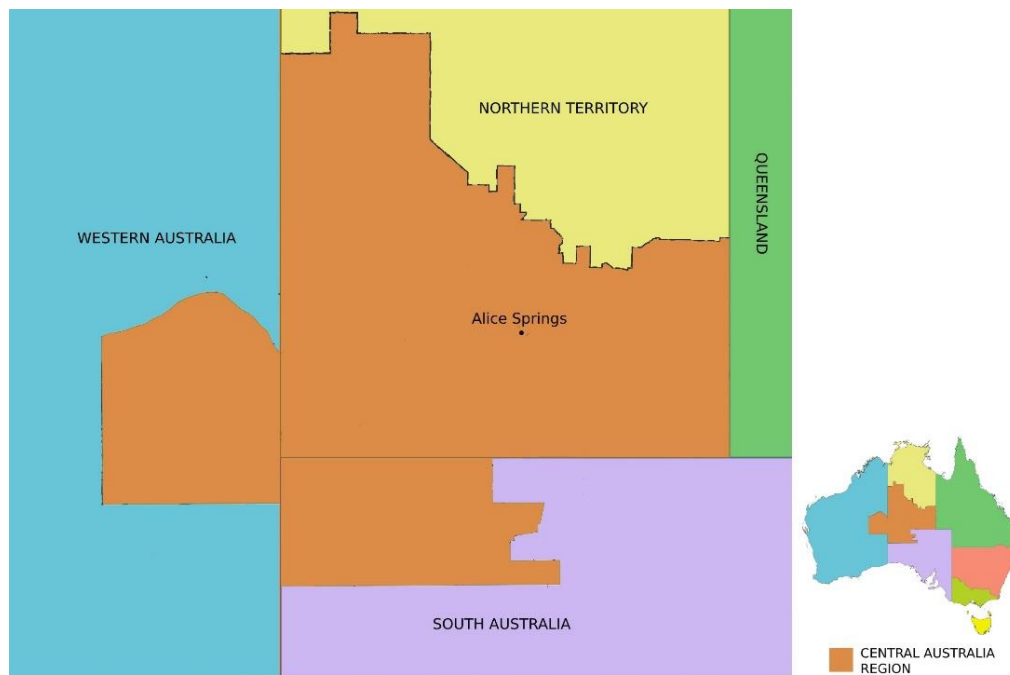
This chapter analyses power, colonial systems and cultural training with relevance to Indigenous youth in Central Australia. The first section considers what is known about the socio-cultural, political and economic contexts of young Indigenous Australians from remote communities in Central Australia and the inequalities that affect them but do not define them. The second section analyses settler colonial concepts and the dismantling of these structures through decolonisation from Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars. The third section focuses on the specific literature from selected reports, studies and evaluations pertinent to youth programs in remote Central Australia. The final sections analyses the existing literature on the evolving cultural training models that may have relevance for the youth sector in Central Australia. The literature review analyses theories, programs, concepts and frameworks that aim to mitigate against individual, systemic and structural inequality; to construct new knowledge where the gaps exist; and to determine the efficacy of Cultural Safety within this context.

Statistical and Contextual background

The focus location of this thesis is Central Australia, a culturally rich and diverse region where young Indigenous people live in unique socio-cultural, political and economic contexts. Located in a geographically isolated area in the semi-arid centre of Australia, this region spans across three states: Northern Territory, South Australia and Western Australia, covering an area of approximately 630,000 square kilometres (Australian Bureau of Statistics [ABS] 2016a; ABS 2018c), as shown in Figure 1. Central to this region is the town of Alice Springs in the Northern Territory with a population of approximately 26,000 (ABS 2018a), where the central councils and organisations that service the remote communities are based. Currently, there are fewer than ten regional councils and non-government organisations who provide youth services to remote communities in this region. These councils and organisations provide services to approximately 10,000 people who reside in more than 70 communities (ABS 2016a; ABS 2018a; ABS 2018b).

These communities include the Indigenous language groups: Arrernte, Warlpiri, Kaytej, Anmatyere, Alyawarre, Pintupi, Luritja, Ngatatjara, Ngaanyatjarra, Pitjantjatjara and Yankunytjatjara (Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies 2009). Indigenous youth aged between 10 to 24 years living in this region make up 49% of the region's overall population (ABS 2016). Mainly for this demographic, English is not their first language, and many are multi-lingual (Shaw 2010, p. 1). A significant number of youth experience health and socio-economic disadvantage; therefore, context-specific, relevant and effective services for youth have been recognised as critical (Fietz 2006, p.20).

Figure 1: Map of Central Australia Region (Central Desert Regional Council n.d.; NPY



Women's Council n.d.)

For many young Indigenous people, there is a cumulative impact from the structural and systematic disadvantage faced by Indigenous people since colonisation by a history of harmful government legislations over the last two hundred years. The 2016 Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage report showed that,

Intergenerational trauma [is a result of] the ongoing and cumulative effects of colonisation, dispossession of land, language and culture, the erosion of cultural and spiritual identity, forced removal of children and racism and discrimination. (Australian Government Productivity Commission 2016)

Further, Atkinson, Nelson and Atkinson describe the impact of this dispossession,

the high rates of poor physical health, mental health problems, addiction, incarceration, domestic violence, self-harm and suicide in Indigenous communities are directly linked to experiences of trauma. These issues are both results of historical trauma and causes of new instances of trauma, which together can lead to a vicious cycle in Indigenous communities. (Atkinson, Nelson & Atkinson cited in *Australians Together 2020*, para. 5).

These issues have been highlighted in the 2020 findings of the Australian governments twelfth *Close the Gap* report, which reveal an increase in the adverse outcomes for Indigenous people in the areas of health, education and employment (Martin 2020).

The following data shows the statistics on youth suicide and incarceration, demonstrating the critical need to address the disadvantage experienced by Indigenous youth. Between 2011 to 2015, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people accounted for 26% of all suicide deaths of children aged 5-17 years (ABS 2017). The detention rate for Indigenous children aged 10-17 years was 26 times the rate for non-Indigenous youth in 2016, the most overrepresented percentage of youth in the justice system in the world (ABS 2016b; Anthony 2017). Of the nearly 600 children incarcerated in Australia each year, (100%) 94% of children in detention in the Northern Territory are Indigenous, and 82% of those children were in remand without a conviction (Northern Territory Government 2017, p. 9). In Australia, all states and territories enact laws that allow the incarceration of ten-year-old children, even though the 2017 Royal commission into the Northern Territory youth justice system recommended the age of criminal responsibility to be raised to twelve years of age (Commonwealth of Australia 2017, p. 46). Currently young children in the Northern Territory may be removed from their families in Alice Springs and placed in detention centres hundreds of kilometres away from family and support (Terzon 2019). Furthermore, the 2017 NT Royal Commission into the treatment of Indigenous youth in the justice system in Northern Territory, described the systemic failings of juvenile detention centres as 'shocking' with punitive and inhumane environments lacking basic programs for rehabilitation (Royal Commission 2017). These statistics and findings show the ongoing dislocation of Indigenous

children from their family and culture as reported in the 2017 Royal Commission and Board of Inquiry into the Protection and Detention of Children in the Northern Territory (AHRC 2018, p. 9). However, these statistics alone are not a complete representation of Indigenous youth. An explicit focus on this data alone may perpetuate negative stereotypes centred on extreme disadvantage, marginalisation and a sense of hopelessness (Fogarty et al. 2018; Shay, Woods & Sarra 2019).

In 2019, Indigenous youth convened at the Garma Festival in the Northern Territory to present *The Imagination Declaration*, a document that gives a collective voice to young Indigenous Australians (Shay, Woods & Sarra 2019). The declaration called upon the Prime Minister and all Australians to 'Remove the limited thinking around our disadvantage, stop looking at us as a problem to fix, set us free to be the solution' (Garma Youth Forum 2019, The Imagination Declaration). These aspirations are also demonstrated in the 2020 documentary *In My Blood It Runs* through the lens of Djujan, a bilingual twelve-year-old and an Indigenous youth of Arrernte and Garrwa descent. Djujan tells his story of the difficulties he experienced falling through the gaps of the mainstream education system and of finding himself in trouble with the police. He feared that he would be taken away from his family and placed in the Don Dale detention centre in Darwin, 1500km away. With strong support from his family, Djujan reconnected with his cultural roots and began learning about culture, land and healing (Kwan 2019). In 2019, Djujan travelled to Geneva to address the United Nations Human Rights Council, where he appealed for the Australian government to 'stop putting 10-year-old kids in jail' (Hoosan 2019, para 1). Alongside his family, he also addresses the inequality in the education and justice system in the Northern Territory and calls for these systems to include Indigenous knowledges, histories and culture. In this example, Djujan, gives us a contextual insight into his lived experience and hence, a more complete understanding of his situational context beyond statistics.

This thesis builds upon statistical and contextual data to determine the relevance of frameworks that may further create opportunities for young Indigenous people in Central Australia. Next, by shifting the focus to those working within youth development, this thesis considers the actions that can be taken to improve understanding, practices and systems that inform the services that are delivered to Indigenous youth. The following section analyses theories that deconstruct colonial

power, providing a foundational understanding of current practices within the youth sector in Central Australia.

Concepts of Colonialism

Central to community development is an awareness of the impact of colonialism on Indigenous people and of colonialist practices (Ife 2016, p. 185). Ife (2016) describes 'the complex and subtle and pervasive ways in which these systems operate' by pointing out how certain groups are marginalised, and western systems are imposed (p. 263). This is exemplified through dominant systems of language, media, education, organisational structures, justice, health and welfare systems and the economy. By recognising the history of exploitation of Indigenous people, the following research by Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars explores the systems of power that have existed since colonialism and today continue to impact on Indigenous people (Kickett-Tucker et al. 2016, p. 91).

The marginalisation of Indigenous youth living in remote regions of Central Australia can be understood through the existing systemic power structures in the context of past and present legislations and prejudices embedded in Australian society. There are many examples of how systems established under colonialism have denied the basic human rights of Indigenous people. Three examples of discriminatory legislations and acts enacted on Indigenous people spanning from pre-federation through to today are: the Protection Act (1869), the Australia-wide assimilation policies (1910 – 1970), and the Northern Territory Emergency Response (2007), a legislation that specifically enforced restrictions upon Indigenous communities, including work and welfare reforms still enacted today as the Stronger Futures legislation. The Protection Act (1869) denied human rights of Indigenous people through control over residency, freedom of movement, exploited labour, marriage and custody of children (Atkinson, Nelson & Atkinson 2010, p. 8). The Australia wide assimilation policies, spanning over sixty years, continued to forcefully remove up to 1 in 3 Indigenous children from their families, resulting in 100,000 children placed in institutions (Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission 1997). Now known as the Stolen Generation, the generations of grief and loss of culture still impacts Indigenous people today (Atkinson, Nelson & Atkinson 2010, p. 12). The 2007

Northern Territory Intervention (NTER) required the suspension of the Racial Discrimination Act 1975, allowing interventionalist policy that specifically targeted Indigenous people. This legislation relinquished Indigenous control of communities and the authoritative response included the deployment of police and army personnel to remote communities in the Northern Territory to enforce the restrictions. Many of the key components such as the quarantining of welfare payments to Indigenous recipients only, are still enacted today through the Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory Act 2012 (Maddison 2019).

In 2017, to reconcile colonial Australia's past and present structural injustices two hundred and fifty Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders convened at Uluru for a historic consensus for constitutional recognition. In the collective document, known as the *Uluru Statement From The Heart*, the leaders stated, 'these dimensions of our crisis tell plainly the structural nature of our problem' (Referendum Council 2017). They call for substantive change at a structural level through constitutional reform, by enshrining an Indigenous voice in the constitution. They also call for truth-telling, to acknowledge the pre-colonial history of Australia. Furthermore, acknowledging that Australia is the only commonwealth nation not to have a treaty with its Indigenous people, they seek to have their sovereignty, which was never ceded, formally recognised and to coexist with the crown (Referendum Council 2017). All of the requests in the *Uluru Statement From The Heart* were emphatically denied by the Australian government in 2017 (Hobbs 2017).

Past and present government legislations may continue to influence the systems and structures of mainstream Australia through cultural hegemony: whereby civil society perpetuates the marginalisation of Indigenous people disseminated by negative media representation, pejorative discourse and attitudes towards Indigenous people (Ife 2016, p. 263). Indigenous scholar, Tuala (2019), argues that it is important to challenge these dominant cultural paradigms that are accepted as the status quo and continue to reinforce systemic inequality. Hence, Tuala argues that,

there needs to be a process of critical self-reflection and unlearning. There needs to be historical truth telling and acknowledgment [...] The systems and the frameworks that form the foundations of our society have been developed by and for the dominant culture. It is time we collectively challenge these systems. (Tuala 2019, para. 15)

Accordingly, the following literature analyses colonialism through settler colonial and decolonisation theories to understand the structures of legislative, institutional and societal power that impact on Indigenous youth in Central Australia.

Non-Indigenous scholars, Stracosh and Macoun (2017) attribute Australia's ongoing dispossession and control of Indigenous people from a settler colonial standpoint, to 'colonialist attitudes [that] are as rife and formative today as ever in Australian History' (2017, p. 35). The premise of settler colonial theory by non-Indigenous historian, Wolfe, is of the exogenous assertion of colonial sovereignty over land, institutions and identities, through the dispossession of the Indigenous occupants and replacement by settlers (Wolf 1999, p. 4). Wolfe's argument of a 'logic of elimination' is based on the theory of the settler's intent of eradicating Indigenous people in the process of colonisation (1994, p. 4). A salient argument of Wolfe's is that 'Invasion is a structure, not an event' and that settler colonialism continues to exist today to the detriment of the colonised (Wolf 1999, p. 2). This proposition is a common theme in the following literature by prominent Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars.

Indigenous scholars seek to further the discourse of settler colonialism; Moreton-Robinson (2015, p. 10), with prolific research grounded in Indigenous standpoint theory, emphasises 'postcolonising'; a concept that is congruent with settler colonialism and the ongoing effects of cultural domination. Moreton-Robinson's standpoint, however, is divergent from Wolfe's in that it holds more space for Indigenous survival rather than that of the 'logic of elimination' (2015, p. 11). Moreton-Robinson emphasises a reassertion of Indigenous identity and Indigenous agency by highlighting the narratives of Indigenous resistance and resilience (2015, p. 11). Accordingly, another Indigenist perspective by Kinoshi (2019) argues about the limited space for Indigenous voices in settler colonial theory. Kinoshi points to an emphasis on 'extra-colonial Indigenous histories', whereby knowledge from settler colonial theory can be deepened by adding the shared knowledge of Indigenous histories (2019, p. 18). An example of this is Pascoe's 2014 seminal novel *Dark Emu*, primarily influenced by Indigenous knowledges. Pascoe adjusts preconceived notions of Australia's history to include accounts of pre-colonial life in Australia and thus extending the current understandings beyond colonialism (Pascoe 2014).

Tuhiwai-Smith (1999), a formative Indigenous theorist in decolonisation methodology, agrees that colonial systems are still present today and hence, the need for decolonisation; the processes of dismantling colonial systems and reclaiming Indigenous ways of knowing and being (1999, p. 101). Additionally, Chilisa (2011) in *Indigenous Research Methodologies* gives another Indigenist understanding of decolonisation as 'a process of centring the concerns and worldviews of the colonized Other so that they understand themselves through their own assumptions and perspectives' (Chilisa 2011, p. 13). In this way, decolonisation can be used as a tool to foreground Indigenous knowledges.

Alternatively, non-Indigenous Canadian scholar Regan (2005), uses a transformative framework to consider a non-Indigenous approach to decolonisation. In line with the concept of Cultural Safety, Regan described decolonisation as a reflexive process that calls for the practice of,

unsettling the settler within' [to] move us from unconsciousness, racism, denial and guilt about our history to critical inquiry, reflection and social action using history as a catalyst for change. (Regan 2005, p. 1)

In this way, Regan urges settler colonials to enact the process of decolonisation by questioning and unlearning colonised practices, ways of thinking and language that delegitimises Indigenous ways of knowing (Kickett-Tucker et al. 2017, p. 99). A critical awareness of these processes is crucial to community development, decolonisation and culturally safe practices (Chilisa 2011; Coffin & Green 2017; Taylor 2005).

A commonality in emergent literature from Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars is of how decolonisation seeks to question non-Indigenous people's motives for working with Indigenous people (Land 2015, p.202). Accordingly, Land (2015), in *Decolonizing Solidarity*, calls for Indigenous allies to align their motives with Indigenous agendas. However, the following literature discusses the often-inherent hidden agendas and implicit motivations in the work of non-Indigenous people working within an Indigenous context.

Discrimination and ethnocentrism may be mitigated against by non-Indigenous people understanding and recognising their intentions for working in an

Indigenous context (Mooney, Riley & Blacklock 2017, p 61). Accordingly, Beadle (2018), notes that an imbalance of,

power is exacerbated by the attitudes many bring with them: that they have come to “help” the “poor” Aboriginal people and encourage them to aspire to non-Indigenous notions of wellbeing, health and education. (Beadle 2018, p. 53)

Beadle shows how this attitude condescends and reinforces power inequalities even if unintentionally and used with good intentions. Benevolence may imply that one party has greater resources than another, reinforcing the status quo and deepening the social divide. Often this attitude fails to recognise the existing assets within a community and Indigenous ways of knowing (Australians Together 2020, para. 1).

Within the health sector, Taylor (2005, p. 137) argues for decolonising cultural training, through the process of recognising ‘one’s innate assumptions, biases and prejudices toward those who are different’. McIntosh (1988), agrees that privilege cognisance is a critical factor in decolonisation and without it, there is a danger of unintentionally imposing one’s own beliefs and values on to others. This means that there needs to be a recognition of the unearned advantage of white privilege as a function that systematically confers dominance and compounds disadvantage (McIntosh 1988, p. 34).

Although there is not a singular recipe to subscribe to decolonisation, Edwards and Taylor disseminate some useful applications that may fit some contexts to decolonise practice,

it might include examining the language of division - the 'us and them' dialogues, critiquing policy for potentially disempowering practices, refocusing on capacity rather than popular deficits and blame approaches to Indigenous people (Edwards & Taylor 2008, p. 2)

Furthermore, aligning with community development principles, Edwards and Taylor consider decolonising as an opportunity for transforming current practice to shift towards a more socially just position (2008, p.2).

The above literature challenges the assumptions of dominant colonial configurations of power through an analysis of the discourses from Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars, through the lens of settler colonialism and decolonisation. The following section builds upon this knowledge by demonstrating how these

systems and structures have influenced youth services and the programs that are offered from predominately a western paradigm.

Youth Programs in Central Australia

This section turns its focus to how dominant systems of power have influenced western approaches to youth programs for Indigenous youth in Central Australia and analyses the research within this domain. In searching for this specific criterion, only a limited number of evaluations, studies and reports are published. Many studies specific to this region address the endemic petrol sniffing in remote communities throughout the 1980s, which affected young people, their families and whole communities (Nous Group p. 12). Since the introduction of low aromatic fuels in 2005, there has been a 95.2% reduction in the number of people sniffing petrol since 2007 (d'Abbs et al. 2019, p. 6). However, as the root cause of these problems have not been resolved, such as the transmission of poverty and poor health as a result of intergenerational disadvantage, the high rates of volatile substance misuse [VSM] in the form of alcohol and other drugs continue to be a concern (d'Abbs et al. 2019; The Senate 2006).

Beyond VSM specific reports, there have been a small number of studies that have reviewed the effectiveness of youth programs in Central Australia. They studied diversionary programs for Indigenous youth in remote communities with broad social and health objectives (Fietz 2006; Lopes, Flouris & Lindeman 2013; Nous Group 2017; Shaw 2010). All the studies, including the VSM reports, found that effective youth programs can be critical in enhancing community capability and decreasing anti-social behaviour and volatile substance abuse. These studies also address the limitations of youth services specific to this region, such as geographical isolation, extreme climates and other challenges. Fietz (2006) points out in a report for best practice models of youth programs in Central Australia,

youth programs that do exist tend to be subject to the vacillations of community functionality, the insecurity of ongoing funding arrangements and the difficulties of recruitment and retention of quality youth workers. (Fietz 2006, p. 1)

Fietz, therefore, identifies the need for further research on effective youth programs that can respond to these challenges.

The reports by Nous Group (2017) and Linderman, Lopez and Flouris (2013) show that many youth service models are influenced by the dominant culture, and thus they may inadvertently reinforce existing power inequalities. The reports argue that the predominance of western mainstream models practised in remote community youth programs often fail to meet the specific needs and contexts of Indigenous youth and as a result only have tokenistic merit (Lopes, Flouris & Linderman 2013, p. 60). This is demonstrated by the proliferation of mainstream Sports and Recreation models that are broadly applied to remote community youth development programs (d'Abbs et al. 2019; Evans et al. 2015; Fietz 2006; Ife 2016; Lopes, Flouris & Linderman 2013).

A 2019 longitudinal study by d'Abbs et al. (2019) into VSM in remote communities reported concerns raised by remote communities about the limited number of options available other than sports (2019, p. 7). Although sport is central to many communities, Evans et al. argue that participation in sport among Indigenous Australians has been proffered as a panacea for many Indigenous problems that offers 'elusive social outcome' (Evans et al. 2015, p. 1). They argue that to contribute resources predominantly to sports programs developed in a western paradigm, is to limit Indigenous people to a western definition of success and take away resources that may be directed towards other more inclusive programs and events (Evans et al. 2015).

Indigenous youth who live in remote communities have broad interests similar to mainstream youth, which includes but is not limited to sport, arts, music, dance, circus, skateboarding, cycling and multi-media. However, the situational context that they live in makes it critical to also recognise their unique cultural identities. Fietz (2006) states that many sports and recreation programs are 'based on the assumption that young Aboriginal people have the same aspirations, needs and interests as mainstream Australian kids' (2016, p.15). However, in this context, young people's aspirations are affected by their cultural identity and relational Aboriginal kinship systems and lore, which are essential factors that influence accessibility and engagement in youth programs (Fietz 2006, p. 18).

There is also a commonality in the studies of inadequate engagement of local people in Indigenous communities in the design and implementation of their services and programs (Beadle 2018, p. 36). Ife shows that,

Aboriginal communities are constantly being offered community programs developed in Western terms from an outsiders perspective without valuing local community knowledge, expertise and ways of achieving community participation. (Ife 2003 in Coffin & Green 2017, p.77)

Specific to the region, studies identify that a community development approach that develops and designs programs with young people results in an increase in relevance and engagement (Lindeman, Flouris & Lopes 2013; Nous Group 2017). An recent evaluation by Nous Group (2017, p. 8) inquired into the economic capital invested into best practice models and identified examples of youth programs that include 'cultural engagement activities such as bush trips; leadership development activities such as youth boards and committees; and training and employment initiatives' (2017, p. 8). The evaluation concluded that youth programs created this way show a significant social return on investment.

An example of a move away from the mainstream model of sports programs to incorporate an Indigenous-led model is demonstrated in the following instance relayed by Indigenous scholar Judd (2017). Football teams from Papunya, an Indigenous community 246 kilometres from Alice Springs, were part of the Central Australia Football league. However, whenever the Papunya football teams travelled to Alice Springs to play, they continuously experienced racial discrimination and hostility. Judd argues that Papunya people 'resisted and evaded this reprisal of discursive elimination' (2017, p. 114), by instead forming their own league, the Wilurarra Tjutaku Football League [WTFL]. The games were played 'on country' and they developed their own district style of football that incorporates cultural identity. As Judd identifies,

there is minimal touching and body contact, style of play is prioritised over winning, stress is placed on the importance of family, scores are not kept but instead 'negotiated by Elders' and prize monies [are] distributed in such a way that all teams win' to ensure that all players can 'save face.' (Judd 2017, p. 114)

Accordingly, the studies that focus on youth programs in Central Australia show that the most effective programs are those that are context-specific, culturally relevant

and developed locally (Fietz 2006; Lopes, Flouris & Lindeman 2013; Nous Group 2017; Shaw 2010; Lindeman, Flouris & Lopes 2013).

This literature shows that although locally developed programs are key elements to effective youth programs, they are predominately developed and implemented by mainstream sports and recreation models (d'Abbs et al. 2019; Evans et al. 2015; Fietz 2006; Lopes, Flouris & Lindeman 2013). As a result, the social and cultural needs of Indigenous youth are not being met, therefore, Lopes, Flouris and Lindeman (2013) suggest a 'youth-centred and context-specific' approach instead (2013, p. 50). In 2017, an independent study of youth programs for Indigenous communities recommended 'a radical rethinking of the entire approach to youth program development' (Fietz 2006, p. 21). A restructuring of youth services may require further research into current practices and include decolonising its mainstream services to adapt to Indigenous-led models, as Lopes, Flouris and Lindeman point out,

youth service providers should be resourced so that they can provide ongoing support, mentoring and training to their staff in the critical areas of Cultural Safety, empowerment and enablement skills of community development and consultation and intercultural communication. (Lopes, Flouris & Lindeman 2013, p. 8).

Accordingly, the next section analyses the literature on the prolific number of cultural training approaches that have evolved as the connection between the impact of colonisation, the dislocation of cultural identity and poor Indigenous health outcomes has come to the fore.

Cultural Safety and Evolving Models of Cultural Training

This section examines the emergence of Cultural Safety and the models of previous cultural training from where it has evolved. Cultural Safety is used conceptually and practically as a means of change to broad and deeply embedded attitudes, on an individual, institutional and community-wide basis (Brascoupé & Waters 2009, p. 13). Emerging from the Aotearoa/New Zealand health sector, Ramsden's theory and practice has resonated with Indigenous populations affected

by colonialism as demonstrated by Canadian and Australian studies (Brascoupé & Waters 2009; MacLean et al. 2017).

Despite a growing number of studies that explore Cultural Safety within the health sector, this is yet to be fully explored in the youth development sector. From the small number of Central Australia specific studies on youth service, only one report by Lopes, Linderman and Flouris (2013), identified Cultural Safety, and notes in its findings that it was only informally practiced. Additionally, they identified a need for youth workers to be trained in Cultural Safety in a local context and for more research in this domain (2013, p. 45).

Since 2009, an increase in evaluations on cultural training in the health sector has taken place, with a key theme that recognises the importance of cultural identity. Internationally, Brascoupé and Waters (2009, p. 7) provide significant qualitative case studies of Cultural Safety integrated into Indigenous healing programs in a Canadian context. Based on a need for more rigorous studies into the outcomes of cultural training, a 2017 Australian study by MacLean et al. provides a systematic review of quantitative outcomes of cultural training within the health sector. Significantly in their findings, they demonstrate the important link between the expression of cultural identity with measurable health improvements for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and concluded that 'Indigenous health interventions should continue to incorporate strategies that enable people to express cultural identities' (MacLean et al. 2017, p. 317). Their research found substantial improvements in psychosocial, clinical and health outcomes for the beneficiaries of the health services whose staff participated in cultural training (2017, p. 309). This area of research is continues to grow as cultural training models evolve with more advanced understandings of the link between cultural identity and health and well-being.

The concept and practice of Cultural Safety has been widely endorsed by Indigenous health institutions in Australia such as by the Indigenous Allied Health, National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workers Association, Australian Indigenous Doctors Association and the Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (AHRC 2018, pp. 6-7). This may be because existing studies such as the Canadian study by Brascoupé and Waters, demonstrate the connection

between Cultural Safety and the value of healing, trust and relationships, which are cornerstones of many Indigenous knowledge systems (2009). Significantly in a local context, the implementation of Cultural Safety has also been recommended by the 2017 Royal Commissions into youth detention and by the AHRC. They identify the need for further strategies so that Cultural Safety practices can be built into professional staff training with a critical awareness of recognising cultural identity and a connection to culture (White & Gooda 2017; AHRC 2018).

The paradigm shift to Cultural Safety in the health sector in Australia has come from the need to evolve from previous outdated models of cultural training. Edwards and Taylor (2008) in *Decolonising Cultural Awareness*, argue that Cultural Safety is a challenge to integrate into an Australian context because of the institutionalised practices of former cultural training models,

Cultural Safety is about real reconciliation and a path forward. Instead, we have seen a preference for cultural security, cultural competence and more cultural awareness. These are not enough to elicit the respect and acceptance without judgement that is required to improve the care and health outcomes for Indigenous people. (Edwards & Taylor 2008, p. 2)

Here Edwards and Taylor highlight the need to decolonise cultural training to improve the effectiveness of services for Indigenous recipients. Downing, Kowal and Paradis agree with the institutionalised challenge,

while models have evolved to match our growing understanding of the 'cultural chasm', notions of indigenous cultural training in the Australian context have generally not progressed beyond a cultural awareness model. (Downing, Kowal & Paradis 2011, p. 250)

As Edwards and Taylor and Downing et al. show, former cultural training models have become embedded in the discourse of the health sector. Many of these models have also been broadly applied to domains beyond the health sector in education, development, social work, education and government. Edwards and Taylor (2008), Brascoupe and Waters (2009) and Downing, Kowal & Paradis (2011) agree on the need for a shift from former models of cultural training to models that demonstrate more advanced understandings decolonising practices in the health sector.

To understand Cultural Safety and distinguish it from other models of cultural training is problematic because of the prolific number of cultural training frameworks, numerous terminologies and evolving concepts. This thesis aims to explore the

literature that has emerged from previous cross-cultural training frameworks to clarify some of the commonalities and differences between them. An analysis of the literature points to nine frameworks, which summarise the key characteristics that many training models are based on, shown in Table 1. The table shows that the growth of research in this area has extended beyond former models such as the cultural competence continuum (Cross 1988). Many models have extended the Cross (1988) continuum and adapt it to incorporate Cultural Safety as the end goal. More recent conceptualisations, which include cultural capacity, cultural humility, cultural sensitivity and cultural respect, work as building blocks like a pyramid towards Cultural Safety (Taylor & Guerin 2019, p. 14).

The most divergent understandings of the frameworks are between cultural competence and Cultural Safety. The AHRC identifies limitations with the former cultural competence model, which encompasses 'superficial understandings of cultural traditions rather than of an understanding of the factors that produce and maintain inequalities' (AHRC 2018, p. 4). Cultural Safety practices a move away from a focus on Indigenous cultures as *other* and instead on the process of decolonisation for individuals and institutions to recognise privilege, positionality, attitudes and behaviours that may impact Indigenous communities. Accordingly, the AHRC considers Cultural Safety as more robust, because of the greater focus on causes of inequality (AHRC 2018, p. 5). Widely accepted in current cultural training literature is the revision of former models to include emerging understandings, concepts and attitudes to become complementary approaches to Cultural Safety. Desouza (cited in AHRC 2018, p. 5), has made a case for both models, with cultural competence models that now integrate aspects of social justice which originated from Cultural Safety.

The most convergent models represented are Cultural Safety and cultural security and as Coffin (2007) argues, are often hard to distinguish and sometimes used interchangeably (Coffin 2007, p. 22). This demonstrates that more clarity is needed to differentiate the concepts and practices bound within these terminologies. Cultural security is often used in policy literature, which encompasses Cultural Safety and both models have emerged from the need to include Indigenous people in the processes that will improve their services (Coffin & Green 2017, p. 79). Taylor and Guerin argue that the Cultural Safety model offers the most potential for cross-

discipline transferability for different contexts and cultures (2019, p. 21). Linderman, Flouris and Lopes also favour Cultural Safety frameworks for youth services in Central Australia, albeit designed locally to ensure context-specific applicability (2019, p. 46).

Table 1: Existing Cultural Training Models, characteristics and key sources of information (adapted from multiple sources)

Cultural Training Model	Characteristics	Reference
Cultural Competence Continuum	Six categories working towards cultural proficiency in a continuum: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cultural destructiveness (denial) 2. Cultural incapacity (defence) 3. Cultural blindness (minimisation) 4. Cultural pre-competence (acceptance) 5. Cultural competence (adaptation) 6. Cultural proficiency (integration) 	Cross (1988)
Cultural Capability framework	Four key principles: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cultural respect and recognition 2. Communication 3. Relationships and partnerships 4. Capacity building 	Queensland Health (2010)
Cultural Respect framework	Four principles: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Leadership and responsibility 2. Health equality and a human rights approach 3. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community and consumer engagement 4. Partnerships 	National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Standing Committee (2016)
Cultural Humility and Cultural sensitivity	Cultural humility is on a continuum to Cultural Safety: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cultural Awareness and sensitivity 2. Cultural humility 3. Cultural Safety Cultural Sensitivity is a realisation of the legitimacy of difference, an awareness of power and privilege. Cultural Humility is a life-long process of self-reflection to understand personal biases to develop and maintain mutually respectful partnerships based on mutual trust.	Provincial Health Services Authority (n.d.)

Cultural Responsiveness Framework	<p>Six key capabilities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Respect for centrality of culture 2. Self-awareness 3. Proactivity 4. Inclusive engagement 5. Leadership 6. Responsibility and engagement 	Indigenous Allied Health Australia (2015)
Cultural Safety framework	<p>Eight interrelated domains of Cultural Safety:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Country and Community 2. Local Cultural Contextuality 3. Recognising and valuing the roles and responsibilities of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workers 4. Individual reflection 5. Systemic reflection 6. Equity and sustainability 7. Collaboration and Cooperation 8. Monitoring and Evaluation 	National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workers Association Limited (2016)
Cultural Safety Model Ramsden: 3 steps continuum	<p>Three step progression to Cultural Safety:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cultural awareness (of differences), 2. Cultural sensitivity (acceptance of right to differences), 3. Cultural Safety (defined by recipient) 	Ramsden (2005)
Aboriginal Cultural Security Model	A continuum starting with cultural awareness towards cultural security, also includes brokerage and protocols to ensure Indigenous people are included in the process.	Coffin & Green (2017, p. 80)
Northern Territory Aboriginal Cultural Security Framework and Policy	<p>Four Stages:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consolidate: leadership and communication 2. Relationships: responsive and safe 3. Integrate: partnerships 4. Cultural Proficiency: excellence 	Department of Health and Community Services (2016); Northern Territory Health (2016)

This section has showed the proliferate number of cultural training models to determine the efficacy of Cultural Safety for broader benefits for the recipients of youth services in Central Australia. The above studies demonstrate an evolving field of cultural training across sectors, adapting as emergent concepts and understandings come to light. Many of them operate on a continuum which builds towards Cultural Safety and have been adopted by Indigenous organisations in Australia. This review may provide the groundwork for organisations in Central Australia to explore models most suitable for their context.

Literature review summary

Overall this review of the literature has constructed foundational understandings of the situational context for young Indigenous people who live in remote communities in Central Australia. By addressing the research question of the relevance of Cultural Safety in this domain, this chapter analysed locational intrinsic and extrinsic data which relates to Indigenous youth, settler colonial and decolonisation discourses in connection to evolving cultural training frameworks beyond the health sector. In doing so, it has highlighted the significant challenges yet to be overcome while recognising the assets that Indigenous youth possess. Accordingly, this chapter has identified evidence based models encompassing decolonisation through cultural training frameworks that can assist in structural change to overcome disempowering systems (MacLean et al. 2017). It has also identified the need for further research in the specific area of Cultural Safety within the youth sector (Lopes, Flouris & Lindeman 2013; AHRC 2018). The next chapter will lay out the methodology which underpins this thesis.

Chapter Three: Methodology

This chapter outlines the methodology and theoretical framework for this research project, underpinned by a post-colonial standpoint and a community development strength-based approach; both of which are congruent with a constructivist paradigm and of the Indigenous protocols of respect, reciprocity and relationships (Wilson 2008, p. 77). Next, this chapter discusses the methods used to collect and collate the primary data to address the gap in the literature of the current conceptualisations and practices of Cultural Safety within the youth sector in Central Australia. This chapter concludes with the limitations of the study.

A post-colonial standpoint challenges colonial systems and structures and respectfully acknowledges the histories, values, beliefs and worldviews of Indigenous people, which are held as equal to those of Western systems (Kelly, Kickett & Bessarab 2017, p. 93). Thereby this standpoint aims to counter the dominance of western paradigms by addressing power imbalance and social inequity in the pursuit of a more just future for young Indigenous Australians.

Furthermore, this thesis is influenced by a strength-based approach, also referred to as an asset-based approach in community development, which supports Indigenous-led frameworks. A strength-based approach shifts the paradigm from a deficit-based framework, to instead build strong support structures which identify the assets that already exist within the community as a basis for addressing community development. Problems are not minimised but are strategic in how they are addressed to promote agency and empowerment (Kickett-Tucker et al. 2017, p. 102).

Finally, this thesis is underpinned by a constructivist paradigm to construct new knowledge and build 'upon existing knowledge so that researcher and subjects become better informed than before' (Wilson 2008, p. 37). Mertens (2018) describes a constructivist paradigm as focussing 'primarily on identifying multiple values and perspectives through qualitative methods' (2018, p. 160). The context of this thesis is positioned within a complex situational domain, often defined by deficit-based data. Hence, a constructivist paradigm was selected to garner nuanced contextual data from experiential insights in response to the research problem. Furthermore, it is

congruent with a strength-based approach which reinforces knowledge that already exists within a community. The constructivist process is a relational process between the researcher and research participants to engage in a dialogical exchange to reach a mutual understanding. Furthermore, the goal of constructivism is the shared reciprocity of new knowledge constructed and the change that these understandings may help to bring about (Wilson 2008, p. 37).

Method

Following a constructivist paradigm, the primary data was aggregated by qualitative research methods and includes interviews with staff members from youth organisations. The method used to gather qualitative data was dialogical, based on a Semi-Structured Interview format [SSI], (Stake 2010, p. 95). The SSI format, with open-ended questions, enabled the researcher to build rapport with the participants and involved the use of prompts and probes to gain in-depth responses. Primary data consisted of five one-off, individual 30–40-minute interviews from research participants. The SSI format enabled this research to understand the nuances and complexities of the unique situations and experiences of the research participant (Stake 2010, p. 38). Insights were elicited from both an organisational and individual lens and built upon the concept and practice of Cultural Safety as per the research question. Any problems or challenges discussed were supported by strength-based dialogue prompted by guide questions. The interviews were transcribed, and participants had the opportunity to review, edit or add to the content to verify their contributions to strengthen the data.

Ethical integrity was ensured by the approval of a low-risk ethics assessment by Deakin University's Human Research Ethics Committee [DUHREC], (HAE-19-210 approved 29th November 2019). Additionally, participants and organisations read a Plain Language Statement [PLS] and signed consent forms. Interviews took place between 10th and 19th December 2019; all participants and organisations chose to remain anonymous.

Data Collation

The cohort consisted of participants from four Central Australian organisations who provide youth services throughout remote regions of Central Australia and one freelance worker who has worked in the region and sector for twenty years. Three participants were in management and coordinator positions, and two had worked extensively on the ground with young people. This small sample was able to provide significant insights from their various positions within the youth sector, into the context of Cultural Safety practices in youth development in Central Australia. Although a small cohort, it is representative of local regional councils, non-government organisations and Aboriginal organisations who provide youth services to young Indigenous people across a vast cultural and geographical region (see figure 1, p. 5).

The data was collated by transcribing recorded interviews, which were then coded, themed and interpreted via thematic analysis (Stringer 2018, p. 101; Stake 2010, p. 151). The use of the qualitative data analysis software Nvivo assisted in the selection of relevant data from the interview transcriptions to arrange them in categorised files. This process was repeated in an inductive and iterative manner by the categorisation of codes in relation to the research question (Stringer 2018, p. 101; Stake 2010, p. 151). The coding included the organisation of the data from the five interviews into *nodes* related to the interview responses to guide questions in relation to the research question. Nodes included: *concepts of Cultural Safety, assets, cultural training, local relevance, staff retention, funding limitations, systemic limitations*. Next, these codes were arranged into themes for interpretation, as discussed in the following chapter.

Limitations of the study

Further research is required to ascertain the relevance of Cultural Safety from the perspective of the service recipients. Due time limitations of submit this research project for assessment as per requirements of the University, the lengthy process of applying for a high-risk ethics approval was advised against, which made primary data from Indigenous youth and their families outside the scope of this thesis.

The selected cohort included in this thesis was small but represented a good cross-section of the youth sector and garnered significant qualitative insights; however, there is potential for further research in this area, which would include a larger cohort within the youth sector. The qualitative data revealed within this research is not generalisable, or representative of other services outside of the research context. However, the findings may be beneficial to or of relevance to other services outside of the research domain.

Outside of the scope of this thesis was an analysis of the current implementation and effectiveness of culturally safe practices within the education and justice systems specific to youth in Central Australia. This thesis identifies that further research is needed within those institutions to inform policy and practices to improve outcomes for Indigenous youth. The following chapter concludes this thesis with the interpretation and discussion of the primary data and the conclusion drawn from the combined insights elicited by the literature review and empirical analysis in relation to the research question.

Chapter Four: Data Interpretation and Conclusion

This chapter presents the results of the primary data aggregated from the interview participants. The nuances of the insights are discussed throughout and summarised at the end of the chapter. A focus on convergent and divergent data identified three key themes in relation to the relevance of Cultural Safety for youth programs in Central Australia: a conceptual understanding of Cultural Safety; strengths; and challenges of the Cultural Safety model. Finally, this chapter concludes the thesis in a discussion of the overall findings of the research project as related to the research topic.

1. *Concepts of Cultural Safety*

The data shows that an understanding of Cultural Safety is variable amongst the interviewees but understood in a general way as a concept; however, it is yet to be embedded into formal practice in the organisations who work with youth in Central Australia. Only one member had participated in formal training in Cultural Safety. This interviewee, Participant B, remarks on their understanding of Cultural Safety in the workplace and on an individual level,

it's a place where everyone can be, and culture can be respected and valued with what they have to contribute. For me, Cultural Safety is for everyone to be able to have an ability to express themselves in the way they identify through their own cultural practices.

Participant E, who had worked for several local and national organisations providing youth services for Indigenous youth in Central Australia, observed stronger Cultural Safety practices from local organisations due to the inclusion of Indigenous voices, as opposed to the national organisations who would often use broader approaches not as specific to the local context.

[xxx organisation] it's Australia wide and guided by a national framework, it hasn't got a board of Aboriginal members and they're just not as focussed; all the others are local and have an Indigenous board and so they seem more relevant and have a lot more culturally safe practices.

This highlights the importance of local contextual and cultural knowledge, signified by the fact that a majority of local organisations who deliver youth services to Indigenous youth in Central Australia have a high percentage of Indigenous staff and Indigenous governance.

Two divergent understandings emerged from the interviews in relation to epistemological reference points to Cultural Safety: Participant C who had moved to Australia from another country and whose culture had experienced oppression; and Participant D from a non-Indigenous settler Australian perspective.

Participant C highlighted their perspective of not being from the dominant culture, which has enabled them to have insights into culturally sensitive practice by having empathy and creating spaces for everyone to have a voice,

I'm from a culturally rich background, so, culture plays a very important role in everything I do. I understand the importance of walking in others' shoes and being the last person to speak.

On the other hand, Participant D strongly recognised their positionality within the dominant culture commenting on the politicised motives inherent in Cultural Safety, in terms of dominant culture and privilege;

when I walk on country, I'm walking on someone else's country. We want to see the same thing, we want to see the liberation of oppression. I don't think we're going to see any kind of actual equity until we have a treaty.

Additionally, Participant D had a strong understanding of the importance of young people's connection to culture, identifying their strengths and assets with language, lore and living culture and the complexities of navigating mainstream and Indigenous systems of knowledge.

Although both participants did not identify Cultural Safety per se in these insights, they had strong understandings of the underpinning elements of inequality and of critical self-reflective practice. Furthermore, Participant E, grounded in their connection to community and young people, recognised a culturally safe place as one that values relationships and where there is mutual respect.

Even though there's so much systemic divide, that's probably the one thing I value the most is just having those [mutually respectful] connections with kids.

The participants showed that an understanding of Cultural Safety is varied and may be practised intrinsically, without necessarily naming it as such. Participants recognised the importance of congruent themes to Cultural Safety such as safe spaces; relationships; working towards the empowerment of Indigenous people;

mutual respect; a bi-cultural exchange; an awareness of the significance of cultural identity; reflective practice; and considering your positionality, ethics and values.

Despite this, all interview responses indicated an expressed need for more Cultural Safety understanding, training and frameworks for both individuals and organisations. Participants discussed the minimal cultural training in organisational inductions and the gap in training for past and present practice. Participant D discusses the absence of formal training,

going back 20 years, there wasn't training and that was probably the lack of awareness and responsibility of the people that were employing me to go out. So, a lot of the things we just learned on the ground.

Participant A discusses their experience in international development and the cultural awareness required for overseas placements, in contrast to working in their current role with Indigenous cultures in Australia. Recognising the disparity between standards for international development and local development requirements to work in a cross-cultural context, Participant A states,

certainly, I remember having discussions early on with different people saying wow, it's crazy that there is no cultural awareness training.

Within the international development sector, pre-service training is often a requirement for many organisations before commencing any placements abroad. For example, the minimum requirements for an international placement with United States volunteer organisation Peace Corps includes cross-cultural, or intercultural training 'Intercultural training allows you to reflect on your own cultural values and how they influence your behaviour in-country' (Peace Corps n.d.). Peace Corps training includes reflexive practice and language skills as essential criteria for working in a cross-cultural context. Contrastingly, most non-Indigenous Australians who work in Indigenous communities do so without any language skills. Sometimes (2018, p. 25), argues that by favouring English as the dominant language, this perpetuates ethnocentrism, devalues local languages and is open for miscommunication. Consistent with this view, Participant A argues that international development training and protocols should be a prerequisite for working on Indigenous communities in Australia.

2. Strengths

The interview participants highlighted strengths in several key areas, which may be compatible with adopting a Cultural Safety framework within the organisations. By congregating the data, one can see that there is a large body of individual strengths/assets from each organisation. This could be developed into a shared inter-organisational resource for further learning and to improve services.

The participants discussed the following strengths/assets:

- Indigenous-led models through governance and advisory boards
- Intentional, strategic visions geared towards Indigenous leadership
- Institutional guidelines which hold accountability towards Indigenous empowerment
- Commitments to forge new pathways for longer-term funding and to connect funding bodies to strategic community needs to create better services
- Inclinations to learn and integrate new approaches at an organisational level
- Reflexive practices of individual and organisational critical reflection

Each of these strengths and assets demonstrate a capacity for organisational integration of Cultural Safety. For example, several participants discussed a trauma-informed approach. Participant B discussed the recent integration of this approach into their organisation. A trauma-informed approach recognises the importance of healing in their processes, especially for those affected by intergenerational trauma brought about by colonialism (Brascoupe & Waters 2009). Atkinson, Nelson and Atkinson, recognise this approach as compatible with Cultural Safety (2010, p. 299).

Additional to a trauma-informed practice, another approach; 'Strengthening Community Capacities' was discussed by Participant B,

the idea is that you strengthen a community's capacity by opening up a dialogue around, what are the issues? What are the points of resistance? A strengths-based way of having these discussions.

Participant B explains how this has been integrated into organisational practice,

we now apply that to all the things we do in the organisation; it's been passed in a resolution that every team in the organisation will subscribe to that kind of practice. So, the language and the practice around that has just been integrated.

This demonstrates some organisational responsiveness to strength-based approaches.

3. Challenges

Participants clearly identified four key challenges: finding a cultural training framework that has contextual relevance; the impact of high staff turnover in the region; the challenges around short term funding cycles; and unsuitable systems. Each is discussed in turn.

Finding a suitable framework

Vital to all participants was discerning a cultural training model that can take into consideration the unique contexts and individual needs of each community that the organisations service. Participant C commented,

each community is its own individual society; it has its individualised rules, so I don't know if a blanket framework could help.

Aligning with this issue, another Participant A recognises that,

it's really hard to tailor some kind of training because every community we work in is so different. We've also talked about how tricky it would be to actually design training that was comprehensive enough like that.

The need for services, programs and training to be developed in a local context was a common theme addressed in the reports on Central Australian youth programs as discussed in the literature review (Fietz 2006; Lopes, Flouris & Lindeman 2013; Nous Group 2017; Shaw 2010; Lindeman, Flouris & Lopes 2013). Specifically, the report by Linderman et al. outlined,

Cultural Safety needs to be determined locally – what counts as culturally safe in one settlement or community will be different in another. This is aligned with the community development ideal of locally developed solutions to foster empowerment. (Lindeman, Flouris & Lopes 2013, p. 46)

Based on their contextual understanding of specific local needs and requirements, participants addressed the difficulty in finding appropriate models which would be relevant to each community.

Impact of high staff turnover

Interview participants indicated a commonality in their concerns of how to viably implement training and retain that knowledge within organisations with the high staff turnovers in Central Australia. Participant D commented,

one of the challenges with positions in Alice Springs is that as soon as you train up a person and then they leave, you've got to do it again and it costs a lot of money to do that and that person leaves with all of that knowledge.

The implications of this in terms of Cultural Safety is responded to by Participant C,

how do you create a model that sustains cultural competence when staff just are coming and going all the time?

Divergently, Participant B points to the importance of training locals whose benefits will remain with communities beyond transient staff and beyond the program.

The [Youth Advisory Board] are there [on the ground in communities] regardless. Our input and capacity building we're doing with them will hopefully benefit their communities, regardless of if they work for us or not.

The idea of building capacity within a community is a strength-based community development approach and demonstrates one way that training can be maintained within the community. However, also critical to Cultural Safety is the attitudes and behaviours of non-Indigenous people working within Indigenous services; therefore, it is vital to find ways to viably train and keep staff, as shown by the interview responses. One answer may lie with the incorporation and embodiment of Cultural Safety practice into the wider mainstream institutions as a foundation for practice in all domains.

Funding requirements and limitations

The programs receive funding from a wide range of sources, including from local, state and Commonwealth government departments (Nous Group 2017, p. 2). However, improving services for beneficiaries such as through further Cultural training of staff requires strategic planning, which many of the participants agree is limited by current short-term funding cycles and requirements. Participant C explained;

the funding in Central Australia is so fragmented and short term, in our current funding, the longest is a calendar year. So how do you implement a three- or four-years strategy plan of developing or improving [services] when you have twelve months funding? Something needs to change.

Recognising this same challenge of short-term funding cycles, Participant A demonstrates how this is being dealt with from an organisational standpoint,

high up in our organisation, they've been doing a lot of work on trying to teach our funding bodies about how it works and how it translates, our directors have done a lot of work around getting contracts for a minimum of a three-year period. And they've been successful. It's taken a really long time for them to do that.

Although the allocation of funding was one of the most common themes from the data set, Participant A demonstrates the persistence required to make structural change.

Structural challenges

There is a difficulty in re-structuring current unsuitable systems. Participant B explains the structure of local councils as Aboriginal organisations which are established in a non-Aboriginal context to deliver Aboriginal services. Therefore, they are structured in a way that is dominated by a western framework; Participant A demonstrates the implications of this tension,

being based on a local government system but trying to make it work in remote communities [...] from an organisational point of view in our contracts, you have to deliver a program of this many hours, you have to deliver between these times. Why do we agree to this, when nobody actually wants it? It's very irrelevant.

Adding to the systemic divide, funding bodies broadly want 'culturally appropriate' requirements fulfilled offering no framework to work with, as Participant C cited,

what we have at the moment with the term 'culturally appropriate activities,' it's just wrapping everything in one statement and hoping it works. There is a challenge because it's left for individual interpretation, organisational interpretation and there's no way that cultural design is fed into the formal system. What is needed is a true representation of the Aboriginal culture on a piece of paper.

According to the participants, some local organisations are operating in a culturally proficient way; however, to sustain that, more is needed to improve the systems if they are to embody genuine culturally safe workplaces.

At the end of the interviews, a transcription was sent to the participants to add to, amend or edit in order to strengthen the data and include all relevant information. As consistent with a constructivist paradigm, this also enabled the participants to build upon the knowledge elicited from the interview and conduct further research themselves. Each participant verified from their various insights and positions and answered with a categorical 'yes' answer to the research question: *Is Cultural Safety relevant for youth service providers working with Indigenous young people in Central Australia?* Participant C responded that they had done further research and added this final statement to the end of the interview,

I believe there will be a benefit from such a [Cultural Safety] framework to effectively create cultural awareness, cultural sensitivity and cultural

competence amongst practitioners and clients in the sector, which should hopefully result in the provision of culturally informed and safe services.

Evidently, by following a constructivist paradigm, this research has elicited individual change, whereby at least one participant has engaged in further research following the interview in order to alter their response. Additionally, by following a qualitative data methodology through dialogical SSI interview process, this research enabled the participants to individually reflect on their own culturally safe or unsafe practices.

To summarise the data findings, current conceptualisation of Cultural Safety amongst the participants is only generally understood and interpreted in multiple ways, which indicates a challenge to implement it into practice. This may be because of the extensive number of cultural training, frameworks and models as shown in Table 1. [pp. 20-21]. Despite this, there was an agreement among all participants of the value of Cultural Safety within the youth sector.

The results demonstrated an integration of strength-based approaches within each organisation. Accordingly, some research participants demonstrated their organisation's open attitude to implementing new approaches, leading to the improvement of services. This indicates that with improved understandings of Cultural Safety, practical outcomes may be incorporated at an organisational level into youth development policy and programming and by doing so, address the challenges identified by the research participants of systemic and structural issues. This may help to improve the relevance of youth programs for young Indigenous people.

Conclusion

This chapter concludes by highlighting the significance of the new knowledge gained from an inquiry into the relevance of Cultural Safety for the youth sector in Central Australia. Building on a constructivist paradigm, post-colonial standpoint and strength-based approach, this thesis has analysed the literature which explores structural inequality affecting many young Indigenous people living in this region. It has explored the effectiveness of Cultural Safety as a model to mitigate against

those structures, with a focus on the practice of decolonisation and critical reflection to understand the behaviours and assumptions that motivate individuals from the dominant culture to work within this context.

Therefore, answering the research question: *Is Cultural Safety relevant for organisations who provide services to Indigenous youth living in remote regions of Central Australia?* This thesis has determined that Cultural Safety may have substantial conceptual and practical application and relevance for the youth sector in Central Australia. An analysis into the theory of the model demonstrates tools for individual and institutional critical reflection that may assist in recognising behaviours and attitudes that impact access to services for young people in this region. Significantly, this thesis has identified evidence based findings that show the effectiveness of cultural training that aligns with Cultural Safety principles, for the recipients of services (MacLean et al. 2017). Additionally, it has identified specific studies and recommendations by the NT 2017 Royal Commission and Lopez, Flouris and Linderman (2013), which address the need for further Cultural Safety training within the youth and justice sectors in the Northern Territory. Despite these recommendations, there remains a limited understanding and implementation of Cultural Safety, both conceptually and in practical application within this domain (AHRC 2018; Lopes, Flouris & Lindeman 2013).

This thesis analyses academic findings by Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars that discuss the decolonisation aspects of Cultural Safety as a valuable tool to mobilise change through the acknowledgment of Indigenous histories, experiences of colonisation, and cultural identity; the unlearning of ongoing colonialist practices that cause harm; and a critical inquiry of privileges and power (Regan 2005; Tuala 2019). Accordingly, the literature on cultural training discerns the difference between various models and highlights the need to extend cultural training education to include decolonising processes, as a path forward for social action and reconciliation (Edwards & Taylor 2008). Significantly, these evolved models which include Cultural Safety have been widely recognised as relevant by Indigenous organisations in Australia and adapted to suit their specific contexts and cultures (AHRC 2018).

The primary data strongly supports the theoretical research, as the research participants all agreed on the importance of Cultural Safety from their various perspectives, however required clarity discerning between the various existing models, concepts and terminologies of cultural training. Their understandings were substantial, relating to the specific situational contexts of current practices of youth services for Indigenous youth living in remote Central Australia. Their insights highlighted the strengths and challenges that affect the organisations' capabilities to integrate approaches that improve services for Indigenous recipients. The key themes they acknowledged include: the need for appropriate funding, staffing and strategic planning to support cultural training; and the importance of the development of cultural training in a local context to be relevant for each community. The local organisations showed existing capacity to adapt to evolving concepts and models linked to Indigenous empowerment and agency. Therefore, there is an opportunity for models such as Cultural Safety to be incorporated alongside these frameworks and in doing so acknowledging the knowledge and capacity that exists within the local communities, by recognising Indigenous approaches to service delivery.

Connecting these findings to the literature, a multiple pronged approach is necessary to address the complexities of Australia's present challenges, as Tuala contends, 'true consultation, cultural safety, recognition and embedding our unique [Indigenous] knowledges and frameworks throughout all systems is the only way we will move forward together' (2019, para. 21). Accordingly, Linderman, Flouris and Lopes show that cultural training models developed in this way offer the possibility to promote transformative change both individually and within institutions (2013, p. 45).

Overall, this thesis links the large body of existing frameworks within Indigenous health services to the youth sector for consideration and suitability. Additionally, it identifies the need for further research in this domain that connects emerging literature of Cultural Safety to the youth sector and to other institutions such as education and the justice system. The limitations of this study identify the need for further research to evaluate the effects of culturally safe practices for the recipients of the programs: Indigenous youth living in remote communities in Central Australia. In this way, with further data that highlights the voice of Indigenous youth, Indigenous paradigms and local contexts, Cultural Safety training and frameworks may be implemented into policy, procedure and practice of youth organisations and

service providers. This thesis offers the analysis of academic research and empirical data that may contribute to how service providers can walk alongside and work collectively with Indigenous youth, offering culturally safe spaces to remove individual behavioural and institutional structural barriers. In this way organisations can work with young people so that so that they can ‘continue carrying the custodianship of imagination, entrepreneurial spirit and genius [and to] show the nation Aboriginal leadership and imagination.’ (Garma Youth Forum 2019, The Imagination Declaration).

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