



**Sweet Grass Grows:**  
Moving from Victim to Survivor  
using Traditional  
and  
Western Methods of Healing

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## Objectives

- Participants will learn how trauma impacts the mind, body and spirit
- Participants will learn skills that develop or do not develop as a result of trauma
- Individuals will learn three positive internal resource skills that integrate cultural wellness strategies for personal and/or professional use in coping with trauma triggers.

*"We are living the stories planted in us early or along the way, or we are also living the stories we planted knowingly of unknowingly – in ourselves.*

*We live stories that either give our lives meaning or negate it with meaninglessness.*

*If we change the stores we live by, quite possibly we change our lives."*

Ben Okri  
Nigerian Storyteller  
From The Truth About Stories  
By Thomas King



Trauma = an overwhelming event that impact's one's ability to cope

- What happens when mammals experience trauma?

Biological hard wired response

- What areas of our lives does trauma impact?

Physical, Mental, Emotional and Spiritual

### **Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder**

- Exposure to a traumatic event in which person experiences actual or threatened death or threat to physical integrity of self or others. Person's response involved intense fear, helplessness or horror
- Re-experiencing-recurring intrusive memories, images, thoughts, dreams, flashbacks
- Avoidance – thoughts, feelings, activities, places people
- Enduring symptoms of hypervigilance, exaggerated startle response, irritability or outbursts of anger, difficulty falling or staying asleep

## What About Historical and Intergenerational Trauma?

### Society

Beliefs and norms (historic – present)

Demonization, Invisible/Omitted, Noble Savage

Community, Lateral Oppression,

Loss of Language, Fragmented, Loss of Social Roles, Alcohol Abuse, Drug Abuse

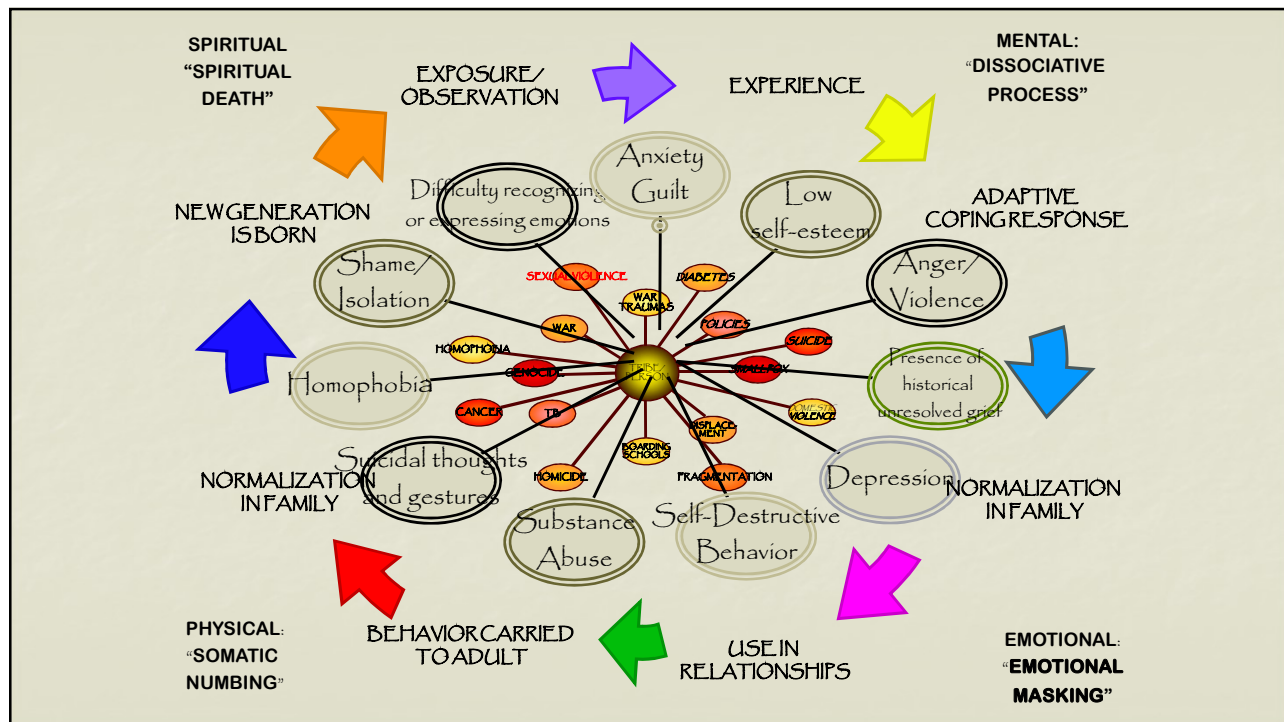
## Historical and Intergenerational Trauma

### Family

- Boarding school, loss of language, coping mechanisms transferred to next generation

### Individual

- Learns behaviors from first teachers, identity formation, coping/survival



## Behaviors Observed with Trauma

- Defense of self
- Isolation
- Performing
- Hyperaware
- Disappearing
- Shame
- Care taking
- Intellectualization
- Need for perfection
- Blame

## Behaviors Observed with Complex Trauma

- |                          |                       |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| ■ Guilt                  | Avoidance of conflict |
| ■ Anger/or lack of anger | Conflict seeking      |
| ■ Letting self be used   | Over accountability   |
| ■ No boundaries          | Non accountability    |
| ■ Controlling            | Fear                  |

## Skills Missing due to Trauma

- |  |              |
|--|--------------|
| ■ Connection   | Satisfaction |
| ■ Healthy boundaries   | Belonging    |
| ■ Trust  | Acceptance   |
| ■ Choice   | Creativity   |
| ■ Ability to say yes/no  |              |
| ■ Lack of ability to experience<br>a wide range of emotion/feeling |              |



## Skills Missing due to Trauma

- Having a voice –  
using it for positive
- Worthiness
- Being with contradiction
- Containment
- Curiosity
- Feeling/owning/connecting with  
one's body
- Taking a stand

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## Rebuilding

- Safety
  - Internal
  - External
- Managing symptoms
- The story - what happened
- Finding the internal meaning – negative belief
- Reframing the meaning telling a new story – positive belief
- Integration

## Integrating Culture

- Safety
- Stories
- Sending of Voice
- Movement



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- The Truth About Stories, Thomas King
- Staci Haines, [www.generativesomatics.org](http://www.generativesomatics.org)