



Journey Women: Decolonization, Social Change and Social Justice

Artists:
Zoë Brow and Lynda Stewart

Lucy Lu, ATR

Art therapist and child counsellor at Minwaashin Lodge, an Aboriginal Women's Support Centre in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada.

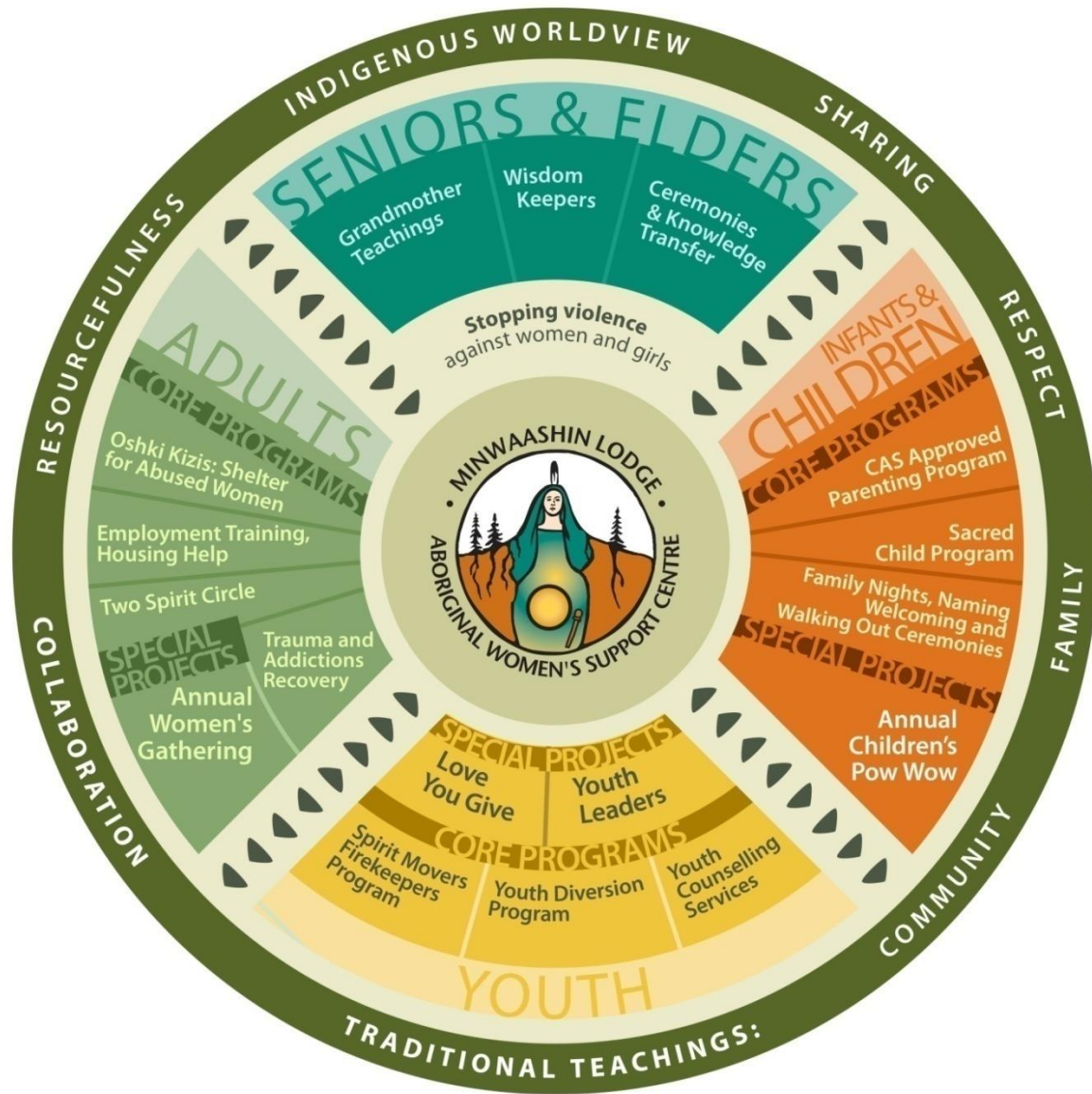
Felice Yuen, Ph.D.

Assistant professor in the Department of Applied Human Sciences at Concordia University in Montreal.

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Journey Women: Aboriginal Women's Healing Experiences
Minwaashin Lodge- Aboriginal Women's Support Centre
Concordia University



MINWAASHIN LODGE: LIFE-CYCLE SERVICE MODEL

Purpose

- To gain an understanding of the healing processes of Aboriginal women in an urban context



Research Questions

- 1) What conditions contribute to or undermine Aboriginal women's experiences of healing?
- 2) To what extent do Aboriginal resources and supports impact the experience of healing?



Foundational Aspects of the Research

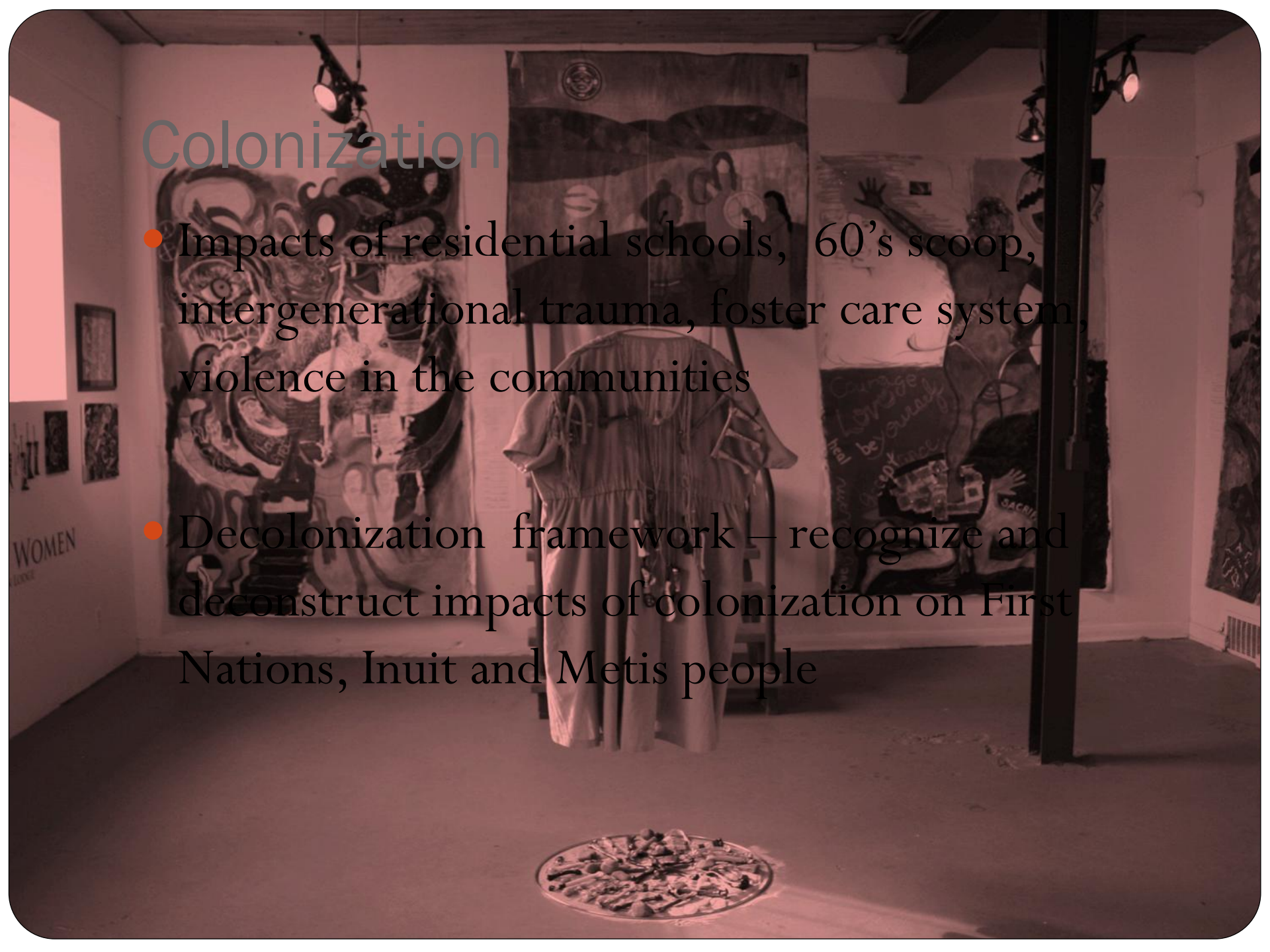
- Decolonization
- Social justice
- Social change

Emphasize strengths, rather than seek out what is dysfunctional (Smith, 1999)



Colonization

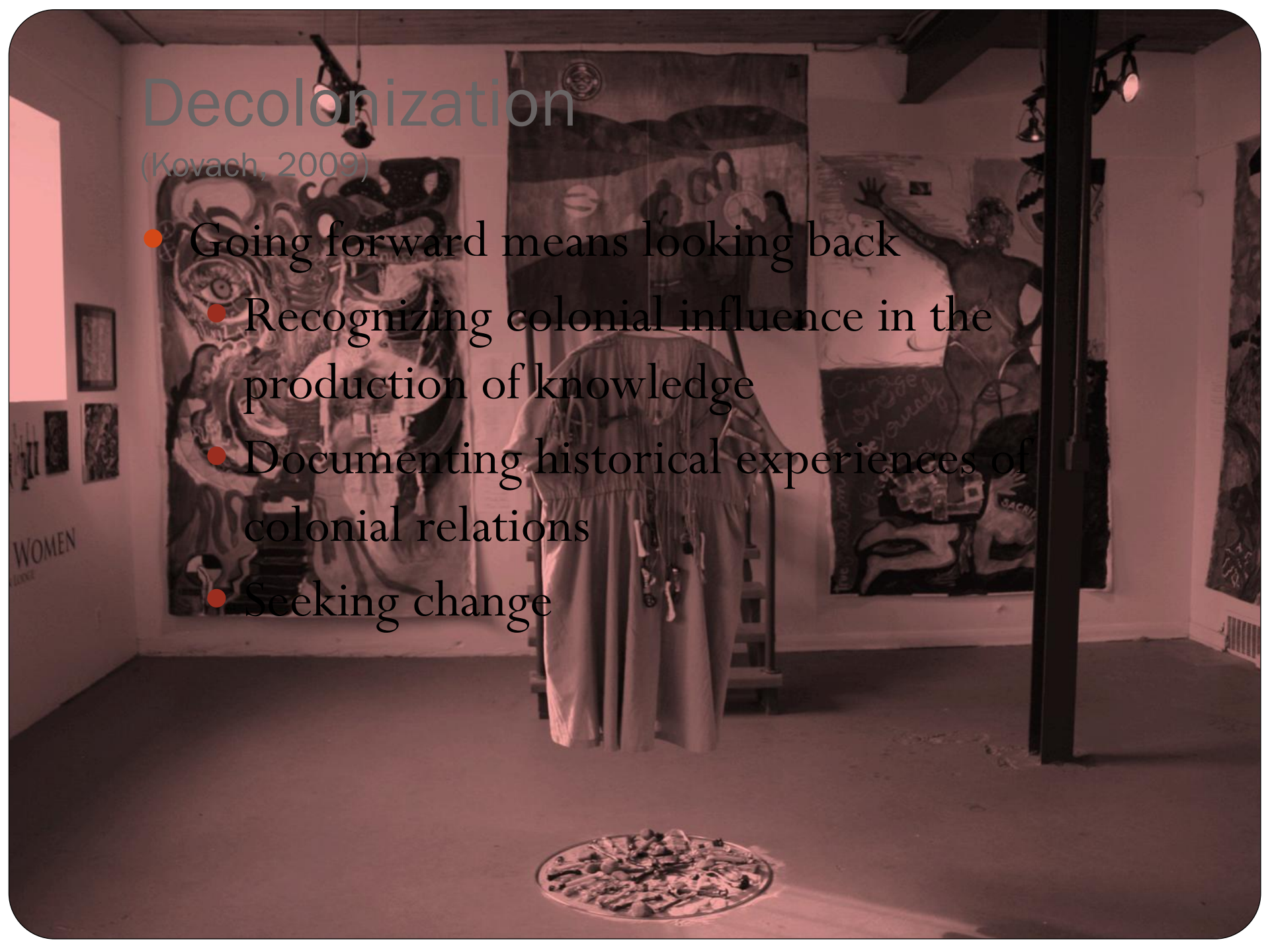
- Impacts of residential schools, 60's scoop, intergenerational trauma, foster care system, violence in the communities
- Decolonization framework – recognize and deconstruct impacts of colonization on First Nations, Inuit and Metis people



Decolonization

(Kovach, 2009)

- Going forward means looking back
 - Recognizing colonial influence in the production of knowledge
 - Documenting historical experiences of colonial relations
 - Seeking change



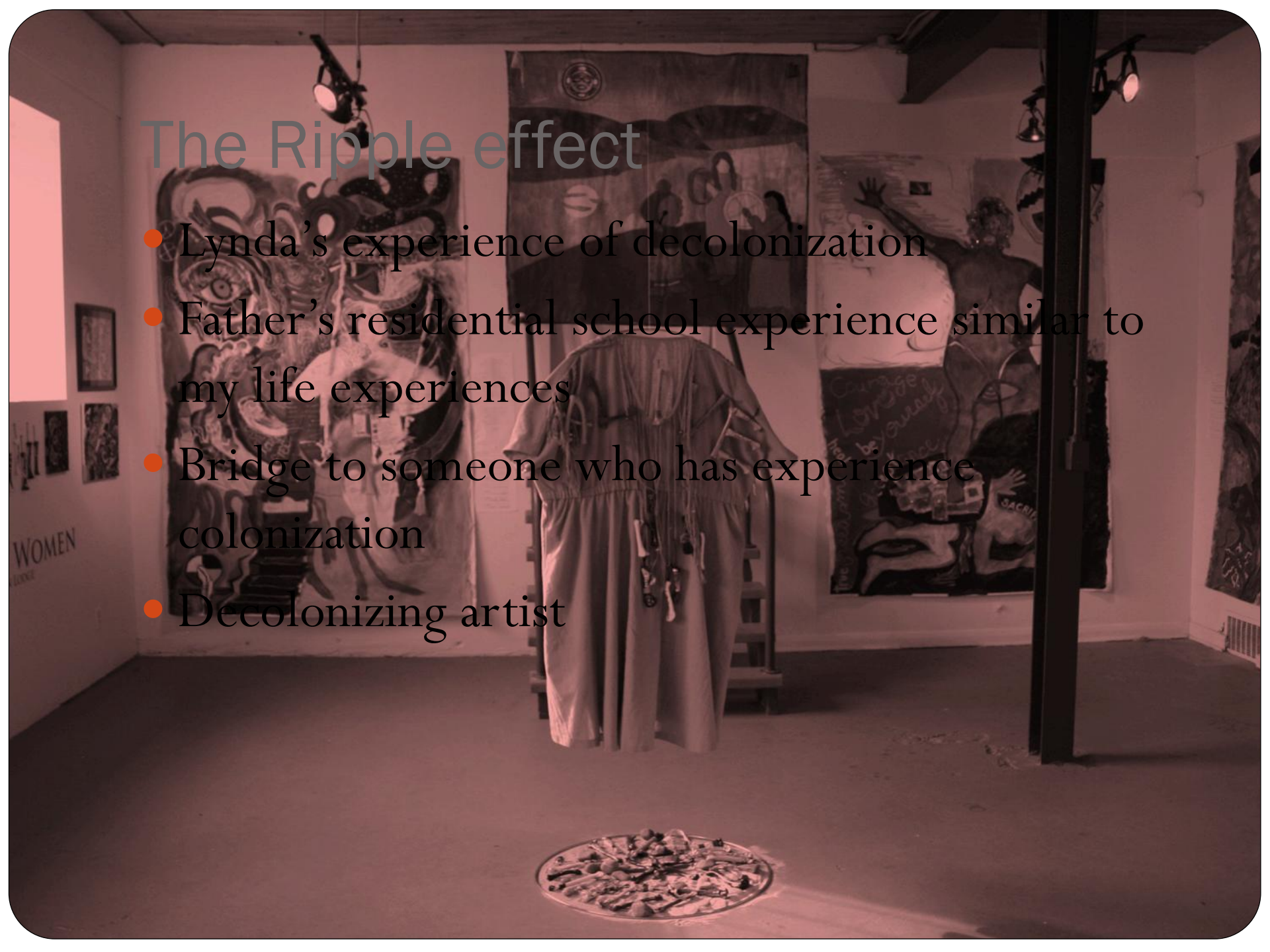
Decolonization and Art Therapy

The background image shows an art gallery installation. On the left wall, there are several small framed pictures and a sign that says "WOMEN". In the center, a long, light-colored dress hangs from a wooden chair. To the right, a large, dark, abstract artwork is displayed. In the foreground, a circular tray filled with small, dark objects sits on the floor. The lighting is dramatic, with spotlights illuminating the central dress and the artwork on the right.

- Art Therapy as a bridge:
 - Self and Collective suffering
 - Indigenous and non-indigenous perspectives
 - Ceremony, Research and Activism

The Ripple effect

- Lynda's experience of decolonization
- Father's residential school experience similar to my life experiences
- Bridge to someone who has experience colonization
- Decolonizing artist



Walk for Justice



Art for Justice

Social Justice



- Research methods must give back to the community in meaningful way
 - Relationship with the participants and community is key
 - Shift the power of the researcher in controlling the research process and outcome
- Acknowledging the realities of individuals who have experienced social injustice



Mask of Shame

Zoe's story

My mother's side of the family, we do have Native heritage. But we were not allowed to talk about it. It's something we were told not to expose...It was not at all accepted. We couldn't truly be who we were... We heard stories from my mom saying all their documents were burned because their church was burned down...because they didn't want to keep any of the Native traditions alive.

Body Mapping as a Creative Process

- Jane Solomon's work "Living with X" – a Body Mapping Journey in the time of HIV and AIDS
- Mapping life stories to the body
- Self in relationship to your support person
- Linear life line adapted as circular Life-Cycle Journey to fit an Aboriginal perspective



Points on the Journey

- Where they see themselves in the future
- Hopes and Dreams

Old Age

- Origins
- Strengths and Challenges

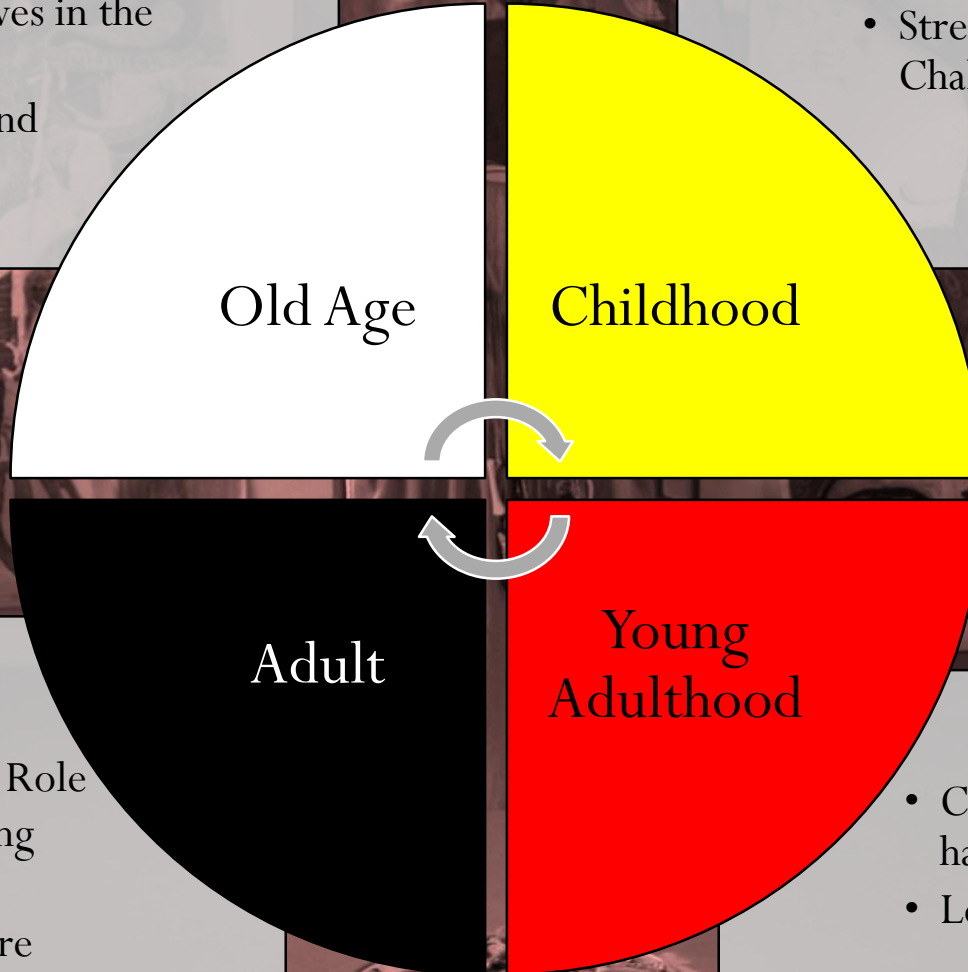
Childhood

Adult

- Minwaashin's Role in their Healing Journey
- Where they are now

Young Adulthood

- Challenges that have overcome
- Lessons Learned



Mapping the Body

- Life challenges that mark the body – physical, spiritual, emotional, psychological
- Impacts of healing
- Source of power
- Self-portrait or personal slogan



Legend



strength
Sexual Abuse



Bravery
Addictions



Gratitude
Poverty



Love
Hope
Mimwaashin



Healing
Helping



1" = 1 month





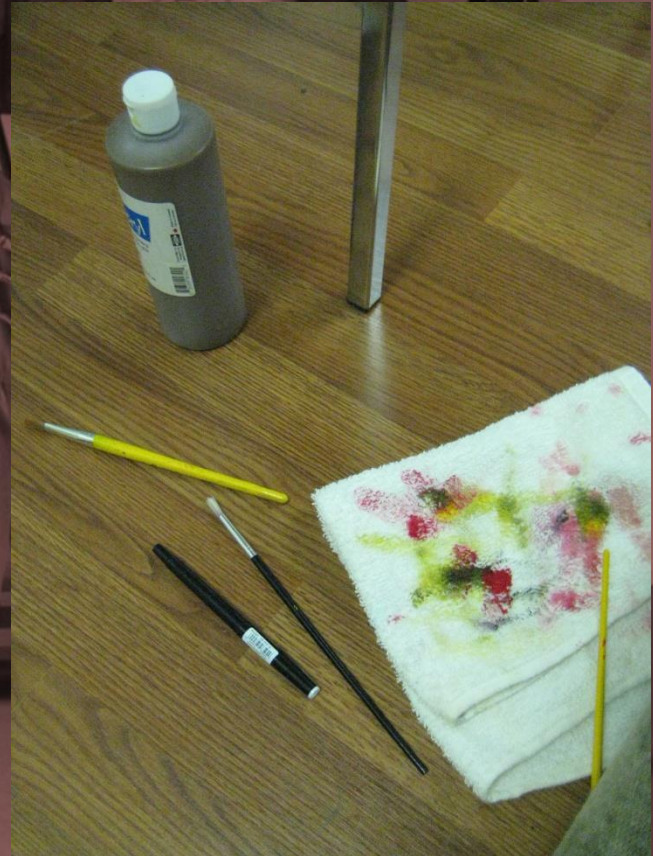
Social Change

The background image shows an art gallery installation. On the left wall, there are several framed artworks and a sign that says "WOMEN". In the center, a mannequin is dressed in a light-colored, long-sleeved, button-down dress. Behind the mannequin, there are large, abstract tapestries or murals. One features a face with large eyes, and another shows a figure with arms raised. The room is lit with spotlights, and a circular object is on the floor in the foreground.

- Begins with personal change
- Creative art therapy gives a platform to witness that change
- Body-map gives a platform to sharing the journey
- Affecting the community
 - Consider: What is our role in supporting this change as an academic and/or practitioner?
 - How do we honour women and their stories?

Self-Determination

- Arts-based research
- What is support?



WOMEN
VOICE



Ceremony and Witnessing

The background image shows an art gallery with several large, expressive artworks on the walls. One artwork on the left features a complex, abstract composition with a central face-like form. Another artwork in the center depicts a figure in a dark, hooded garment. To the right, there's a piece with a figure in a dynamic, almost dancing pose. In the foreground, a round table is set with a variety of small, bite-sized food items. The lighting is soft and focused on the art.

- Ceremony as a sacred space to actively witness and honour the life journey
- Sharing your story and journey and having it heard
- Art Exhibit Celebration
- Creative Workshop run by artists as circle keepers
- Women's Worlds Conference
- Breaking Down the Barriers of Silence VAW exhibit
- Gender and Creative Arts Therapies Conference

The Journey of the Body-Maps





What do you see?

WOMEN
LOUNGE



Amy



WOMEN
LOVE

Nikkutai



WOMEN
1900-1950



Raven



Sophia



WOMEN

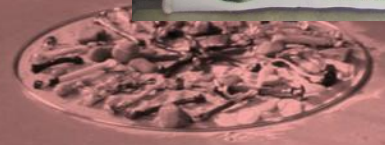
Roberta



Lynda
Bape Ande
Kwe



Xochilt



WOMEN
MUSEUM



Zoë



WOMEN



Now we feel seen

It is good to be seen

Thank you for seeing me

What do you see when you look back?

We look back to move forward



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