

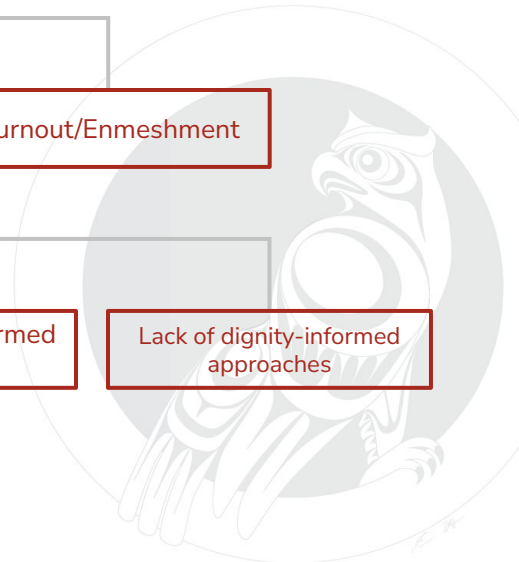
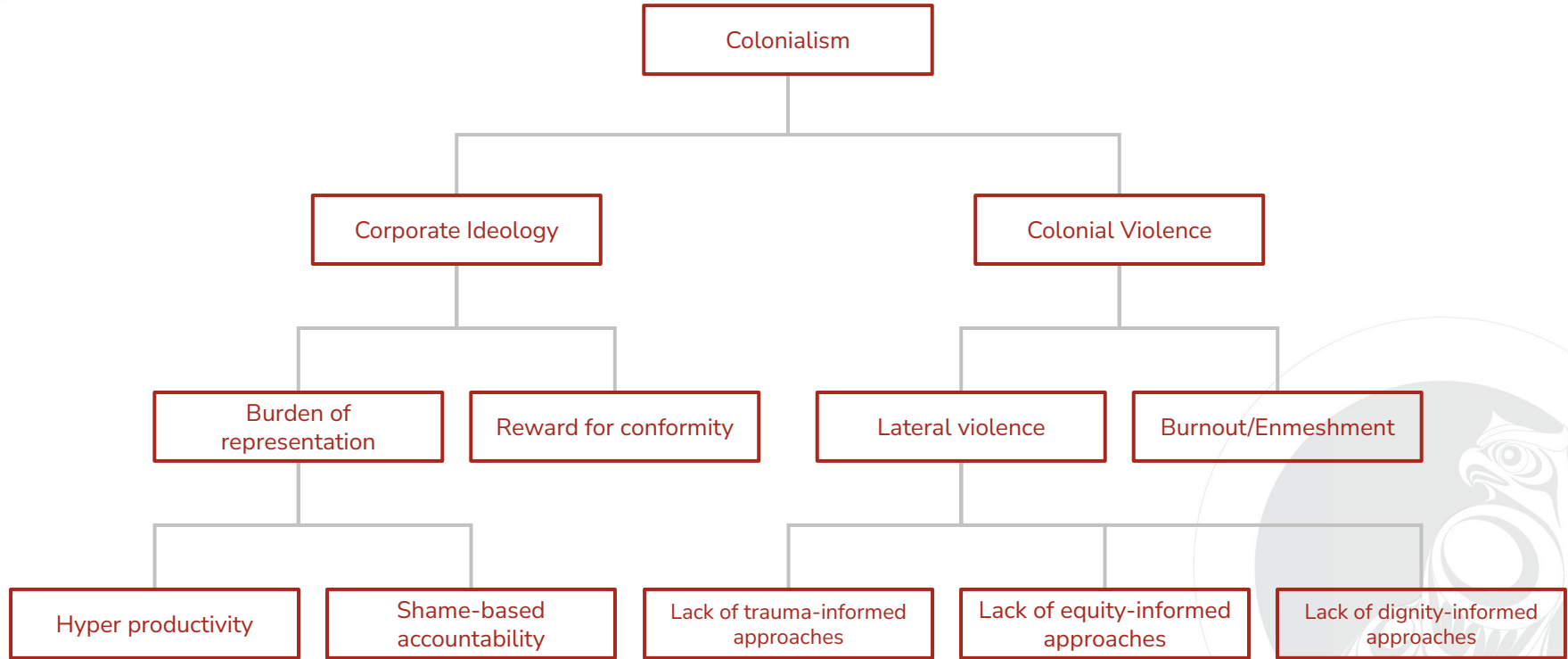
A photograph of a person standing in a forest of tall, moss-covered trees. The person is wearing a brown fringed poncho and a hat, and is looking away from the camera. The forest floor is covered in moss and fallen leaves. The background is filled with tall, thin trees and green foliage.

Keeping in Solidarity: *Self-care, Community-care, and Ethical Leadership in Indigenous Health*

UBC Learning Circle December 2025
Instructor: Len Pierre, CEO



The Colonial-Indigenous Leadership Landscape

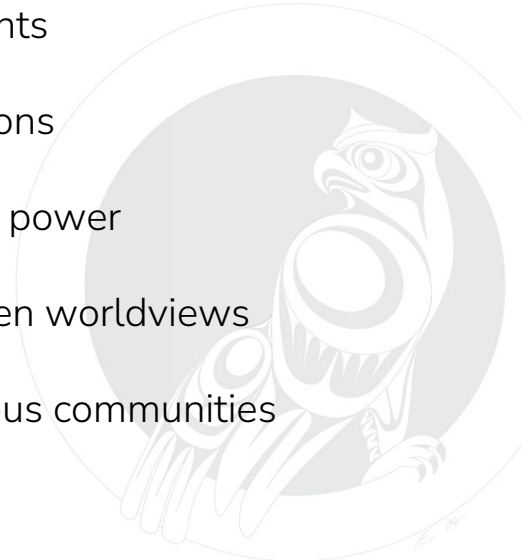




Reconciliation and Indigenous Moral Injury Fallout



- Indigenous staff are forced to operate in systems that violate their core values, cultural teachings, or ethical responsibilities.
- Structural/colonial constraints
- Ethical betrayal by institutions
- Personal responsibility w/o power
- Internalized conflict between worldviews
- Witness harms to Indigenous communities





Circles of Solidarity (Reynolds 2017)

- Relationships of respect and dignity
- Loyalty to each other
- Responding to oppression with action & resistance
- Make repairs
- Respond with action
- Groundless solidarity
- Infinite responsibility
- We do not fight oppression with oppression
- Cultivate cultures of critique





Indigenous Cultural Safety Spectrum

Cultural Avoidance

Cultural Awareness

Cultural Sensitivity

Cultural Safety

Cultural Advocacy



Superiority

Apathy

Dominating

Saviourism

Censoring

Remaining Silent

Limiting

Exploiting

Consuming

Aggressive

Violent

Humbleness

Humility

Compassion

Empowering

Allyship

Speaking Up

Asking Questions

Sharing

Attend To

Vulnerability

TRANSFORMATION

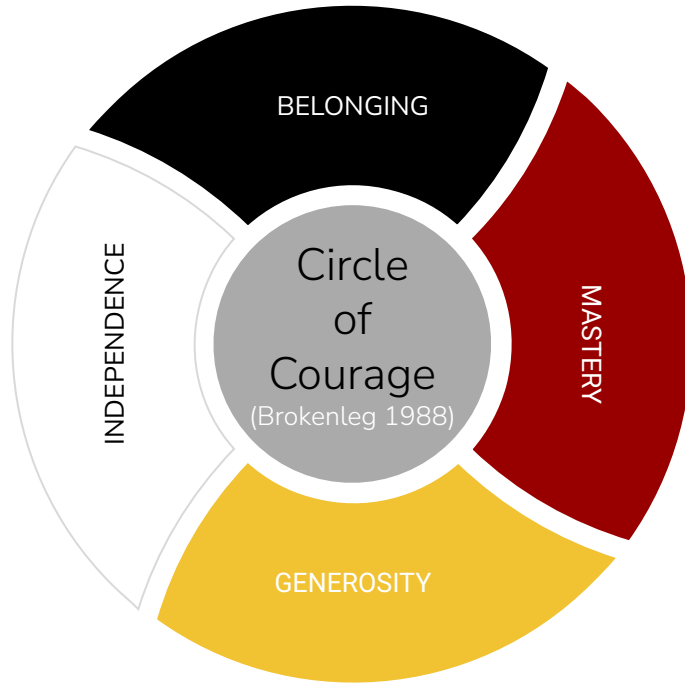
We listen, we learn, we lean in, we change.

**SUPPORTING THE
TYRANNY OF EFFICIENCY**

Productivity, efficiency, data, hierarchical, time, etc.



Leading with Community-Care



Belonging - relational connection:

- Are my team members feeling happy, grounded, and well supported?
- Have I nurtured a sense of kinship, trust, and connection within the team?

Mastery - self-determination:

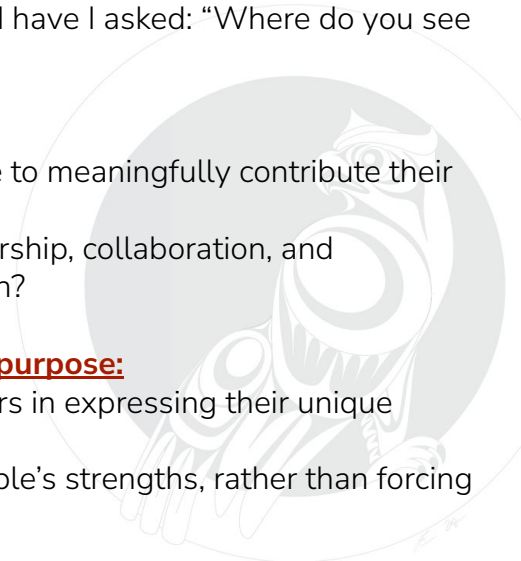
- Have I created space for team members to exercise agency and autonomy?
- Do I know their aspirations, and have I asked: "Where do you see yourself growing next?"

Generosity - collective contribution:

- Have I made room for everyone to meaningfully contribute their gifts?
- Am I encouraging shared leadership, collaboration, and community-centred contribution?

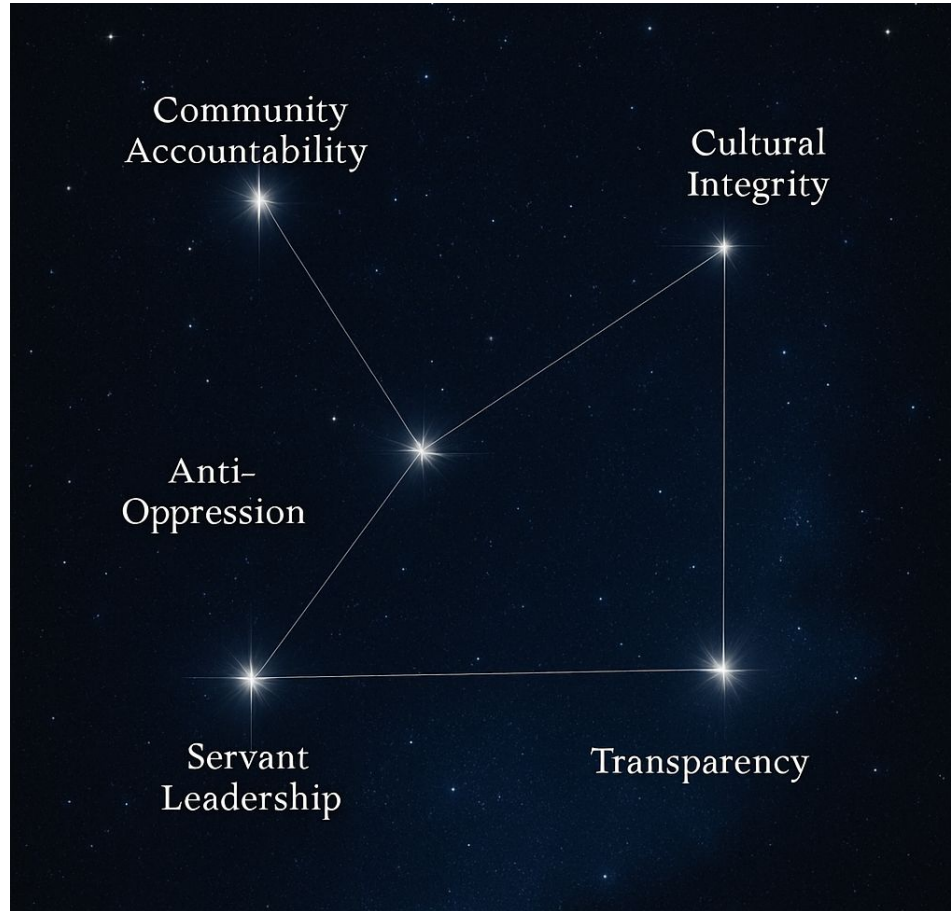
Independence - creative power and purpose:

- Have I supported team members in expressing their unique brilliance and independence?
- Am I shaping roles around people's strengths, rather than forcing people into rigid roles?



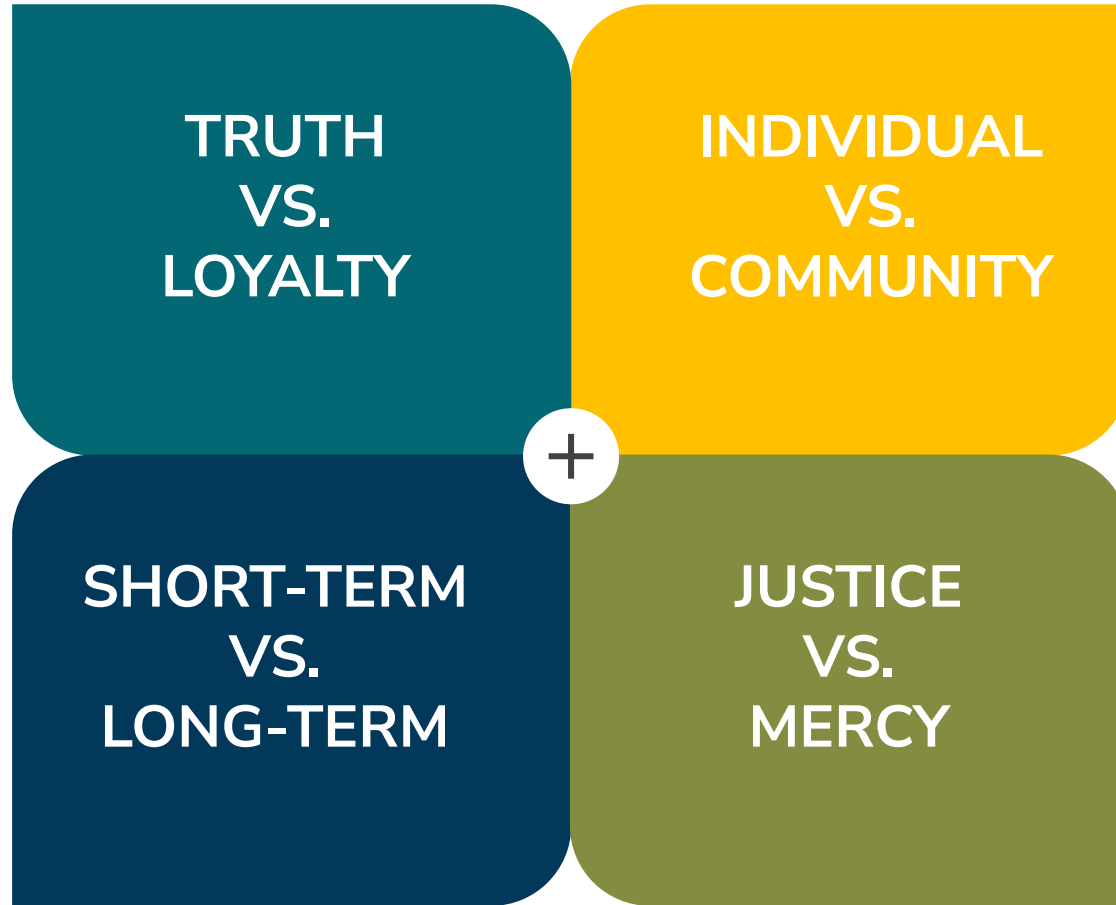


Ethical Leadership Constellation





4 Ethical Dilemmas (Kidder 1996)





Beyond Trauma-Informed (TEDI) Leadership

Trauma-informed

Recognizes Indigenous targeted trauma and creates an environments that prioritize holistic safety for Indigenous Peoples.

Equity-informed

Acknowledges colonial barriers and works to redistribute power, access, and opportunity so Indigenous Peoples can participate.

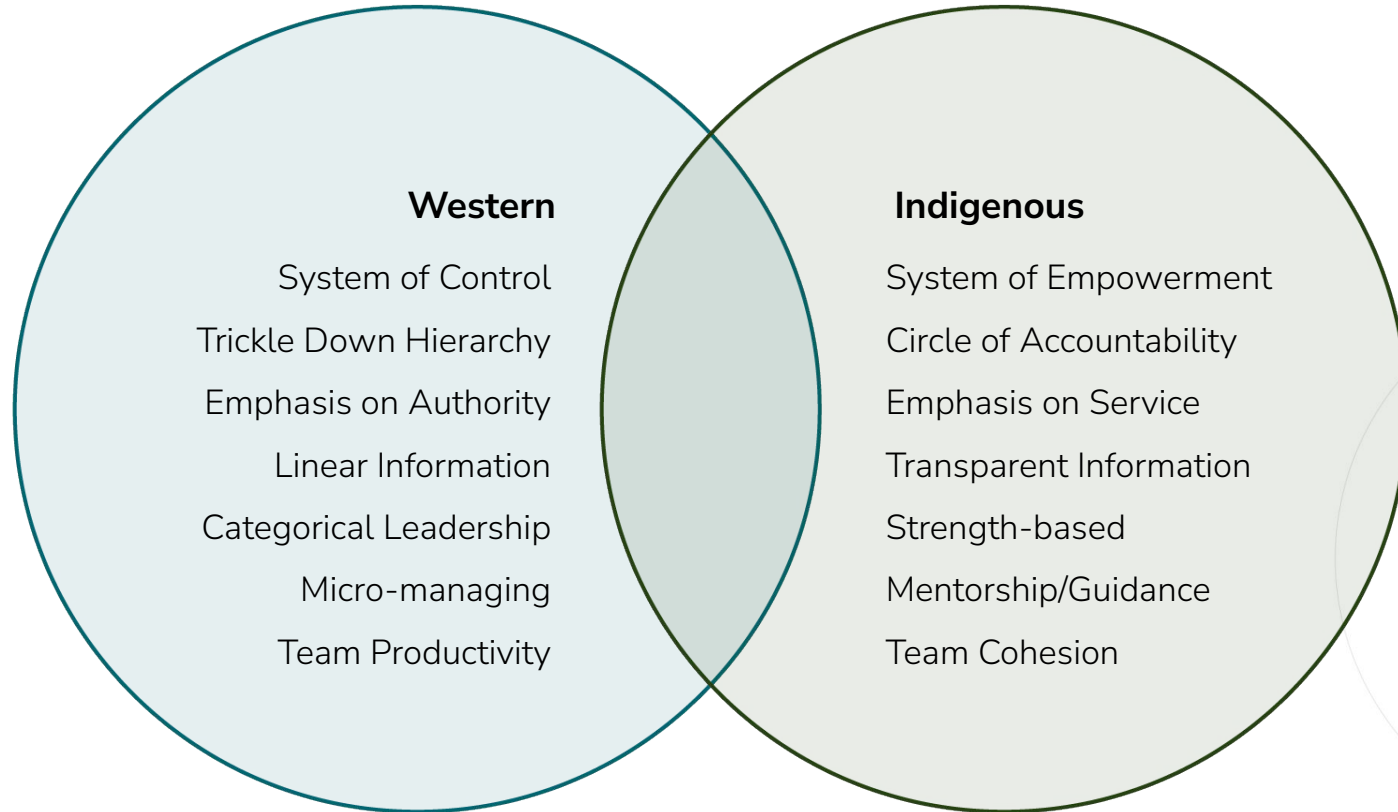
Dignity-informed

Centers person's inherent worth to uphold respect, autonomy, reduce shame, honour boundaries, and strengthen trust.





Decolonizing Leadership

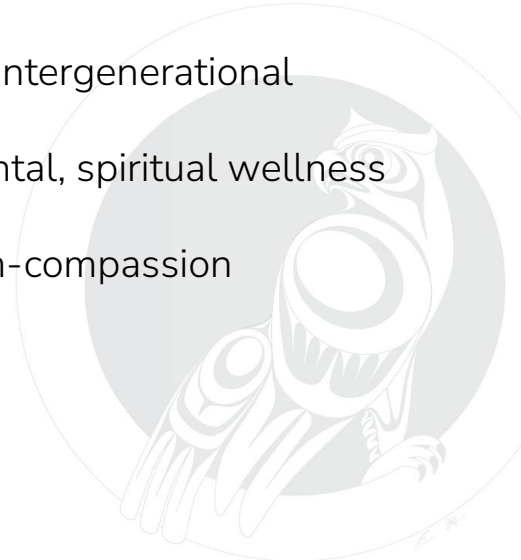




Decolonizing Leadership



- Getting too close to the work
- Being too distant from the work
- The work VS. The system
- The immediate VS. The intergenerational
- Emotional, physical, mental, spiritual wellness
- Self-compassion & team-compassion
- Self-care & team-care





The Teaching of Process & Letting Go



- Ceremony: cedar, brushing, smudging, burning, etc.
- Fire, earth, air, water as medicine and healing mechanisms
- Feeling stuck or trapped as a pitfall: name it, process, it, accept it, value it, commit to an action and go
- Modern day hacks:
 - Bathroom Tissue Therapy (BTT)
 - Wandering clouds
 - Give it to someone
 - Give it back to Mother Earth





In Closing



Staying in solidarity with the good work means knowing when to set aside colonial tools and when they serve a purpose. Indigenous leadership can make use of Western approaches, but it must be grounded first in relationality, balance, and interconnectedness.

Our strength comes from leading in a way that honours our teachings, our responsibilities to one another, and the ethical commitments that hold us together.

When we lead from this place, we do more than manage systems, we sustain our teams, protect our purpose, and stand firmly in our shared humanity.



“

“May we continue to walk in a good way. May our words come from the heart. May we always be open to learn, to share, and to trust in ourselves and each other.

And may we never forget who walks beside us, and who is still to come.”

ELDER RICHARD PIERRE





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- **Feedback helps us grow:** Your insights will be used to enhance future course offerings.
- **Your evaluation is anonymous**
- **Session Details:**
 - Course: UBC LC
 - Instructor: Len Pierre