

Updated 16th Feb 2020

Mutual Help and Peer Support Groups

A Resource Evolved by a Collective of Mutual Help Groups in Australia

This resource is about *mutual* help which differs considerably from service delivery

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Mutual Help and Peer Support Groups

A feature of mutuality is that nothing happens unless local folk want it to happen and are involved in doing things together

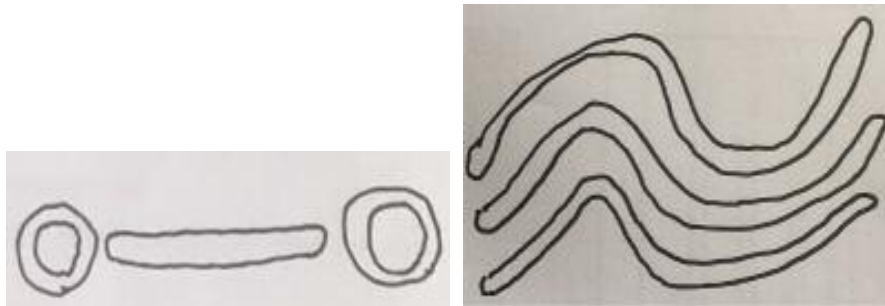
The Format

The following format is used for each of the twenty three themes – refer workbook:

- Theme
- Symbol
- Image
- Folk Wisdom Sayings
- Essence of the Idea / Principle
- A Practical Example
- A Defining Exemplar
- A Laceweb link
- A Website Link

Respecting Connecting and Relating

Symbol and Image



Folk Wisdom

- mutual help groups may foster respecting, connecting, and relating with others
- burdens shared are burdens halved
- being more connected to ourselves as well as to others and relating better with ourselves and others is good
- the onlooker sees most of the game
- waters of river and sea ebb and flow in estuaries; the sea water sends back the brown water and then, after a time recedes; likewise there is the rhythm of contact and withdrawal with others - we may flow outwards into the world and withdraw into ourselves, we may engage and reflect; this is the basic rhythm of breathing and the rhythm of life
- as we are forming our mutual help groups, our mutual help groups are forming us

A PRACTICAL EXAMPLE

Indigenous women from the Australia Top End gathered together at Lake Tinaroo on the Atherton Tablelands in June 1994 to connect, relate, and share story and way. They all knew about both ebb and flow and weaving and the way these are respectfully woven into connecting and relating.

DEFINING EXEMPLAR

Generating exemplar projects in demonstrating that a better world *is* possible - an example:

a relational mediating theme-based gathering of mutual help groups occurred in 1993 at Lake Tinaroo near Atherton on the Atherton Tablelands in Queensland, Australia. This gathering was hosted by local aboriginal and islander women. A number of Aboriginal nurturer women travelled across 3,159 kilometres from Yirrkala, in Northern Territory as well as from other remote communities in the Top End and participated in co-learning co-liberating at this Gathering. The gentleness of the Gathering's sub themes:

Thursday 26th April:

- family friendship
- harmonious decisions, and
- domestic bliss

Friday 27th April was International Dispute Resolution Day (linking the gathering with regional and global outlooking):

- dissolving disputes
- night feast: delicious differences, dancing dreaming music

Essence of the Idea / Principle

The phenomenal experiencing of connecting:

- locality, place and space
- enabling environments
- proximity
 - in circle
 - in small groups
 - in pairs/in threes
- changing contexts
- tendency to match in multiple ways
- rapport - all senses staying in the here-and-now present (staying in uptime)
- attending in uptime
- listening with internal silence (slowing down and stopping head chatter)
- Attending Listening and Remembering
www.laceweb.org.au/alm.htm



A Website Link

Report on the Lake Tinaroo Small Island Gathering – Internet reference

www.laceweb.org.au/rsig.htm

Centrality of Community

Symbol



Folk Wisdom

- sometimes it may be good to have a shoulder to cry on
- many hands make light work
- a new broom sweeps clean but an old broom knows the corners
- we are all in the same boat
- walk a mile in my shoes
- it takes a village to raise a child
- the wisdom is in the group – this will make more sense when you start experiencing the mutual help group strangely and repeatedly coming up with exquisite ways that entail what no one or more in the group could or would normally come up with
- The significance of certain friends in uncertain times

PRACTICAL EXAMPLES

The local Kinglake community survivors of the 2009 fire-storm came together as *Community* with a capital 'C' being fully deeply present to each other in providing emotional, physical, psychological, and practical support.

Other instances:

- a way continued for 1,000s of years is sharing story while gathering bush food
- helping our caravan park temporary neighbours at 3am when the wind partially collapses their annexes
- every small town member keeping an eye on the youngsters walking to and from school and friends' places
- 40,000 plus year old stories about respect for community, instilling compassion in the young boys, and the community significance of weaving and ebb and flow

DEFINING EXAMPLE

Mingles mutual help group located in Paddington and Bondi Junction in Sydney, NSW in the late 1960s evolved into a vibrant intercultural community of communities; a collectivity of mutual help groups that mingled together in celebratory feasting and dining and sharing of good times. Mingles intentionally created a small village atmosphere where everyone knows everyone and cares for everyone and no one has to be alone for Christmas dinner.

Essence of the Idea / Principle

The importance of turning *to* one another and being *with* one another (rather than turning *on* one another), *particularly in informal settings* and bottom-up common-folk led deep listening and mutually supportive adaptive processes.

LACEWEB LINK

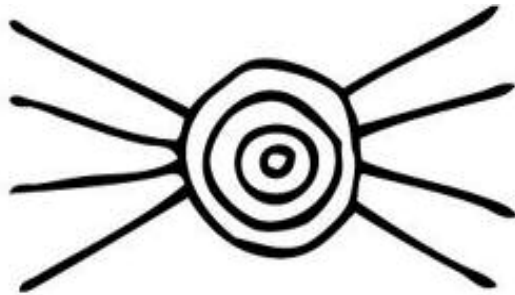
Mingles www.laceweb.org.au/min.htm



Mingles at ConFest – a Conference Festival Running Since 1976

Importance of Locality Place and Meeting Place

Symbol



A place of transforming potency

Folk Wisdom

- placemaking and creating locality where *'locality' means 'connecting to place'*
- homemakers turn house into a home, so place-makers turn a space into a place
- cultural locality meaning *'people connecting together connecting to place'*
- home is where the heart is - 'let's go back to our place'
- a place - a natural environment of significant appeal - where energies come together
- space may be imbued with significance in the process of becoming a place - where folk evolve a mutual connection to place and have memories of significant times shared there.
- place may be linked to a particular time so folk in a mutual help group know 'the time and the place.'
- space can transform into a *place* for a designated period – 'every Tuesday between 10am and 11am we reserve the back table at the coffee shop' or the community room at the local library

PLACE - A PRACTICAL EXAMPLE

The local good vibe cafe where people regularly catch up with mutual friends

A DEFINING EXEMPLAR

The little community hall that survived the Kinglake firestorm became the special place in the burnt black hills for the small group of women to regularly come together in their shared grief and emotionally heal as they quietly knitted and crocheted together.

Essence of the Idea / Principle

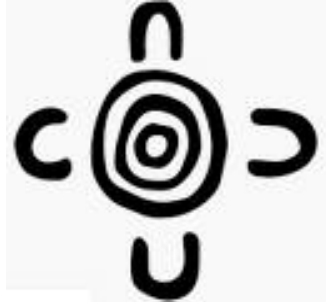
Mutual-help and peer support groups having a focus and gathering place with links to placemaking, evolving *locality* (connection to place), and evolving *cultural locality* - folk connecting together connecting to place.

A Website Link An example is evolving a short term place and cultural locality at beautiful Lake Tinaroo near the rainforest on the Atherton Tablelands in Far North Queensland – a place used a number of times:

Lake Tinaroo Mediation Gathering: www.laceweb.org.au/ltnmg.htm:

Securing a Venue

Symbol



Folk Wisdom

- changing how we move is an easy place to start
- moving well on the way to the meeting place and returning from the meeting; something in the way we move. Refer *Walking and Free Energy* www.laceweb.org.au/wfe.htm
- Spotting differences that make a difference and spotting that is both obvious and hard to spot

Essence of the Idea / Principle

Locating and/or evolving places to meet, for example, in coffee shops (for the price of a coffee), and in people's homes and in parks. The thirty mutual help groups in the 1960s and 1970s all thrived on their OWN resources - bringing food to share leads to abundance. They made do.

A Practical Example

A clear space above a disused shop at 245 Broadway on the edge of the business district in Sydney was rented for a very low rate and used for 18 months by mutual help groups. After a full day of experiences at 245 Broadway a few of us who played bluegrass music entertained ourselves for 45 minutes beside an open window. When we came downstairs to go for dinner, 40 people had been sitting on the footpath listening to our blue grass and hoping to get in to what they thought was a fabulous new venue.



Look for space that owners find hard to lease. We may be able to rent for low or no cost for mutual help groups. This happened with un-rentable shops in a small mall in Rapid Creek in Darwin in the Northern Territory when a large shopping centre opened nearby (hint: look for these kinds of contexts). Another ideal feature was Darwin's oldest intercultural community market was still at this little shopping complex on a Saturday morning and early afternoon, making it a natural place to network. Refer - *The Rapid Creek Village Project* www.laceweb.org.au/rcp.htm



In the late 1980s and 1990s a home in Yungaburra on the Atherton Tablelands in Queensland was used to hold mutual help groups with names like Mediation Matters, Nexus Groups, Inma Nelps, and UN Inma, (refer Attachment A)

The Yungaburra house in 1931

A Defining Exemplar



Bondi Junction House



A Laceweb link

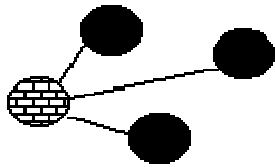
Evolving a Dispersed Urban Wellbeing Community
www.laceweb.org.au/hsb.htm

A Website Link

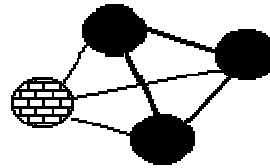
Archive: www.laceweb.org.au

Increasing Folk Participating

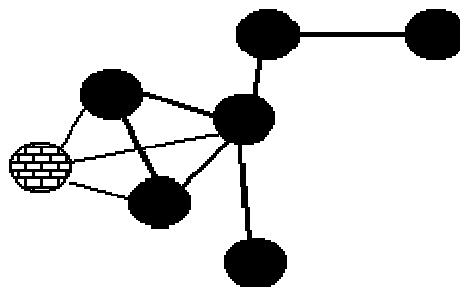
Symbols



Enabler finds Natural Nurturers



Pass three ways to each and have them share and in so doing adapting ways to local contexts



They begin to locate other natural nurturers

Folk Wisdom Sayings

- 'natural nurturers', people who are naturally good and nurturing others
- natural nurturers can be really helpful in starting and sustaining mutual help groups
- here's a way that works; pass it on and use or adapt it if you will
- what's round goes around

Essence of the Idea / Principle

Evolving participant numbers - finding natural nurturers and raising their consciousness about their own currently little used practical wisdom; evolving relational connections and supporting them to be more able to support others and evolving natural nurturer networks. *These become resource people in attracting new folk to the mutual help group.*

Practical Examples

In the 1990s a number of mutual help groups with differing foci and a shared locality had a shared focus in re-habilitating Rapid Creek in Darwin, Australia.

1991. *The Rapid Creek Village Project* - www.laceweb.org.au/rcp.htm

Jan 1994. *One Fortnight's Laceweb Action in the Atherton Tablelands*

www.laceweb.org.au/ofla.htm

A Defining Exemplar

During 2002 and 2005 capacity was made available to seek natural nurturers and networks of natural nurturers throughout SE Asia Oceania. Natural nurturers were found and linked into existing natural nurturer networks and mutual help Groups and collectives of mutual help groups in the Region. Guides to this practical action and outcomes may be found in the following links:

Laceweb Links

Evolving Natural Nurturer Networks, pages 792 - 814
www.laceweb.org.au/bio.pdf

Healing Group Processes
www.laceweb.org.au/hgp.htm

A Website link

Evolving Transforming Relational Networks
www.laceweb.org.au/etn.htm

Developing Our Own Story

Symbol



Folk Wisdom Sayings

- we're all storytellers; inside is a natural-born storyteller waiting to be released
- we all live in a network of stories
- in Australia the term 'yarn' means to talk in a friendly way and also spun thread used for knitting, weaving, or sewing.
- there isn't a stronger connection between people than storytelling
- storytelling is a most powerful way to put ideas into the world
- there's always room for a story that can transport others to another place
- stories create community, enable us to see through the eyes of other people, and open us to the claims of others
- telling your story and listening to you self in the re-making

Essence of the Idea / Principle

Perhaps, setting in place multiple woven aspects for maintaining practice and legitimizing action (keeping all your stories of bits that worked well, passing these on to others who may use or adapt ways to their own culture, context and locality); obtaining endorsements, finding allies who'll back you, having a local media presence etc,

A Practical Example

In Greek mythology Theseus was able to get out of the deadly Minotaur's labyrinth by unrolling a ball of yarn so he could retrace his steps. In Middle English, such rolled-up yarn was called a clewe. Eventually, clew/clue took on the metaphorical meaning of something that will lead you to satisfactory outcomes.

A Defining Exemplar / A Laceweb link

A timeline of laceweb Mutual Help Action in the late 1980s:
www.laceweb.org.au/cwhw.htm#history

A Website Link

Nurturing Community for Wellness - Legitimizing Under Threat of Reality Breakdown - Pages 251 to 258 - www.laceweb.org.au/resp.pdf

Social and Cultural Exchange

Symbol



Folk Wisdom Sayings

- we get on with our change-work
- bring it up in the group
- well begun is half done already
- don't cross a bridge before you come to it
- the journey starts with the first step
- don't put all your eggs in one basket.
- birds of a feather flock together
- our culture is our way of living with others
- a thing of beauty is a joy forever
- folk are known by the company they keep
- you can't have an omelette unless you break the egg
- the bough that bears the most fruit hangs lowest
- confidence begets confidence

Essence of the Idea / Principle

We common folk live our lives knowing a few people - with some connection to others – perhaps a few relationships between people. We have some experience of the world – some beliefs, some ideas, and some learning from life experience that we all may bring to bear on our own particular corner of the world. These commonsense capacities are part of the folkCommons – a term honouring the multitudinous occasions of insight, affect, and defect that we common folk bring to daily life: in parenting and growing up, caring for ourselves and each other; the aged, the disabled, and the demented; persisting with some love that brings perhaps moments of flourishing and success, supporting neighbours visited by calamity.

A Practical Example

At a 1993/94 new year's eve party at a Yungaburra house most of the local children became involved in decorating the play space including placing fluoro whitener in white river sand as dance floor on the ground below the house (a Queenslander style house set up high on poles) so it looked spectacular under fluoro lights of an evening. When the adults arrived that evening *all* of the beer was 1% alcohol so everyone stayed sober for the whole party. Key strategies were formed during the gathering for preparing for the Small Island Gathering Celebration during mid year.



Yungaburra house 2001 where children prepared underneath

A Defining Exemplar

In 1999, a week-long intercultural healing gathering was arranged by a few mutual help groups in the Cairns Atherton Tablelands Region with the theme *Sharing Our Ways for Sustaining Resilience and Wellness in the Aftermath of Disaster*. Folk attended with lived experience of man-made and natural disasters in Bougainville, East Timor, West Papua, and Papua New Guinea. Also attending were Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, Anglos, Australian South Sea Islanders, Anglo-Germans, Brazilian, Hmong, Irish, Japanese, and North American Indian. Non compromising funding was provided from a NSW Foundation.

A Laceweb link

June-July, 2000. *The Intercultural Trauma Healing Gatherings for the Sixth Anniversary of the July, 1994 Small Island Coastal and Estuarine People Gathering Celebration*. www.laceweb.org.au/hsg.htm

Website Links

Regional Cooperation, Networking, and Consolidation of Resources.
pages 1 & 6:

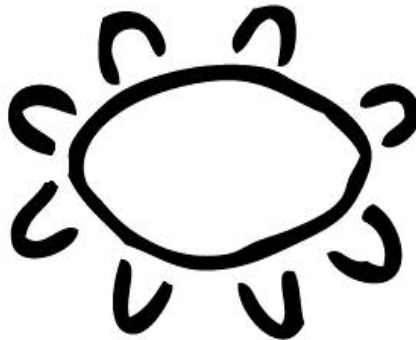
www.laceweb.org.au/433.pdf

All Coffee Break Conference

www.laceweb.org.au/oacbc.htm

Accessing and Sharing Resources

Symbol



Folk Wisdom Sayings

- a burden shared is burden halved
- notice how your breathing may change as you do the following - interrupting being taut, exaggerating the tautness so *you* increase agency – you do the change, then *you* suddenly let go, and sense that, and learn by sensing difference between tautness and letting go, and then consciously exercising agency (can do) with awareness in alternating between tensing and relaxing, and noticing the difference, and noticing it's okay to let go;

Essence of the Idea / Principle

The transformational Interrupt. Refer:

The Upstairs Dorm: <http://www.laceweb.org.au/Fraser%2007.mp3>

Interrupting, pages 27-41. <http://www.laceweb.org.au/btw.pdf>

A Practical Example

In SE Asian disaster contexts where international aid organisations found only devastation and despair, those with mutual help perception were easily able to find local-knowing-based capacity, competence, resilience, and resourcefulness alongside folkCommons practical wisdom in action in abundance.

Identifying Resilience in its many Forms.

www.laceweb.org.au/rr.htm

Network Established in Cambodia, Oceania, Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam - Building Links in Indonesia and East Timor.

www.laceweb.org.au/323.pdf

A Defining Exemplar

Mutual help Group ways leads to authentic empowering:

www.laceweb.org.au/nlp.htm#auth

Laceweb link

Healing Ways Experiential Learning
www.laceweb.org.au/el.htm

Website Links

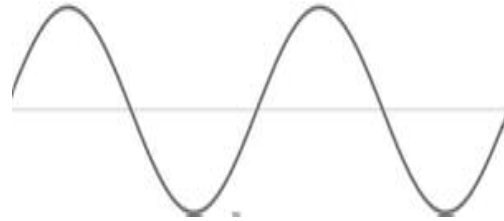
Micro Experiences for sharing healing ways
www.laceweb.org.au/mic.htm

Learning Community

Symbols



Intergenerational connecting



on the same resonating wave



Signs and traces with implications

Folk Wisdom Sayings

- in ripples, every peak involves a trough and a couple of turning points
- bringing it up in the group
- there's a time to ebb and a time to flow
- a time to sow and a time to reap
- play and spontaneity is at the heart of the child in everyone - play to order is not play

Essence of the Idea / Principle

Viable and vibrant practices within mutual help groups often just happen and self organising aspects just begin emerge or happening within social exchange, and what works may be in a specific, but evolving context and set of relationships; refer:

- www.laceweb.org.au/nlp.htm#sel)
- www.laceweb.org.au/nlp.htm#emergen

An opportunity exists in supporting a shared increase in a groups' capacity to sense, experience and think dynamically, and become aware and apply and adapt practically useful emergent phenomena and reflect and act on change opportunities and pass on ways that work to others.

A Practical Example

The 1993 *Lake Tinaroo* relational mediation *gathering celebration* of members of mutual help groups from across the Top End of Australia was an example of a dispersed community formed expressly as a learning community

Laceweb link

Lake Tinaroo Mediation Gathering

- www.laceweb.org.au/ltmg.htm

A Defining Exemplar

Healing Sunday held monthly on the first Sunday of the month and held at a home in Bondi Junction, Sydney is a practical wisdom exemplar relating to evolving a learning community with members of the community living in the suburbs of Sydney and further afield including interstate

- www.laceweb.org.au/hsb.htm
- www.laceweb.org.au/DispTC.mp3

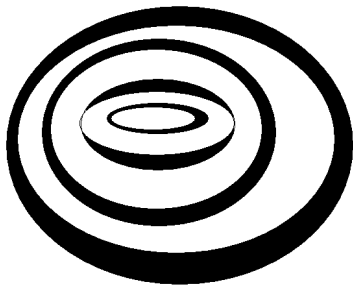
A Website Link

The Life Work of Dr Neville Yeomans. Appendix 36, p. 641-643.

www.laceweb.org.au/bio.pdf

Expanding the Experience Envelope

Symbol and Images



Enriching sensing and sense-making



Sensing the lay of the land – keypoints and keylines
land topography and social topography

Note: Folk attending a mutual help group generally want to be all at the same level – like they are around the edge of the lake. They don't have people on the hill looking down on them.

Folk Wisdom Sayings

- involve me and I learn
- we learn by doing, and by falling over and picking ourselves up
- experience is the best teacher
- learning by remaining curious
- learning by disconnecting from what is untrue
- common sense is genius dressed in its working clothes
- experiencing experiencing through awareness of awareness
- learning to see what others can't see
- life is a journey, not a destination.
- some search the world for treasure when they have acres of diamonds in their own backyard
- often what one is looking for is right under one's nose – often one can't see for looking
- wisdom is oftentimes nearer when we stoop than when we soar
- practical wisdom is bound up with action; it's not a enough to know the wise thing to do, start moving and actually do it

Essence of the Idea / Principle

Finding, connecting, gaining rapport, and relating well with natural nurturers among common folk and supporting them to reconnect with their own folk Commons practical wisdoms and practical actions and linking these folk together at fitting times and places for sharing and expanding their experiencing.

Practical Examples

Varied examples of Community Mutual Help are included in the following reference including examples of letters of support legitimating practical action:

- a farm based mutual help group
- a remote area gathering celebration
- a village project
- an international gathering celebration
- a mutual help group based urban renewal project
- a mutual help group based health ecology project

www.laceweb.org.au/ecm.htm

A Defining Exemplar

Laceweb links

- *Healing Ways Experiential Learning*
www.laceweb.org.au/el.htm
- *Laceweb Contexts and Frames*
www.laceweb.org.au/lcf.htm
- *Natural living Processes Lexicon*
www.laceweb.org.au/nlp.htm
- *Realising human Potential*
www.laceweb.org.au/rhp.htm

Website Links

Yeomans Biography Keyline and Cultural Keyline. Pages 274 – 483
www.laceweb.org.au/bio.pdf

Sociograms
www.laceweb.org.au/soc.htm

Liminality in Natural Living Processes Lexicon
www.laceweb.org.au/nlp.htm#limi

Coming to One's Senses. A collection of 130 stories of transforming ways in action
www.laceweb.org.au/btw.pdf

Practical Life Wisdom

Image & Symbol



The sweetness of glucose is nowhere to be found in carbon, hydrogen, or oxygen, though present when they are chemically bonded together in the above ratios to form glucose. This is an example of function and pleasant aspects emerging out of practical action.

Folk Wisdom Sayings

- link good ideas with action

Essence of the Idea / Principle

Recognising, enriching and using the practical wisdom and life experiences of success and failure present among common folk (the folkCommons). Commonsense capacities are part of the folkCommons – a term honouring the multitudinous occasions of insight, affect, and defect that we common folk bring to daily life: in parenting and growing up, caring for ourselves and each other; the aged, the disabled, and the demented; persisting with the love that brings flourishing and success, supporting neighbours visited by calamity, joining friends and family in celebrations of life thresholds

A Practical Example

Very young children in South East Asia (East Timor, Thailand, Cambodia and Vietnam) when given the opportunity will use a cup to take water from a container and slowly pour the water on their wrist; and if left alone, they will do this over and over for 20 minutes or more. It is very simple. Presumably, it is very pleasant. It's cooling. It's calming. And it feels very very good. It is something they do for themselves (self help). They are using their own 'can do' or agency. Simple practical wisdom in action.

A Defining Exemplar

A Laceweb link

A Website Link

The Functional in Context

Symbol/images



Functional if it stays together Cracking nuts is functional – smashing is not so functional

Folk Wisdom Sayings

- a stitch in time saves nine
- Misery loves the company of miserable people so no detailing of what you do *not* want. Rather share what you do want.
- They called him 'Hobbly-go-kick'. (Hobbly would kick his leg through as he had poor muscle coordination. It looked a funny walk but it worked for Hobbly)

Essence of the Idea / Principle

Interrupt anyone 'cataloguing disaster' – that is, making a long list of everything that's wrong. This is a waste of time, it's typically reinforcing pathology, it's time wasting, and sustaining mess. Rather, focus on what *is* working well. Often micro-moments of ease and the seemingly trivial are windows to possible different realities.

'You just did a big sigh. How different do you feel right now after doing this?'

It is useful to be sensing small differences. Be recognising the role-specific functional in context - the positives and the bits that work well and work with these - work with the free energy near the stuck energy for ripple through effects.

A Practical Example

At the first mutual help group gathering within a prison, members discussed between themselves and agreed *what they all wanted* - support in feeling well, relaxed and energised within their bodies. They were given a guided experience of being aware of moving their awareness around their bodies and soon were delighted in how they now felt.

Aspects:

- respecting connecting and relating together
- focusing on what we do want
- collaborating and reaching agreement on a common issue
- expressing our felt needs
- our action is appropriate for our high stress context
- we seek and accept enabling support so we all become more able to alter how we feel inside our respective bodies and we share our positive changes with each other
- we're realising that we're have increasing flexibility and choice as to how we feel.

A Defining Exemplar

One moment: 'Notice how her yelling got his attention.'

Next moment: 'Notice how he is not responding to her continuing yelling'

The same behaviour is functional in one context, and not in the next

A Laceweb link

Holistic Functional Integrating
www.laceweb.org.au/hfi.htm

A Website Link

It takes a particular kind of perceiving (the sense we make of our senses) to recognise the role specific functional in context. This is detailed in the following reference.

Refer *Neville's Role as Leader and his Group Processes - On the Side of Constructive Striving, Pages 240-248.*
www.laceweb.org.au/bio.pdf

Transforming through Experiencing Respectful Connecting and Relating to Self and Others

Symbol



Folk Wisdom Sayings

- as the part changes so the whole changes
- everyone has *astronomical* potential (there are over 6.22 billion ways to arrange 13 different items in a row and we're made up of billions of bits)
- our very nature is simultaneously inter-connecting, inter-relating and inter-dependent

Essence of the Idea / Principle

The heading says it all - the process of respectfully experiencing connecting and relating to self and others leads to transforming

A Practical Example

Saul, in becoming Paul, 'put on a new personality' by 'making the mind over'.

Refer Daughter on Bail Story in *Coming to One's Senses - By The Way*.
Pages 62, 66, 73, 340, 356, 371, 384

www.laceweb.org.au/btw.pdf

A Defining Exemplar

A Laceweb link

Supporting Mutual Help – Experiential Learning Course
www.laceweb.org.au/shmh.htm

A Website Link

Transforming
www.laceweb.org.au/nlp.htm#transf
www.laceweb.org.au/nlp.htm#tap

Focusing on Shared Strengths

Symbol



Aligning intention, place-locality, connecting forces, balance, potential energy, time-light-shadow, & symmetry

Folk Wisdom Sayings

The coming together of complementary valued human potencies:

- Loving
- being respectful and compassionate
- recognising others, especially their dignity
refer Dignity: www.laceweb.org.au/dsw.pdf
- showing kindness and social intelligence, and
- connecting in enriching positive relationships

Essence of the Idea / Principle

Looking for, and tapping into mutual-help and peer support group folk's emotional, psychological, and social resources and resilience - their strengths – their values and vision, capacities, capabilities and competencies, and their potentials and aspirations

A Practical Example

The community of firestorm survivors up in Kinglake, while ravaged and decimated, shared their complementary strengths in putting their lives back together.

A Defining Exemplar

In groups with lots of pathology present, the group facilitator directs everyone's attention to the *role specific function bits of behaviour in context*.

'Notice her yelling attracted his attention. Now notice that he is not responding to her continuing yelling.'

The same behaviour is functional one moment, and not functional the next moment; so everyone attends to folks' strengths and functional bits as exemplars.

A Laceweb link

Refer: *On Neville's Role as Leader and his Group Processes*, p. 240.

www.laceweb.org.au/bio.pdf

A Website Link

Weaving it all Together

Symbol



Folk Wisdom Sayings

- the forces between folk that are connecting folk are where magic happens – these forces make up the energy that holds the creating process together – the social constituting of realities.
- a sevenfold cord is not easily broken

Essence of the Idea / Principle

The following works and has been found to work in many mutual help contexts - keep stacking all of the aspects mentioned in this Resource; wisely putting *everything* close together while using practical wisdom in specifically and generally placing together people and things along with weaving everything together, so evolving fluid structures-processes with ebb and flow as appropriate to context and given such a carefully worked-out structure, evolution is an inevitable consequence.



Stacking - (placing different things together)



a time to ebb – a time to flow
Tidal River at Norman Beach



weaving

A Practical Example

The mutual help group Weaving Women's Wisdom provides a time and place for girls and women of all ages to gather. Together we hold space for ceremony, celebration, skill-sharing and nourishing; and we're ongoingly creating an inspirational intergenerational community of women who are connected to themselves, each other, their community and the earth.

A Defining Exemplar

Neville Yeomans helped spawn 30 mutual help groups in the late 1960s from his experience of establishing a transitional community where a massive number of micro aspects were woven together towards people connecting, relating and trans-forming their lives together while generating networked social networks

International Web Links

Healing Words Newsletter Page 13. *Healing Words – Connecting Aboriginal Communities – North South East and West.*

www.ahf.ca/downloads/feb-2000.pdf

Aboriginal Healing Foundation 2000b. Healing Words Newsletter - Page 10. *The Healing Art of Storytelling*

www.ahf.ca/downloads/june-2000.pdf

A Laceweb link

Transforming Ways

www.laceweb.org.au/tp.htm

A Website Link

The Laceweb Network

www.laceweb.org.au/tln.htm

Layering Stacking and Weaving Our Experiences Together

Symbols



Folk Wisdom Sayings

- experience is the best teacher
- the wisdom of the wise and the experience of the ages are perpetuated in story and proverbs
- the seven fold cord is not easily broken

Essence of the Idea / Principle

Respectfully stretching and extending ourselves as a group, returning to what we know, layering our experience and our learning, like we are making a thatched roof, a croissant (stretch and fold) or very strong steel

A Practical Example

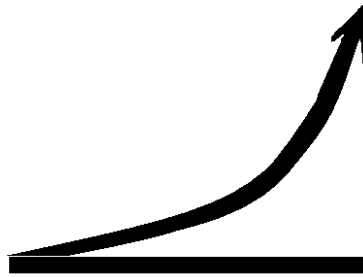
A Defining Exemplar

A Laceweb link

A Website Link

Compounding Impact

Symbol



Folk Wisdom Sayings

- 'exponential' means having an increasing rate of increasing – a prevalent phenomenon in natural systems - accompanied by ecological checks and balances – for example, exponential growth of one species contributes to exponential growth of predators leading to depletion of food source for, and decline of the numbers of the preyed upon species, and subsequent decline in predators with exponential forces part of the dynamic
- obtaining further interest on our interests
- including outcomes that work well into new action; and noting that *outcomes that work* tend to emerge somewhat spontaneously, so look out for them
- compounding community involves incorporating our combined interesting outcomes into our community resources-in-use and hence experiencing a culture of continuing improvement in wellness

Essence of the Idea / Principle

Mutual action in supporting each other shares the risk and the load, increases the likelihood of doing well together, and decreases risks; you also have the emergence of social compound interest (the original meaning was to enter into the essence of the other) - growth becomes exponential, that is, not only is there an increase in transforming, there is also an increase in the rate of increase – refer to the symbol above.

A Practical Example

A Defining Exemplar

A Laceweb link –

A Website Link

Total Care Foundations Role in the Early Festivals
www.laceweb.org.au/tcfr.htm

Opening Up to the Outside

Symbol



Folk Wisdom Sayings

- *alone we may not change the world, though we can playfully skip stones across the water creating many ripples*
- the butterfly effect
- evolving away from homo-agressans as in 'aggressors' and towards homo amans as in 'lovers'

Essence of the Idea / Principle

Evolving sensible permeable boundaries is natural for intaking and disseminating nutrient and information and eliminating waste while keeping the harmful at bay, that is, - preventing potential harm from being harmful while enjoying thriving wellness

A Practical Example

In maintaining sensible permeable boundaries, the 1970s mutual help groups followed the Fraser House way – 'here we respectfully get on with living well together so together we learn to leave madness or badness outside'. Every person having a bad moment or day is supported. In mental hospitals residents were expected to have mental health issues. In Fraser House residents were expected to *be getting on with living well together* so together '*no madness or badness here*', any such behaviour was gently and respectfully interrupted.

A Defining Exemplar

A Laceweb link

Living Well Communities - Associated Action Research - Inter-Community & Regional Cooperative Partnerships in Living Well Communities Program Working Group www.laceweb.org.au/lwc.htm

A Website Link

Transforming Norms www.laceweb.org.au/tn.htm

Emerging Adapting and Transforming

Symbols and Images



Emerging

Adapting

Transforming

Folk Wisdom Sayings

- emergence may be emergent phenomena – just appearing in a self organising natural way
- adaptations may occur in the cracks and crevices
- living systems adapt by transforming patterns that connect
- often folk don't notice they're transforming – an advantage as they don't sabotage the transforming

Essence of the Idea / Principle

Connecting and relating well within and between mutual help groups – and when and if folk are ready, evolving the collective of mutual help groups and/or the community of communities

A Practical Example

Aboriginal and Islander adolescents who had had strife with the criminal justice system came to a supported mutual help group in the Australia Top end, listened to story night and morning, and experienced living well within clearly stated boundaries. 75% were leaving the mutual help group with a wide range of life and work competences to work fulltime as stockmen on very large cattle stations. There was a time and place to huddle together to listen to story (before breakfast and with a full tummy after dinner) and a time to gallop on horseback down gullies and across shallow creeks.

A Defining Exemplar

A Laceweb link

Micro Experiences for Sharing Healing Ways www.laceweb.org.au/mic.htm

Website Links

Wounded Healer Wounded Group
www.laceweb.org.au/hhc.htm

Transforming Norms
www.laceweb.org.au/tn.htm

Transforming Experiences or Wellbeing
www.laceweb.org.au/tew.htm

Creating a Point of Difference

Symbol



Folk Wisdom Sayings

- childlike folk continue to find joy while engaging in play
- play softens bodies, increases flow in moving
- play to order is not play
- many profound insights and actions emerge from spontaneity
- sense the differences that make the difference
- lookout for the elusive obvious
- energising moods that attune

Essence of the Idea / Principle

Local Distinctiveness

Distinctiveness at the International Level

This theme is detailed in the paper:

Interfacing Alternative and Complementary Well-being Ways for Local Wellness'

www.laceweb.org.au/int.htm

A Practical Example

During and after the Kinglake firestorm in 2009, the local folk were massively affected by loss of their friends, houses, infrastructure, and way of life. Self-starters using local knowing and sensing urgent and paramount needs immediately swung into spontaneous action. Burnt out cars were towed off roads to allow access. Houses tucked away in thick bush on back roads were checked by local folk for survivors even as fire continued to surge up and down steep gullies. Other locals joined in. They realised a strong yearning for sharing what each other knew. Who knew what about what and whom? Who were the local 'go to people? Importantly, who had survived? Who were injured? And grievously tragic, who had died? Folk want to know. Where were people now? How were others going?

Arranging brief meet ups. All of this deeply respecting connecting relating became a major part of each day and massively helped people get through each day. And all of this emerged out of a pre-firestorm small village mutual help as a communal way of life; Kinglake was on the margins – away from all levels of government and governance.

Sadly, people charged with providing expert service delivery to these locals felt their jobs threaten by all this mutual help of locals by locals and the ‘charged experts’ carried out sustained attempts at interference in local way

A Defining Exemplar

Differentiating service delivery and ethical community mutual-help action for wellness:

Governments and the Facilitating of Grassroots Action
www.laceweb.org.au/gfg.htm

Laceweb Ethics
www.laceweb.org.au/eth.htm

A Laceweb link

A Website Link

Preventing Pathological Co-Optation

Symbol



Folk Wisdom Sayings

- we are held together by the weaving of wellness possibilities
- threat may move us to higher order functioning
- together we stand and together we may do so much
- on ways for evolving community – if you're not weaving you typically are not getting it
- casting a stone across the waters creates many widening ripples
- there is no power for change greater than a community discovering what it cares about
- the wellness of a community may be sensed by the compassionate connecting and relating well of its members
- recognising both 'we do it for you' and we do it well for our own wellness'

Essence of the Idea / Principle

Co-optating means the adapting or adjusting of parts to each other; a very good process for integrating individual and groups, though dysfunctional if creating dependency - especially dependency upon service providers. Mutual-help, peer support and enriching community differ profoundly from clinical service delivery. Entanglement with service delivery, while useful for referrals, can diminish agency (doing things ourselves) while contributing to dependence and learned helplessness along with enclosing and collapsing the *folkCommons*, etc.. So, use the old ways of 'warding off' encroachment – increasing our awareness of compromising ways and standing firm together. Resisting compromising funding that seems sweet, though inevitably it entangles and disempowers. The pervasive concept 'job' does not apply within mutual-help, peer support way.

Preventing co-aptation

Governments and the Facilitation of Grassroots Action
www.laceweb.org.au/gfg.htm

For folkCommons refer:

The Renaissance and Enrichment of the FolkCommons
www.laceweb.org.au/shg.htm

The FolkCommons – From Psychopathology to Well Futures
www.laceweb.org.au/tfp.htm

A Practical Example

Two examples of sustaining mutual help within a service delivery framework:

Near Reading in the UK:

Service delivery aspects:

- funding service providers
- arranging meeting place
- selecting of attendee admittance and cessation
- maintaining the groups process and format
- arranging food and drinks
- member follow-up

Mutual help aspects:

- providing exemplar micro moments to each other
- members showing interest in other members
- respectfully connecting and relating upon arrival and during breaks and meal
- members supporting each other to be able

Fraser House in Sydney, 1959-68

Service delivery aspects:

- funding service providers
- arranging meeting place
- selecting of attendee admittance and cessation
- maintaining the groups process and format – though this was after some months also delegated to staff-member co-action

Other aspects normally carried out within a service delivery model were reframed to *ensure* all service delivery staff stayed in the ‘enabler’ role, that is, *supporting others to be more able*.

Refer:

- www.laceweb.org.au/bio.pdf
- www.laceweb.org.au/resp.pdf

A Defining Exemplar

A Laceweb link

A Website Link

Elizabeth De Castro et al. *Recognising and Evolving Local-lateral Links Between Various Support Processes*. www.laceweb.org.au/lll.htm

Community of Communities

Symbol



Folk Wisdom Sayings

- evolving and enjoying gathering celebrations together

Essence of the Idea / Principle

Especially using low-cost no-cost bush campout gathering celebrations in rural and remote enchanting places for reconnecting and relating between mutual help groups - evolving the collective of mutual help groups and/or the community of communities

Many Practical Examples

Some of the processes to look out for in the following examples:

- having an exquisite locality and place for the potential gathering celebrating
- community enriching as a natural outcome of collaborating in seeking, finding and preparing the site
- energising possibilities:
- a letter sent in evolving the June 1994 Gathering Celebration where around 500 attended <http://www.laceweb.org.au/rsig.htm> :
Ideas are evolving for a gathering celebration of small island coastal and estuarine women in the Australia top end for the exploring of the softening of drug abuse, the stopping of family violence and humane caring alternatives to criminal and psychiatric incarceration
- having a gathering celebration theme that is resonant with attracting a spread of potential attendees from mutual help groups – conducive to coherence
- having news of the gathering celebration spreading through natural nurturer networks
- being very strategic as to the timing and locating of the gathering celebration
- celebrating gatherings on anniversaries of previous happenings
- linking action to regional and global celebratory days or years or events as precursor events, concurrent or follow-on events; in so doing widening the scope of being in attendees

1993 - *Some Reflecting upon the Experience of Appraising Sites for DTE ConFest in the 1990s and the Processes Used in ConFest Site Layout*
<http://www.laceweb.org.au/sro.htm>

1968. *Connexion - a Family and Community Healing Network*
www.laceweb.org.au/conn.htm

1969. *The Range of Events and Activities Teed Up as Part of the 1969 Centennial Park Festival Organised by Total Care Foundation, Mingles, Connexion and Other Laceweb Energies*
www.laceweb.org.au/cpf.htm

1971 – 1973. *Surviving Well in a Dominant World Gatherings in North East NSW - The Start of International Outreach*
www.laceweb.org.au/swidw.htm

1976 *Manifesto from the First ConFest at Cotter River*
www.laceweb.org.au/man.htm

1993. *Lake Tinaroo Mediation Gathering*
www.laceweb.org.au/ltnmg.htm

1994. *The Asia Pacific Small Island Coastal and Estuarine Waters People Gathering Celebration at Lake Tinaroo in NE Australia*
www.laceweb.org.au/rsig.htm

June-July 2000. *The Intercultural Trauma Healing Gatherings for the Sixth Anniversary of the Small Island Coastal and Estuarine People Gathering Celebration*
www.laceweb.org.au/hsg.htm

July 2001. *In Celebrating the Seventh Anniversary of the Small Island Coastal and Estuarine People Gathering Celebration*
www.laceweb.org.au/indexA.htm

The Total Care Foundation's Role in the Early Festivals
www.laceweb.org.au/ttcf.htm

Countries where Folk are Accessing the Laceweb Archive
www.laceweb.org.au/cllw.htm

A Defining Exemplar

There has been self organising communing between common folk in small town communities on the Atherton Tablelands in the Australia Top End for decades, especially making use of community markets to catch up with and network with each other.

1968 - 2017. *Un-Inma Atherton Tablelands Inma Project - A Fifty Year Longitudinal Community Wellbeing Action Research Project Supported by Total Care Foundation and Australian Wellness Foundation*

www.laceweb.org.au/uninma.htm

Laceweb links

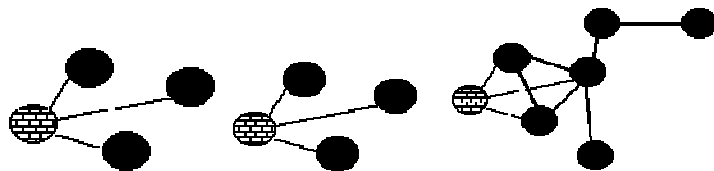
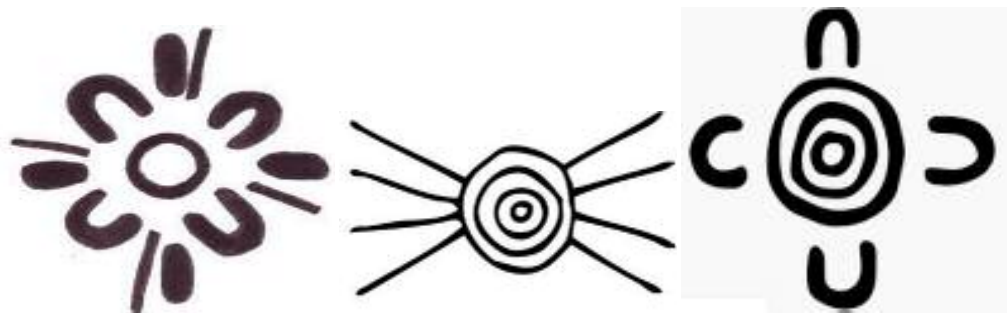
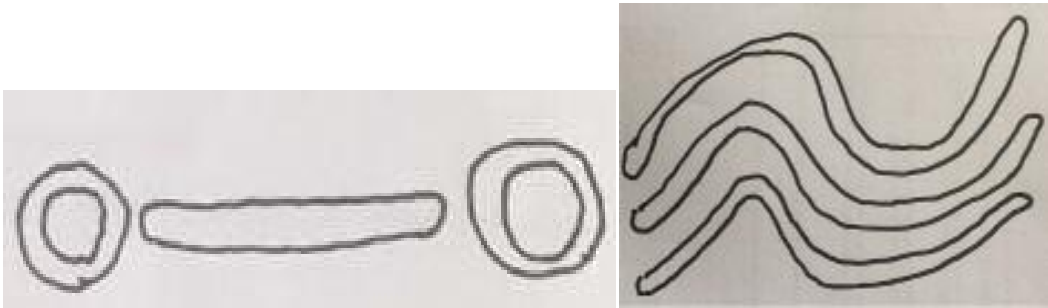
1994. *The Rapid Creek Village Project*

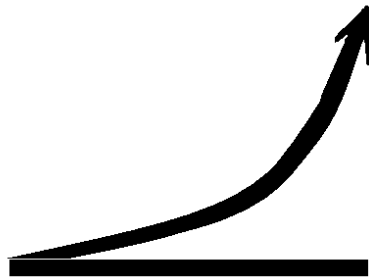
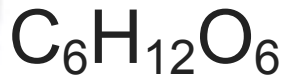
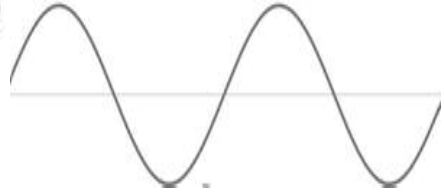
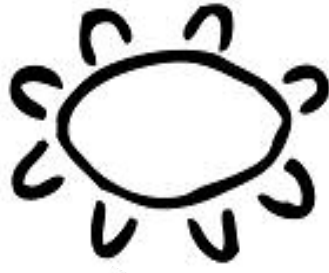
www.laceweb.org.au/rcp.htm

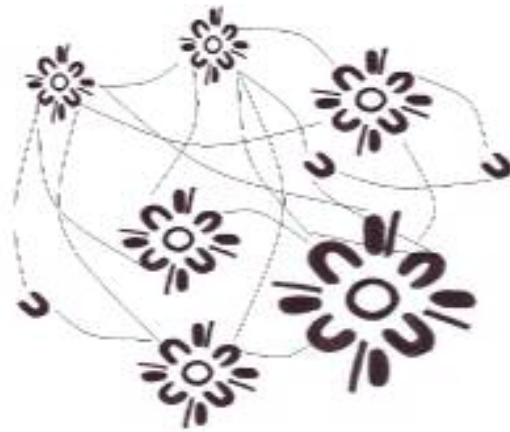
Website Links

- *Significant Laceweb Documents on Mutual Help Action*
www.laceweb.org.au/sld.htm
- *Centennial Park Festival*
www.laceweb.org.au/cpf.htm
- *Laceweb Timeline - 1930s to 2019*
www.laceweb.org.au/cwhw.htm#lacet
- *New Social Phenomena*
www.laceweb.org.au/nsp.htm
- *Informal Networks and New Social Movements*
www.laceweb.org.au/inf.htm
- *Precursors to New Social Movements*
www.laceweb.org.au/pnsm.htm
- *The Laceweb Network*
www.laceweb.org.au/tln.htm
- *Humane Global Transitions - Therapeutic Community, Self-help Networking and Peacehealing*
www.laceweb.org.au/tcj.htm
- *Self-Help Action Rebuilding Well-Being in the SE Asia Oceania Australasia Region - Exploring Possibilities for Small Generalisable Actions among Disadvantaged Indigenous and Small Minority People*
www.laceweb.org.au/tcd.htm

Symbols







Attachment A

A Partial List of Mutual Help Groups from the 1970s – Foci and Loci

NAME USED	FUNCTIONS, FIELDS AND FOCI	LOCI
AKAME	grandmother and me youth and adolescent support cultural healing action healing storytelling alternatives to criminal and psychiatric incarceration stopping youth and adolescent civil and criminal law breaking values	Atherton Tablelands & Cape York
CADRES	community theatre and the arts community wellbeing social justice relational mediating alternative dispute resolving	Bondi Junction Sydney
CHUMS	Caring and Helping Unmarried Mothers: care help support networking experience sharing work opportunities playgroups childcare	Redfern Randwick Areas
DANZACTS	alternatives to prisons cultural healing action combatant's return to civilian life healing dance, drama & the arts healing festivals and camp-outs	Atherton Tablelands
FAMILY NEXUS	nurturing wellbeing socio-emotionally economically & environmentally integrated local area planning and action by locals	Darwin NT
FUNPO	youth action youth employment and skilling youth healing festivals youth sport dance art and culture	Yungaburra Qld
INMA	caring enabling fostering emergent properties nurturing oneness seeding possibilities spiritual wholeness inter-cultural normative model areas	Yungaburra Qld

<p>KEYLINE</p>	<p>originally:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> conservation eco-villages & eco-habitat edible landscaping oasifying deserts and arid areas permaculture self-sustaining water harvesting thriving new soil generating local energy transfer systems (lets) thriving communities & farming <p>function and foci extended to:</p> <p>producing and distributing documents, papers, communications photos, stickers, films and other, cultural and artistic materials and productions</p> <p>enhancing community cooperation and mutual support, locality, self respect, friendliness, creativity, culturally appropriate peaceful nationalism and multinational regional cooperation</p> <p>life food producing and consuming</p> <p>assisting other bodies with similar aims</p>	<p>Richmond NSW</p>
<p>MEDIATION MATTERS</p>	<p>relational mediating mediation therapy mediating as alternative to adversarial law home, street and rural mediation therapy and mediation counselling</p>	<p>Yungaburra Qld</p>
<p>MINGLES</p>	<p>celebrating and re-creating community wellbeing evolving and sustaining new friendships social networking parties and gatherings wellness enriching families healing language</p>	<p>Paddington Bondi Junction Areas</p>
<p>NELPS</p>	<p>accommodation community education ecological psycho-linguistics natural living processes natural learning processes employment and skilling income security personal wellbeing</p>	<p>Cairns, Townsville and Rockhampton</p>

<p>NEXUS GROUPS (CONNEXION)</p>	<p>intercultural healing action intercultural keyline intercultural humane legal processes intercultural social networks linking to global governance truth, reconciling and accepting healing storytelling</p>	<p>Cairns, Townsville and Rockhampton</p>
<p>UN-INMA</p>	<p>cultural keyline cultural healing action quick response healing teams supporting torture and trauma survivors alternatives to criminal and psychiatric incarcerating therapeutic community healing storytelling evolving enablers enabling networking</p>	<p>Cairns, Townsville and Rockhampton</p>
<p>Note: Each of the names in the above list has significance.</p>		