



National Indian Child Welfare Association

*Dedicated to the Well-being of
American Indian and Alaska Native
Children and Families*



NICWA

National Indian Child Welfare Association

Protecting our children • Preserving our culture



NICWA

National Indian Child Welfare Association

Protecting our children • Preserving our culture

Through Indigenous Eyes: Rethinking Theory and Practice

2007 SNAICC National Conference,

Adelaide, Australia

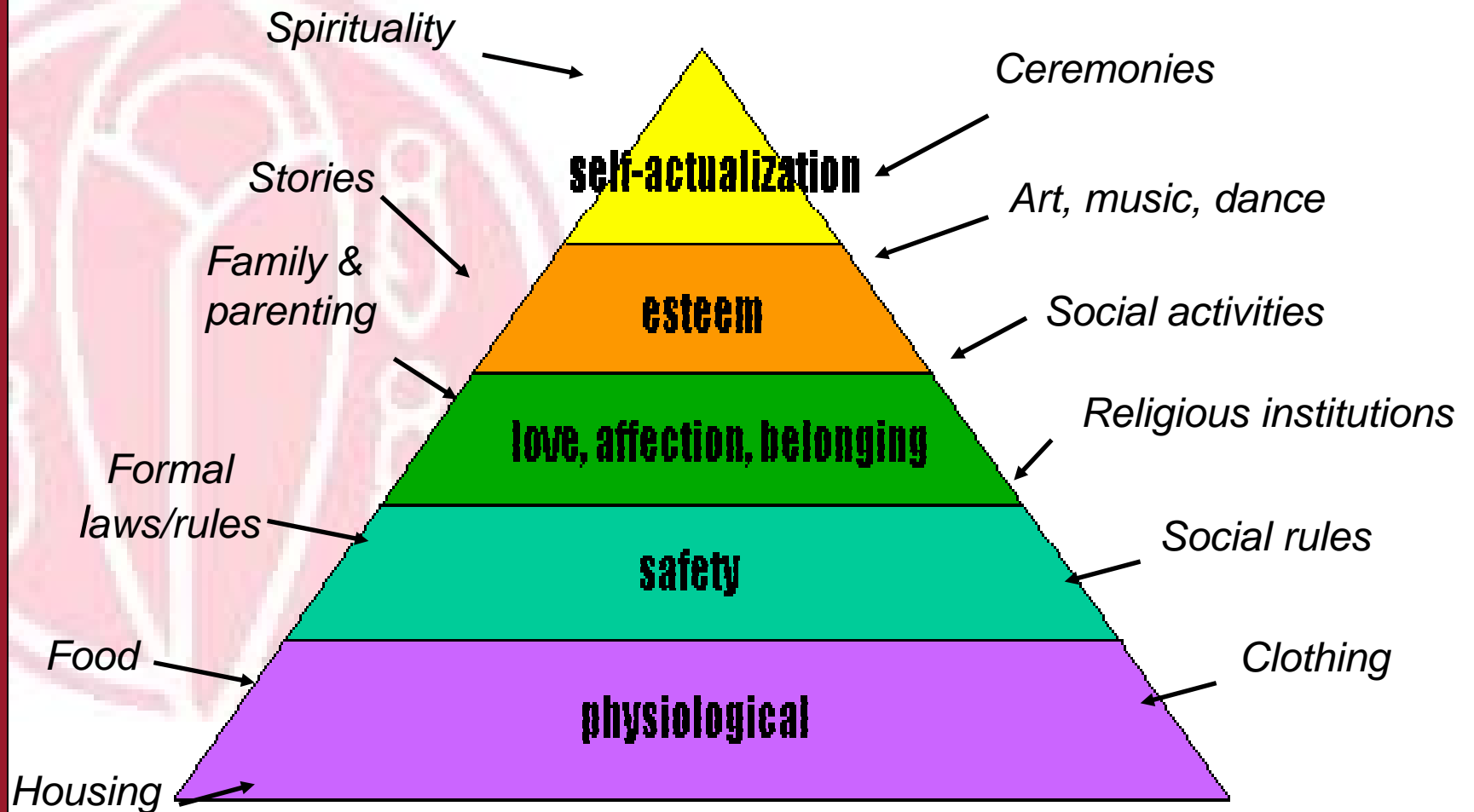
September 20, 2007

Terry L. Cross, MSW

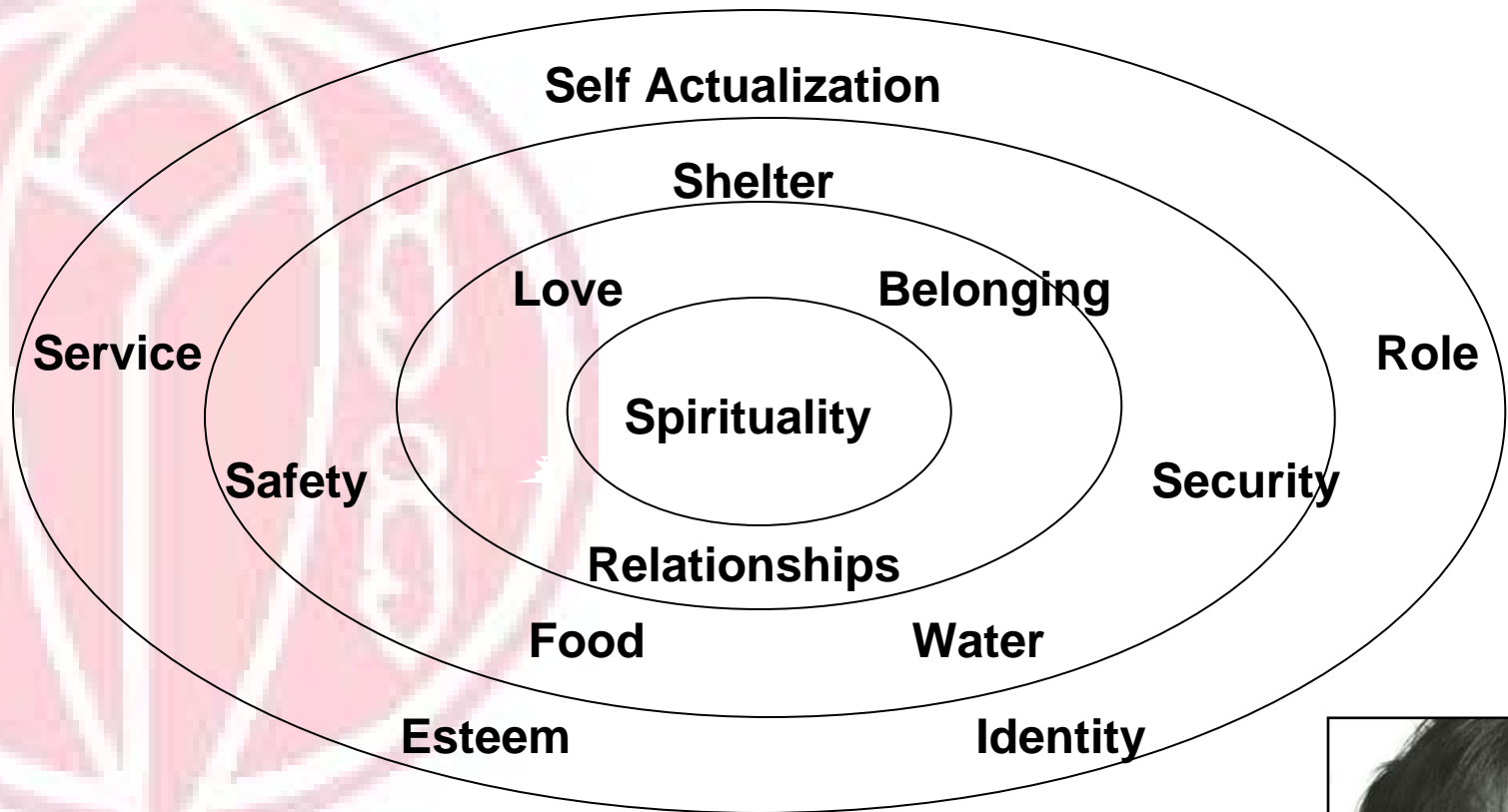
What is “culture”?

- the integrated pattern of human knowledge, belief, and behavior that depends upon our capacity for learning and transmitting knowledge to succeeding generations
- the customary beliefs, social forms, and material traits of a racial, religious, or social group
- the set of shared attitudes, values, goals, and practices that characterizes a system, company or corporation

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

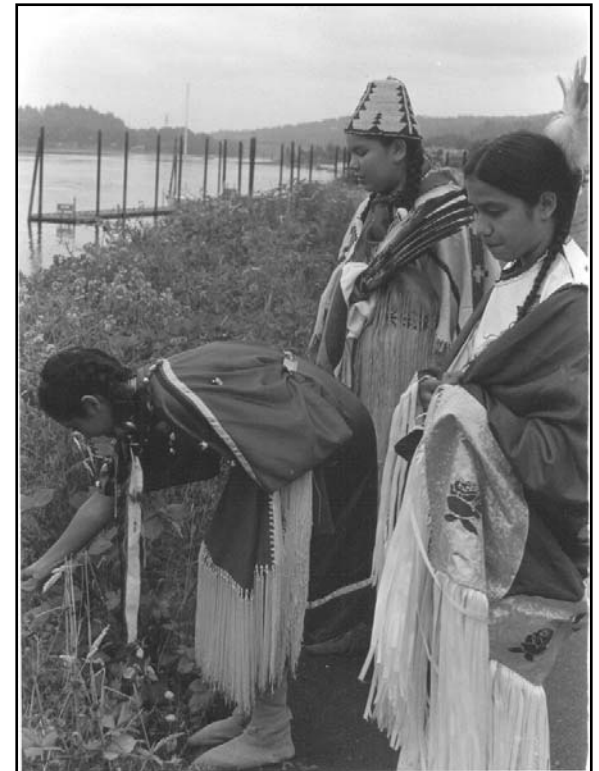


Maslow: Through Indigenous Eyes

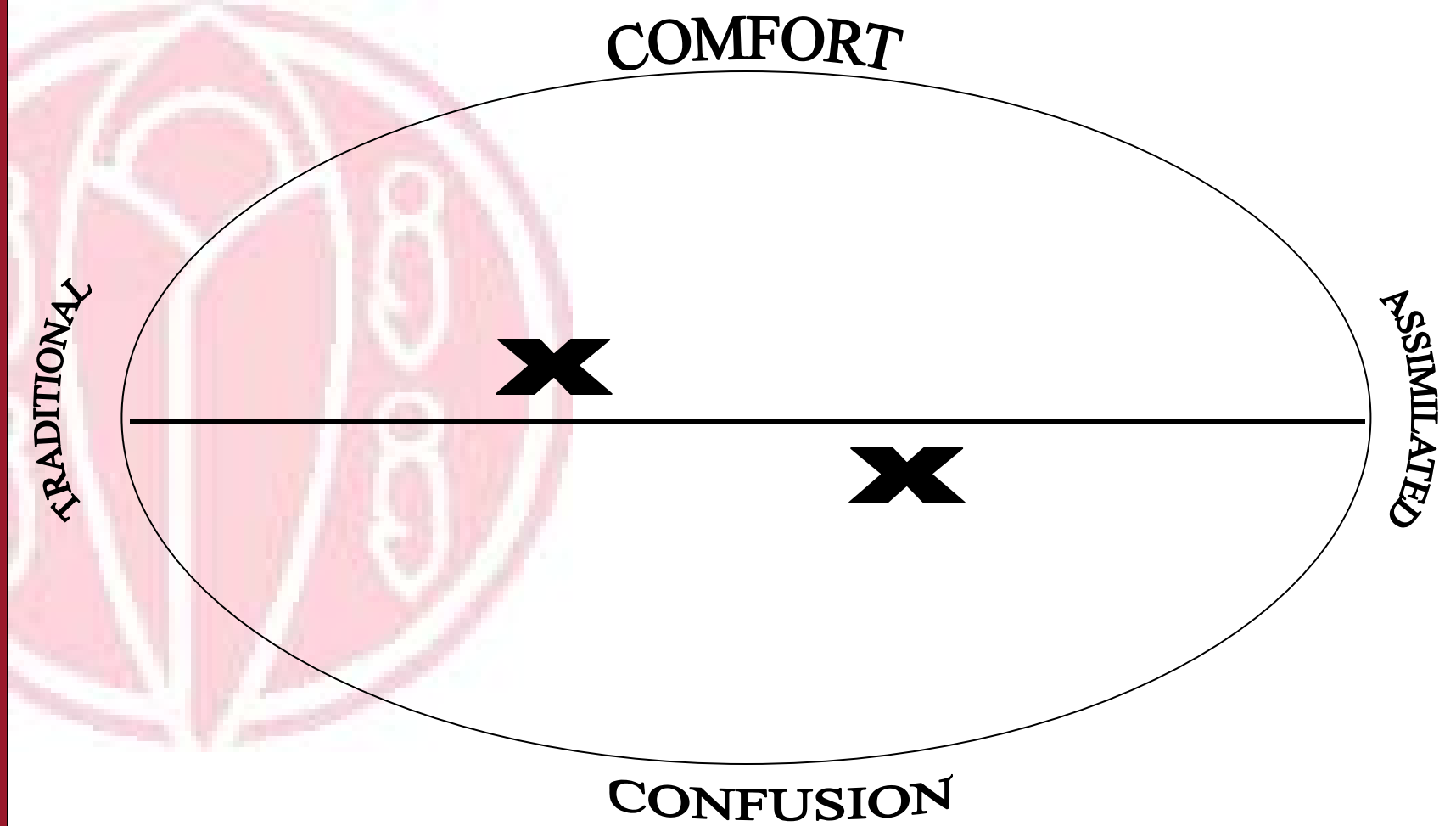


The same but different

- “Culture” is one group or people’s preferred way of meeting their basic human needs

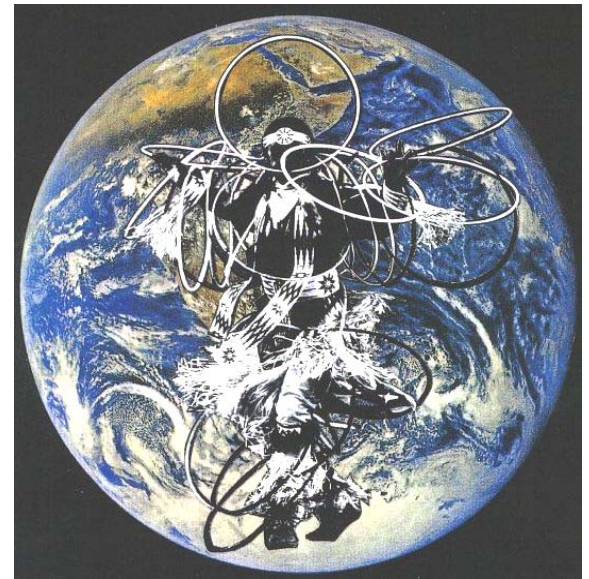


THE INDIGENOUS EXPERIENCE



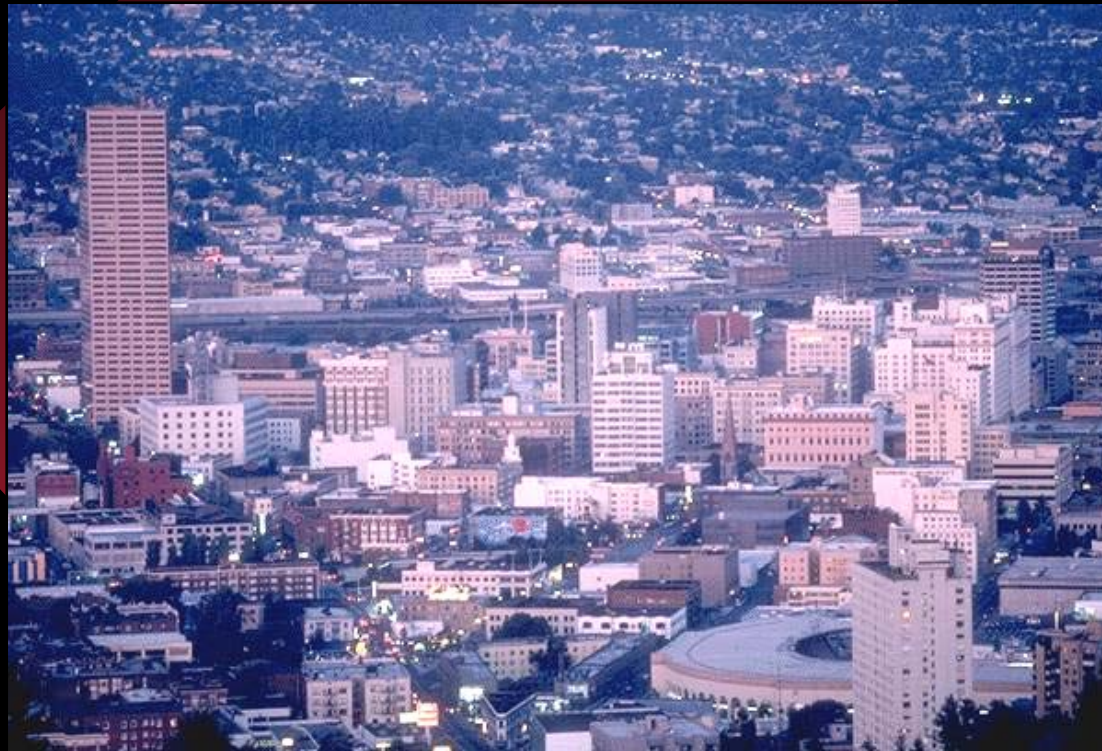
What is a “worldview”?

- Collective thought process of a group or people
- “Linear Worldview”
- “Relational Worldview”



Linear Worldview

Western European/American thought



Cause → Effect → New Cause → New Effect

Linear Worldview

Social Work/Medical Model



Cause → Effect → New Cause → New Effect

Social History → Presenting Problem → Assessment → Treatment → Outcome

Theory of Change

- Contextual Issues
 - Assumptions
 - Resources

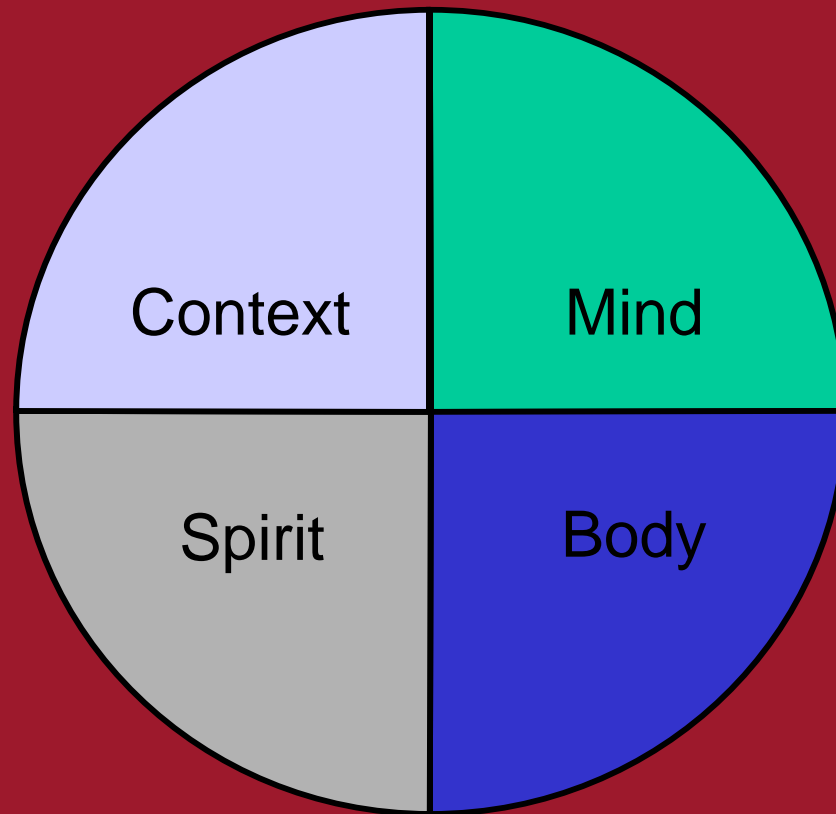
Intervention
Principles/Strategies
Activities

Intended Outputs/Products
Projected Immediate Outcomes
Intended Intermediate Outcomes
Optimal Long Range Outcomes
Desired Ultimate Outcome



Relational Worldview

Native and Tribal Thought



BALANCE

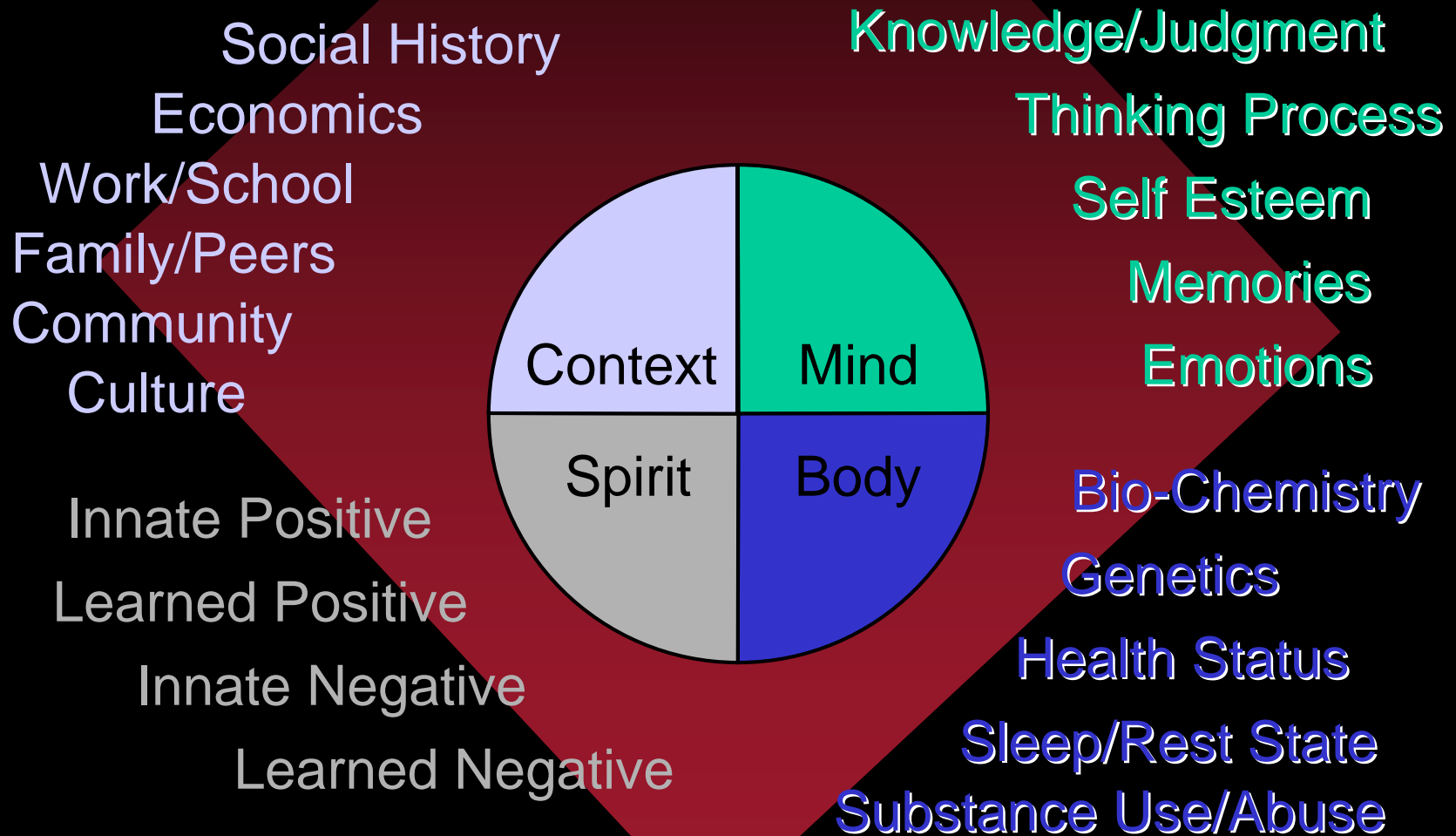
Relational Worldview

Native and Tribal Thought

- Fluid, cyclical view of time
- Each aspect of life is related
- Services aim to restore balance
- Interventions may not be directed at “symptoms”
- Underlying question is “how?”

Relational Worldview

Individual and Family Level



Relational World View

Theory of Change

- Change is a constant, inevitable, cyclical, and dynamic part of the human experience that occurs in natural, predictable patterns and can be facilitated to promote desired and measurable outcomes.

Change is:

- **Constant:** Complex interactions between the quadrants are going on all the time, influenced by experience and perceptions of experience and by the balance states that have come before.
- **Inevitable:** The human organism has a natural tendency to seek balance; to heal, adjust, or relieve stress, and reacts to stimuli by changing (e.g. flight-fight, etc.).

Change is:

- **Cyclical:** Changes in balance and harmony follow natural patterns of the cycles of days, months, seasons, and life spans.
- **Dynamic:** All change is multi-dimensional. Nothing in any quadrant can change without every aspect of the other quadrants being effected. Changes are a combination of linear and multi-causal, multi-effect relationships.

Desired Outcomes

- Balance = an adjustment pattern that represents the best, most basic attempt to incorporate stimuli and response
- Harmony = various aspects of life are in a complementary relationship and taken together produce wellness, beauty, growth, success, the capacity for joy, and the ability to thrive

RWV Based Practice

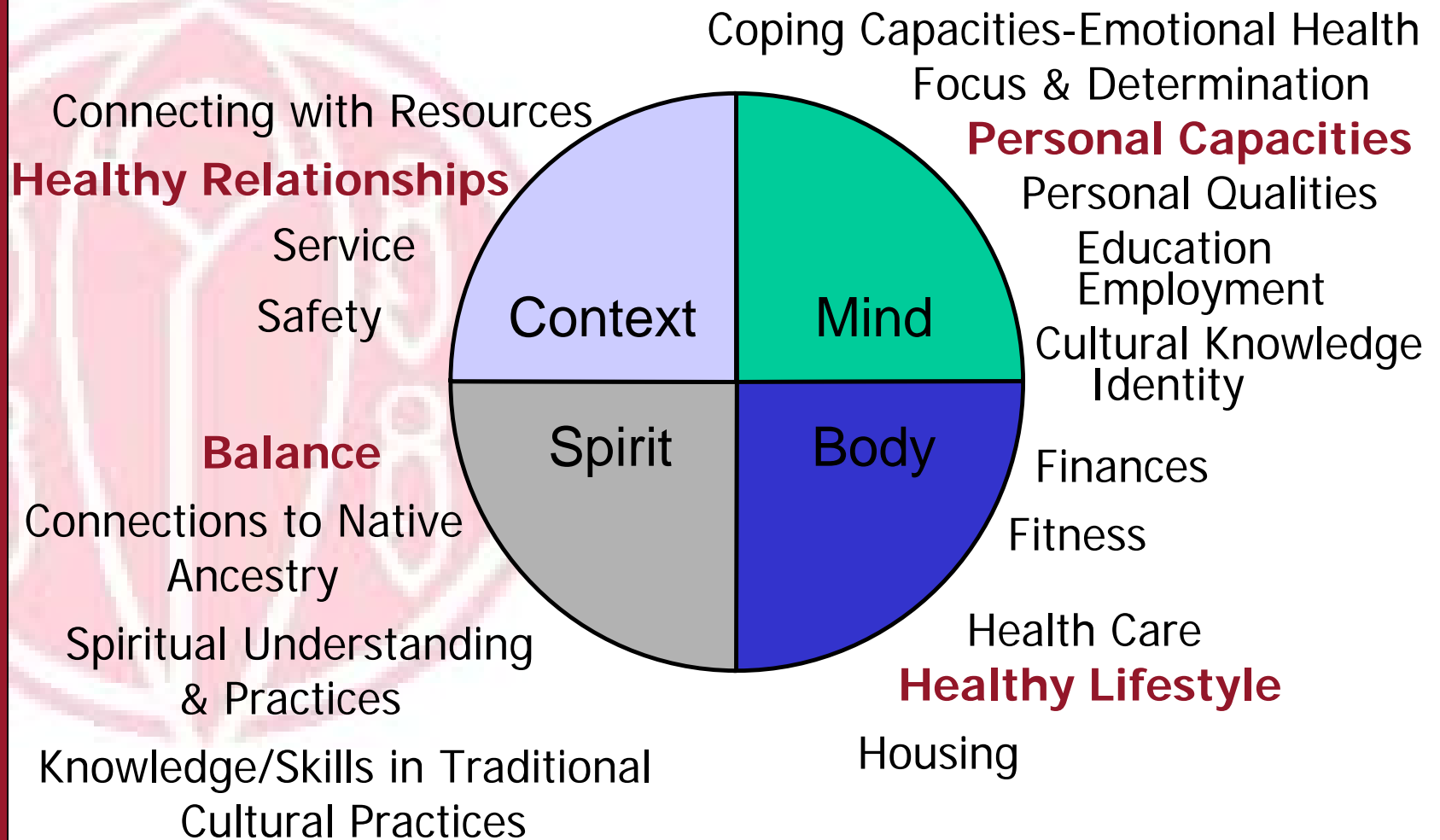
- A change agent joins with the natural forces, and with purposeful intent, impacts the quadrants to restore balance and promote harmony.
- Interventions do not necessarily target symptoms but rather impact balance and facilitate harmony, and are frequently designed to impact multiple quadrants.
- Change can be measured by observing key indicators of balance and harmony and by recording change across time in relationship to the intervention(s).

Applying the Relational Worldview as a Practice Tool

- Assessment tools
- The dream catcher planning
 - Prioritize brainstorming from “Big Picture”
 - Identify needs, goals, objectives, and tasks
- A living and dynamic document that applies the RWV model for personal, family, group, or organizational development
 - Assessment, planning, providing service



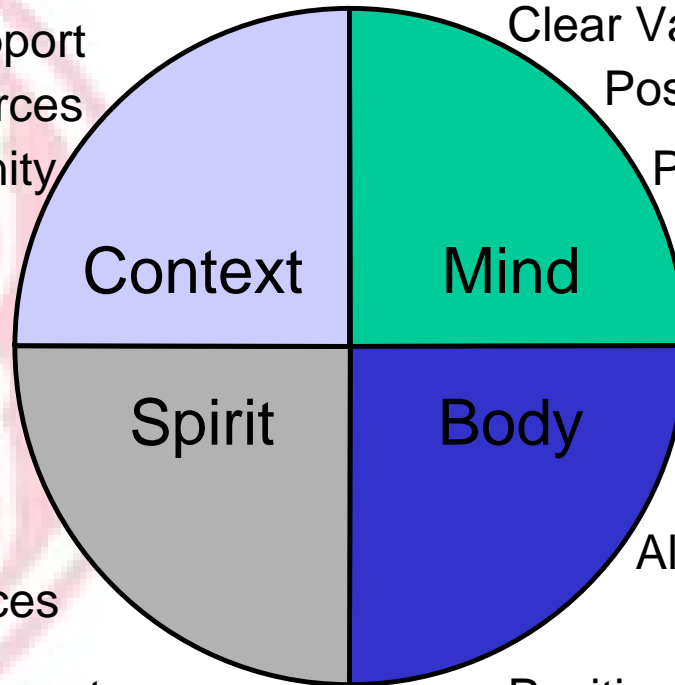
Community Defined Success: Youth



Community Defined Success: Families

Community Support
Extended Family Support
Access to Tribal Resources
Job Skills and Opportunity
Subsistence Capacity

Active Spiritual Practices
Elder Access and Support

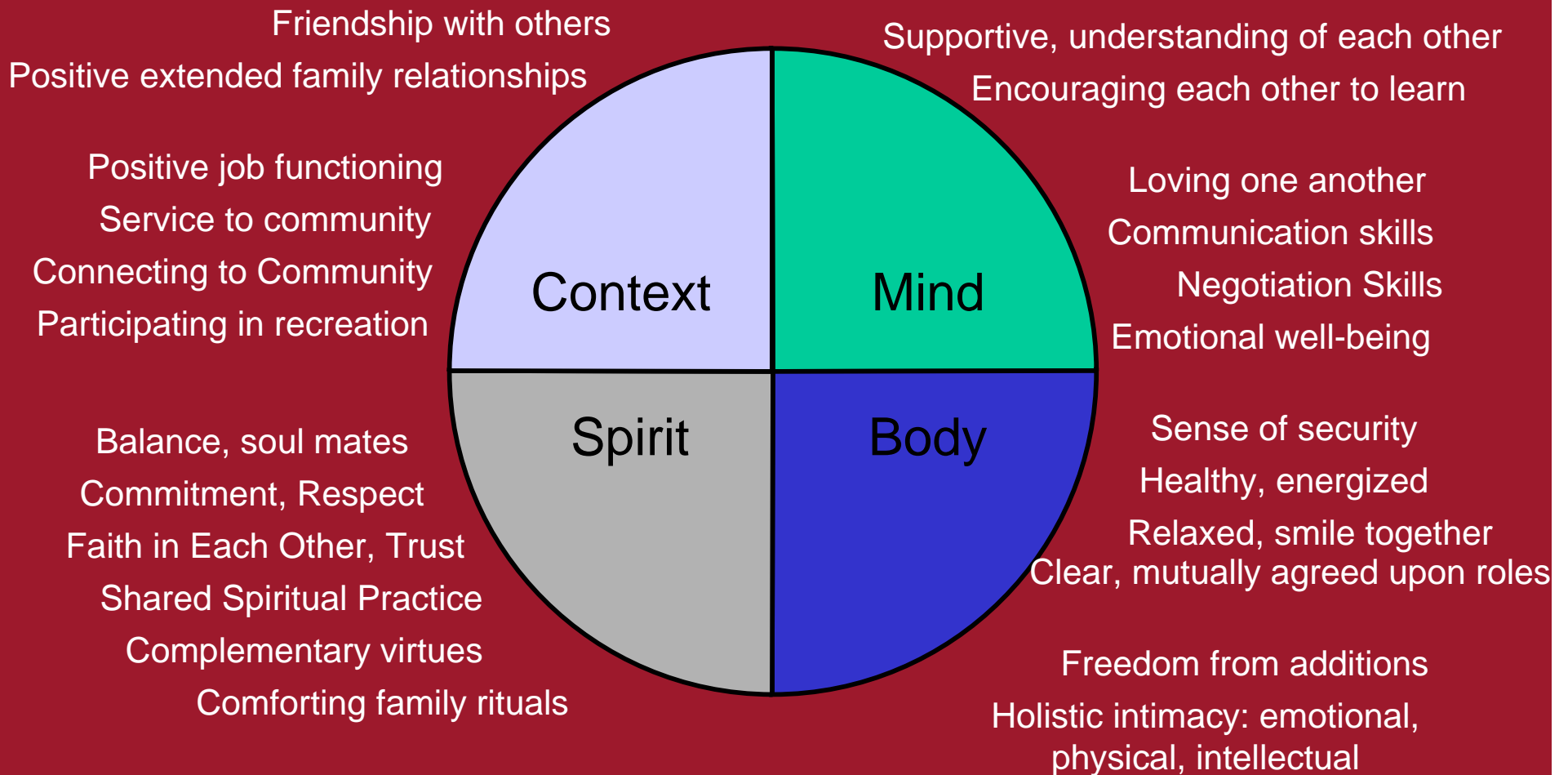


Positive Self and Group Esteem
Clear Value System, Traditions
Positive Motivation
Problem Solving Skills
Decision Making Skills

Alcohol and Drug Free

Positive Health and Hygiene Practices

“What a successful couple looks like”



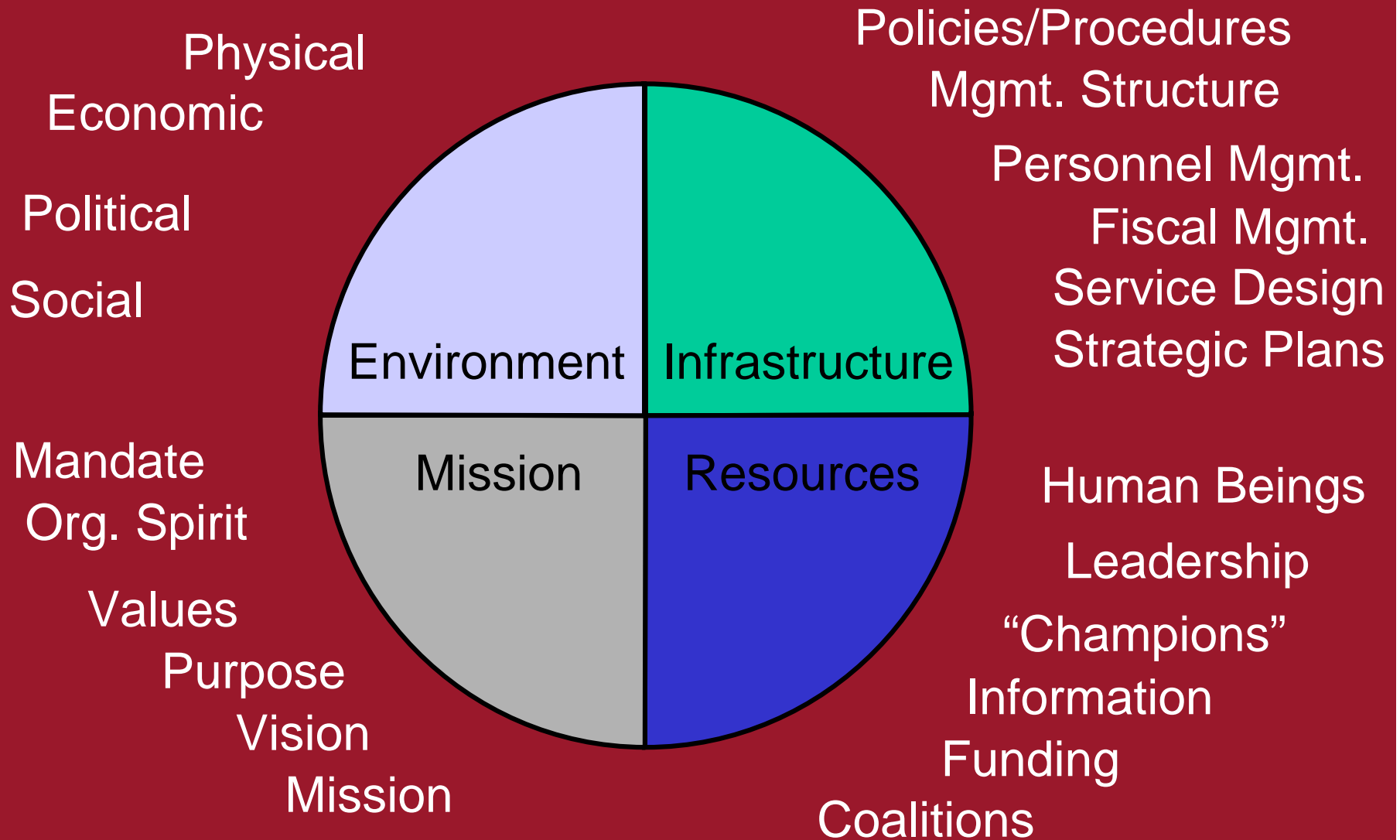
From Individual to Organization

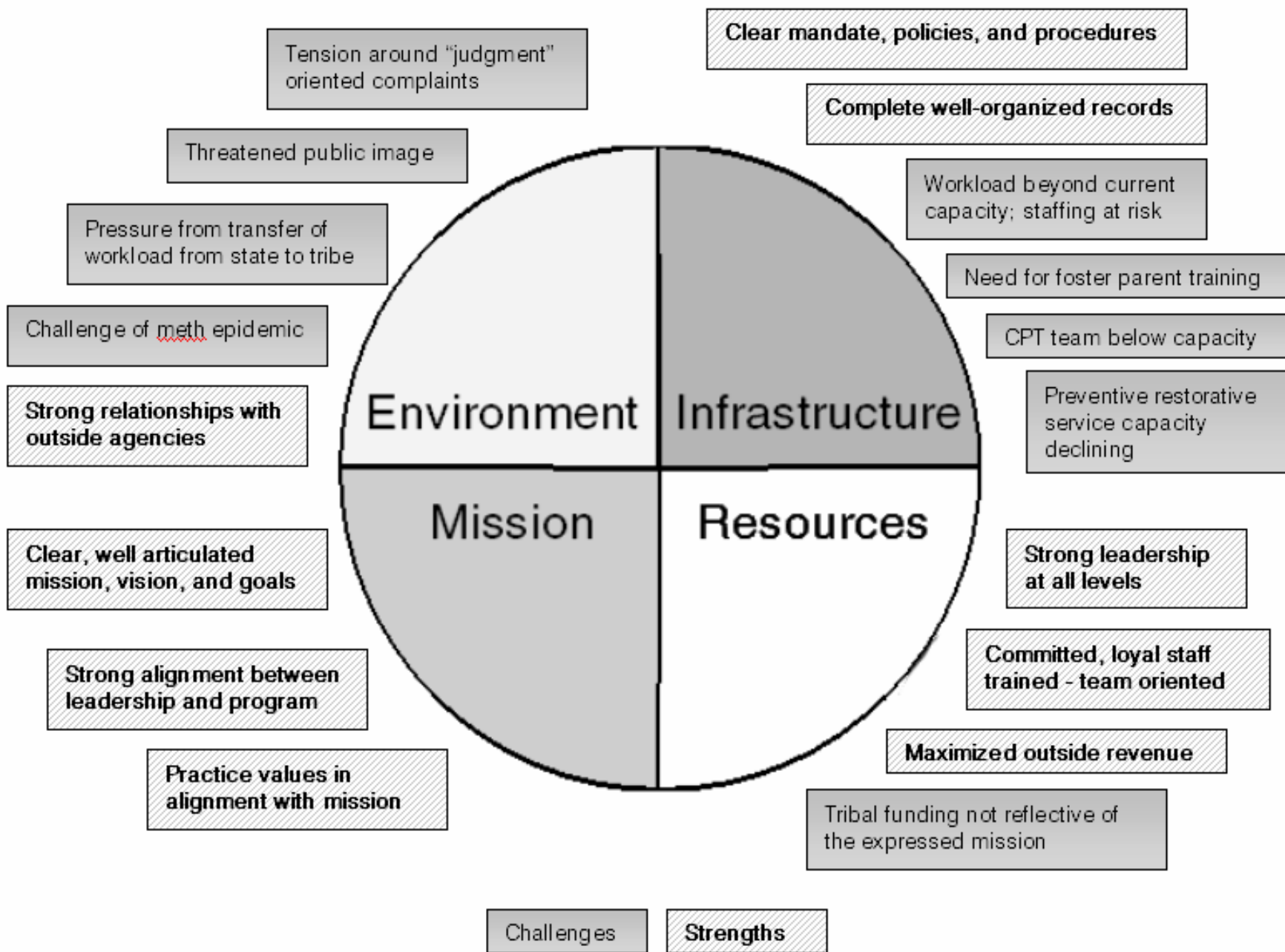
- The model of balance can be applied to organizations and communities.
- Each element of the individual model has a parallel in an organization.
- This is the basis for NICWA's approach to technical assistance.



Relational Worldview

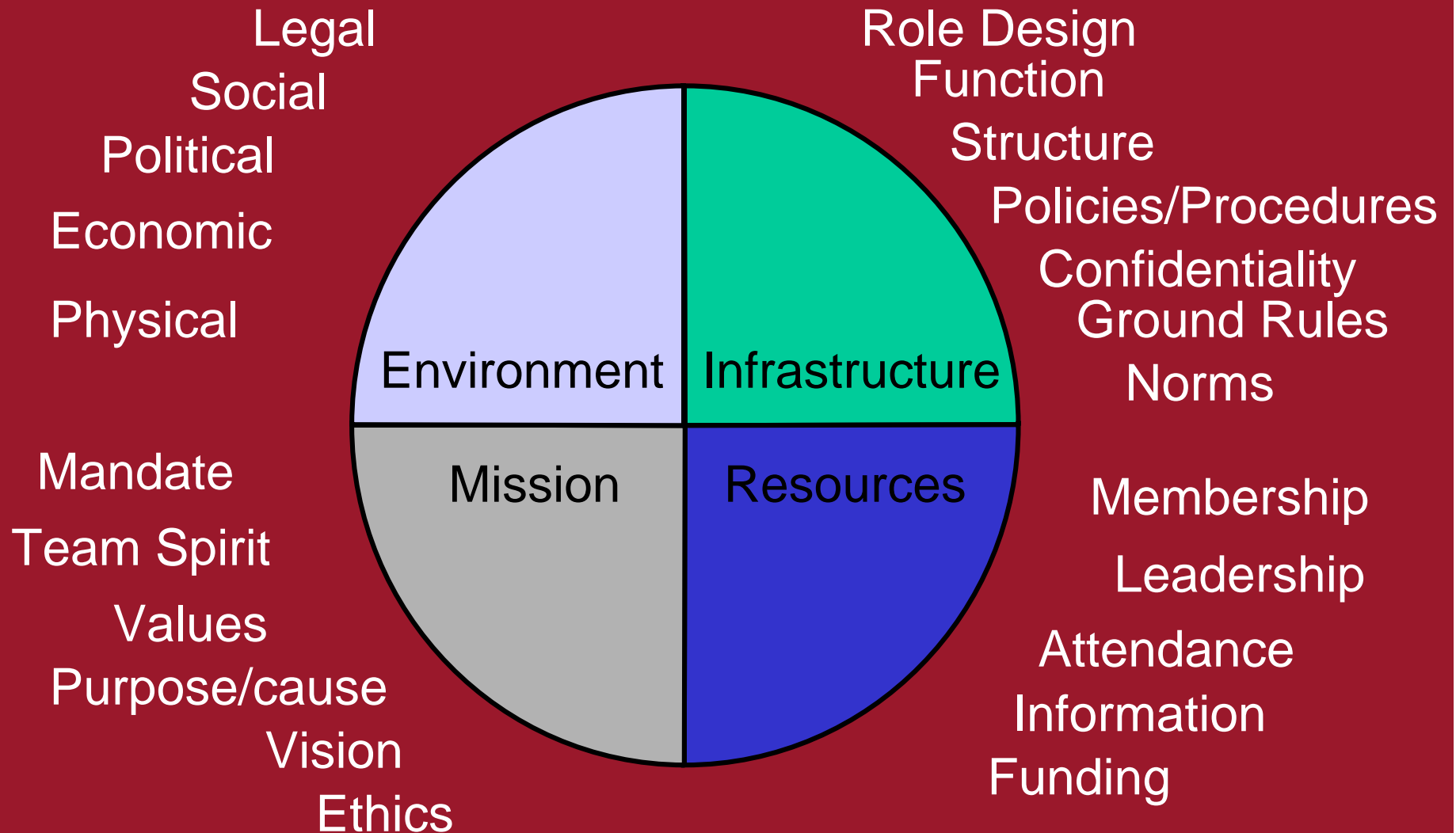
Organizational Level



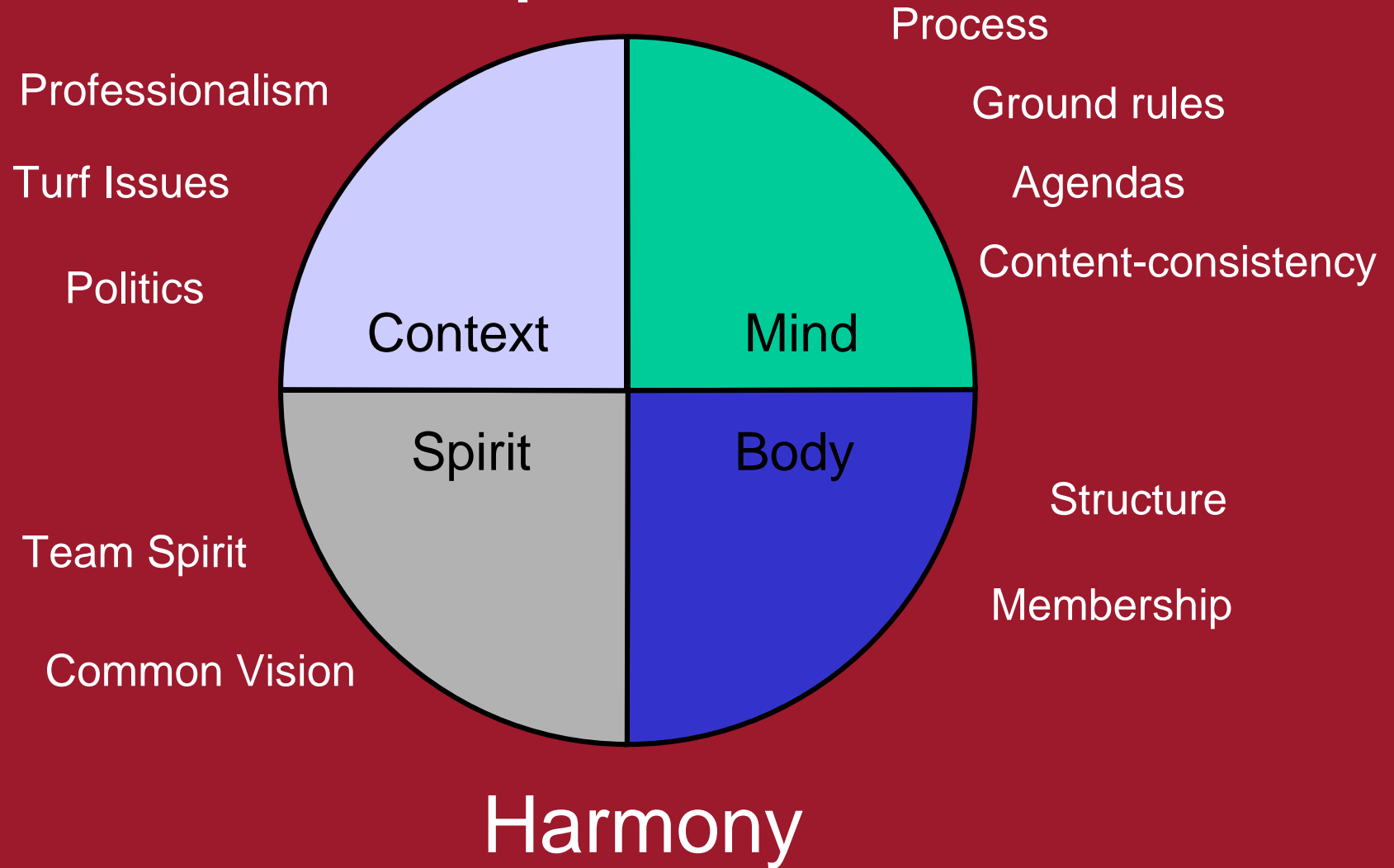


Relational Worldview

CPT's



Group Process

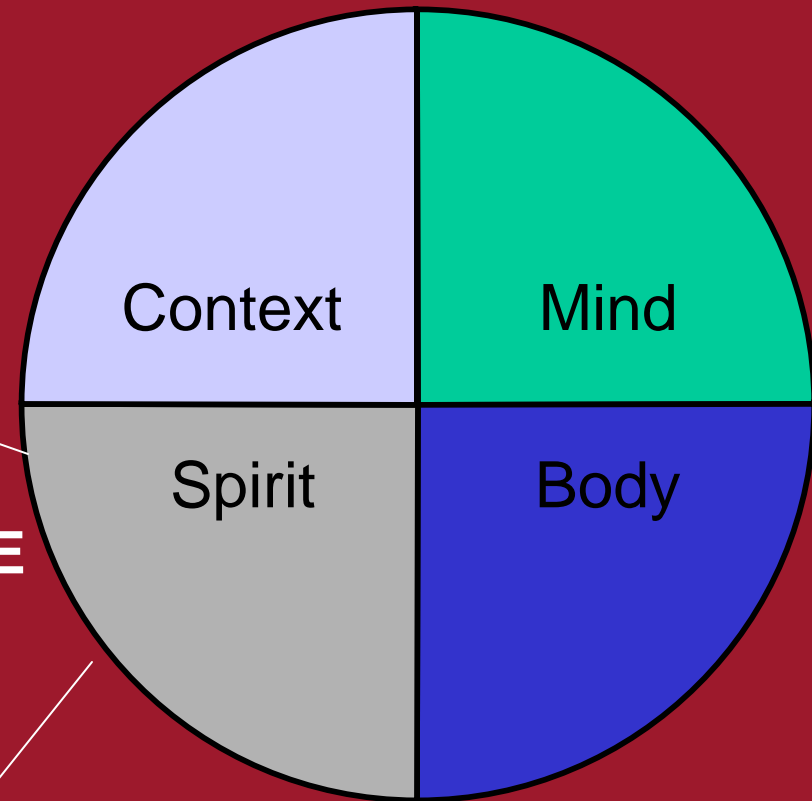


POSITIVE

- Optimism
- Cause
- Vision
- Trust
- Faith
- Belief
- Purpose
- Autonomy
- Role

NEGATIVE

- Pride
- Ego
- Mistrust
- Blame
- Confusion
- Jealousy
- Apathy
- Doubt
- Guilt



www.nicwa.org



National Indian Child Welfare Association

*Let us put our minds together and
see what kind of life we can build for
our children*

Sitting Bull



NICWA

National Indian Child Welfare Association

Protecting our children • Preserving our culture