

Stat Sheet

Numbers for the quantitatively-minded, capturing participation in the process.

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Letters

Connector prototype team members pull no punches as they describe the highs and lows of the work.

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Idea Guide

Extra! Extra! Meet The Mourning Midwife, The Garden Host Network, and The Alchemist as they vie to deepen wellbeing.

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Ask Aunty Goo

Bashful Neighbour and Nervous Knowledge-seeker find out what authentic relationships look like in this week's Q&A.

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Timeline

See three months of work in two pages, and how co-design during a pandemic has played out.

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Connector Captures The
Spirit of Spring 2020

By: Natalie Napier and Sarah Schulman

If the world was divvied up into groundhogs and guinea pigs, Hayley Irving might well be the ringleader of the muddle. Hired to act as a guinea pig for a new role called the Connector, Irving knew little of what to expect other than that system demand would be high.

Twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, three hundred and sixty five days a year, the 24/7 Crisis Diversion Team responded to calls by and about individuals in distress, on the streets, in the winter cold or summer heat. Rather than send police or ambulances, the Crisis Diversion Team sent community workers equipped with socks, slacks, sandwiches, sterilized supplies, and a seat to shelters. Repeat use was high. 22% of all service delivery are used by 0.8% of repeat clients.* As the first Connector with REACH Edmonton, Irving was looking for fresh ways to interrupt the crisis cycle; to free the groundhog from its shadow.

* This statistic is from 2018

Vernon couldn't seem to get far from his shadow. Confined to a walker, he shuffled between the low-mobility shelter and liquor store off 107A street, sometimes losing track of time and space along the way. "I was lost and they found me," Vernon said, describing his interactions with the 24/7 Crisis Diversion Team.

Coming into the Connector prototype, the assumption was that folks like Vernon hadn't just lost their way, but that the service system had lost them. Irving could reconnect people with needed services, and help them to navigate health and housing systems. If only people had the right referrals, they might not be stuck on the crisis merry-go-round. So there was real surprise when, at the end of lunch with Vernon -- during which he reminisced about growing up with his sister in Saskatchewan, going to the gym and working with his hands -- he extracted a crumpled note from his wallet with a phone number for his case manager. He was uncertain of her name and her role.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 →



Irving’s research team realized Vernon didn’t need to be reconnected with service. He was already in the service queue receiving housing and health support. And Vernon wasn’t the only frequent 24/7 client with links to existing services. Of ten profiles of 24/7 clients, eight were well known to inner city services. The relative well connectedness of repeat clients reflects research on frequent inner city users of emergency room departments in Toronto.

“We had hypothesized that this population was not connected to services in the community, and if we offered them case management it would decrease their use of emergency departments,” Dr. Vicky Stergiopoulos, a clinician scientist at the Centre for Research on Inner City Health in Toronto, said.

That hypothesis proved wrong. Many study participants were already connected, with links to multiple social services and case managers. The challenge wasn’t the quantity of service, so much as the focus of those services. Few services were addressing deep underlying needs -- like the fact that people whose only option was to repeatedly use emergency rooms were actually quite sick, and didn’t feel listened to or cared for.

While connection to service wasn’t necessarily the gap repeat 24/7 clients like Vernon experienced, connection to family and community, body and self, land and culture, purpose and spirit were deep unmet needs. Vernon longed to reconnect with his sister and go back to his lands.

Two years of ethnographic research and analysis with street-involved adults, stewarded by the City of Edmonton’s Recover Team, found urban wellness wasn’t so much about the acquisition of resources -- be it money, housing or services, though all three were significant stressors if unmet-- but about the strength of relationships. To be well is to be balanced: to feel one with land and culture, self and community, human potentiality and the sacred.

Given services and institutional connections were often not the weakest links, Irving and the researchers wondered how to refocus the connector role on these six points of connection. It wasn’t that referrals, case management and service coordination were unnecessary or unimportant. They played a key role. But, without also nurturing deeper connections,

Love is our most unifying and empowering common spiritual denominator. The more we ignore its potential to bring greater balance and deeper meaning to human existence, the more likely we are to continue to define history as one long inglorious record of man’s inhumanity to man.

- HISTORIAN, ABERJHANI



ABOVE: The six points of connection

Vernon was likely to keep wandering the streets, drinking, either hiding from or searching for healing, love, care, meaning and purpose. As poet and historian Aberjhani says, “Love is our most unifying and empowering common spiritual denominator. The more we ignore its potential to bring greater balance and deeper meaning to human existence, the more likely we are to continue to define history as one long inglorious record of man's inhumanity to man.”

Irving teamed up with social worker Jane Slessor, REACH Communications Strategist and designer Jaime Calayo, Recover team member and social worker Nor’Ali McDaniel and social design organization InWithForward to imagine an outwardly facing connector role. That is, to imagine a role focused on building connections between street-involved adults and other community members. Love, care, healing, meaning and purpose cannot be the sole responsibility of services and institutions, the team came to understand, because existential and relational needs can only be satiated in community.

Then, COVID-19 hit. Production halted. Skies cleared. Social isolation shifted from the fringes to the mainstream. Economic precarity shook middle class illusions of safety and equality. Class, race, gender and disability determined life and death. Communities rallied against instances of police violence in Canada and the United States, and anti-racism protests erupted. At Edmonton City Council meetings and community league gatherings, citizens showed up and made their voices heard.

For Irving and the design team, it was a powerful reminder. The antidote to marginalization must be deliberate reconnection, not simply outsourcing social problems to police and professionals. “The city council hearings were really exciting -- better than

a TV drama,” Irving said. “I started thinking about inviting all these inspiring people addressing Council into a conversation with us, to learn more about what’s driving them right now.”

What’s driving Edmontonian Robin McClung is a growing sense of ‘we’. “It really has shifted I think, whether we acknowledge it or not... In some ways the community has become more abstract because it’s just some intangible world outside of my bubble, which is my house. But in other ways, it’s become a lot more real because now the community is at my doorstep in a different way. Neighbours are more aware of each other. There’s more intentional connection over fences and across the street than there was before.”

How long the fences and gates remain open is itself an open question.



ABOVE: Zoom conversations

For Vernon, it took another bout in hospital to open-up a window to reconnect with his family, land, and culture. Nearly a year after lunch with Vernon, and with the support of his case manager, he headed back to his sister and ancestral lands. How do we create the conditions for more such connection? How might it look without acute crisis as the precursor? That’s where Natalie Napier, InWithForward’s Lead of Storytelling and Research, sees fresh possibility. “Has there ever been more license to shape resilient and just communities?” Napier asked. “Yes, the spring of 2020 has delivered a powerful moment, which just might lead us to rethink how we operate as communities and support each other. That’s what the connector role affords us the opportunity to do. But, it’s also a vulnerable moment. What we do now will make the difference.”

QUICK STATS

ON PARTICIPANTS

18 Co-designers engaged so far

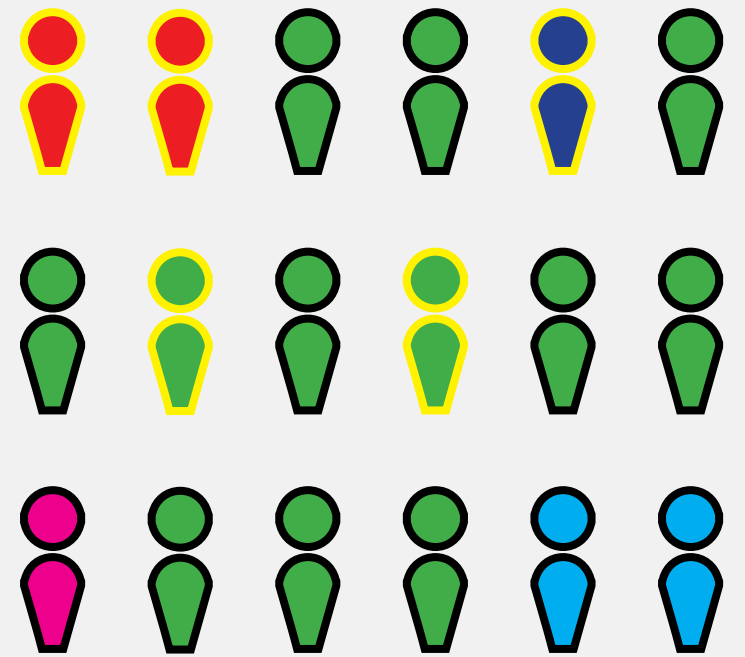
18 People who said they’d engage as co-designers again

3 Participants from cold calls to community members with talents and practices we’d like to leverage

Why this is significant

One of our starting points has been that well-being is a collective pursuit, not just the responsibility of institutions and social services. As a result, we collectively sent a slew of cold emails and cold calls to identify community members both in and out of our orbit to garner some fresh input.

We tried to make sure our conversations were as much about participants’ perspectives and crafts as they were about soliciting feedback on our early ideas. This helped us discover points of convergence and opportunities for future design work. Every participant gravitated towards at least one idea, and wanted to receive progress updates!



Outline:	Fill:	
Contact within our network	Police	Artists/creatives
Cold call	Healing practitioners	Social services
	Health worker	

ON OUR ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

07 New “episodes” written by co-designers

Why this is significant

We realized we needed to do some storytelling to bring alive the vision of a deeply connected Edmonton: a city resplendent with relationships across lines of difference. It wasn’t so obvious what this could look like.

While the ask was rather abstract, seven participants embraced the prompt, and stepped into imagining the overall arc of the docuseries, and where the story might go.

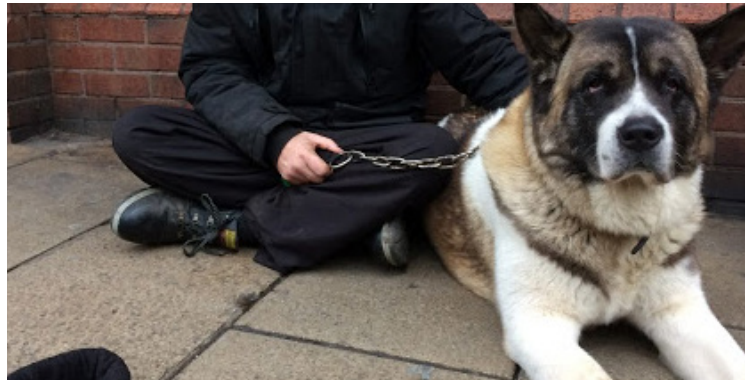
10 People who could imagine themselves or someone they know interacting with the solution idea

That’s where the analogy of Netflix came in. We decided to package our ideas as a fictitious Netflix docu-series to open-up space for narrative building, plot and character development. Rather than ‘pitch’ our ideas as a service, we wanted to explore how an idea might unfold, tapping into people’s intuition and aspiration.

On a few occasions, participants related the stories to someone else they knew more than themselves - and this offered us the opportunity to ask for additional contacts to speak to and expand our research net.

After offering impressions and snippets of each of our ideas as episodes, we asked participants to act as “co-writers” to design their own episode to address any gaps and questions they identified.

ASK AUNTIE GOO



Dear Auntie Goo,
My family and friends would describe me as warm, reliable, and a friend in need. I was raised to value relationships with the people around me, but also to volunteer to help people less fortunate. Recently, I've been rethinking the relationship I have to people who live or spend time in my neighbourhood who may be experiencing homelessness, have been actively using drugs/alcohol/substances, and living with a mental illness or a mental health issue. I am always friendly, but that leads to really superficial relationships. The other day I saw a young man whom I have greeted many times before. He was with a dog and the dog wasn't obeying and he was getting really frustrated and yelling. He seemed to be crying at times. My initial reaction was discomfort because he was loud and agitated, probably my neighbours were displeased with the commotion (and watching from their windows), and I don't really know anything about dealing with dogs. But after, when I was back home, I kept thinking that it was an opportunity to connect in a more authentic way. Should I have offered help? Is that patronising? Should I approach someone who seems so agitated? What would you have said and done, and how could I try to forge more meaningful relationships with other neighbours who have a very different experience to me?

Sincerely,
Bashful Neighbour



Dear Bashful Neighbour,

It sounds like you are seeking deeper connections with your neighbours, I think that can bring anxiousness whether the person is homeless or they have a fixed address. When I worked in schools, I would coach kids on how to make friends, to quickly scan other students to see if they noticed anything that felt relatable, or maybe they said something in common to them. If we looked at your neighbour and rather than focusing on his lack of stable housing, and having a dog both of which you can't relate to, look at him as someone struggling with their pet, and in emotional distress.

Because of your kind nature, checking on him might be a good start, perhaps simply acknowledging his frustration and showing compassion could break the ice. This doesn't always come easy for me, but sometimes starting small when there is less tension, a simple gesture that creates a conduit for a deeper conversation, perhaps offering a unmet need, food, blanket, dog treat? These are simple ways to open the door to a surface chat, and proper introduction. I have a feeling once you get to chatting the authenticity will come naturally.

With Respect,



Dear Auntie,
I am an introverted person with a lot of curiosity about the world, who has come up with lots of ways to cope in sometimes daunting social situations. So when I have a yearning to do something, I am not normally held back by anxiety. And yet, there is an area of my life in which I am feeling stuck. I have developed a passion for wild foraging, while at the same time educating myself on Indigenous histories and traditions of this land, in an effort to begin to decolonize my relationship with Edmonton. But there is only so much to learn from a book. My dream is to connect with a knowledge holder around medicinal plants and their uses, and to respectfully learn from them, including about appropriate ways to use that knowledge. It strikes me that, as a settler, pursuing that knowledge is a privilege that a lot of Indigenous Edmontonians living with historical trauma don't have. I think this discomfort is keeping me from acting. I sense that I am waiting for permission, or confirmation that it's okay to ask someone to share this knowledge with me but I don't want to abuse my social privilege. Is there a way to pursue this that could feel more just?

Cordially,
Nervous knowledge-Seeker



Dear N.K.S

Thoughtful, and important. Reconciliation, real reconciliation is a willingness to deeply understand what being a settler in Edmonton means. Which I sense you have given a lot of thought. Looking for ways to forage that respect the traditional Indigenous protocols and practices is giving reverence to the land, and you're off to a great start in this journey. Our city is filled with people who wish to support these acts, Bent Arrow could be a starting point, they have a program called Practice as Ceremony. There is also a Garden Host prototype to connect street-involved Edmontonians with other community members to spend time in the green spaces of Edmonton, growing connection to land and self. Perhaps you could be matched to an Indigenous person living in Edmonton with a shared interest, and go on this journey together? Being a settler myself, I often fumble, and am never quite sure how to ask for help. Learning about protocol is a great start. What I know is that when I have asked with humility, curiosity, and respect, the outcome often surpasses what I may have expected.

With respect,
Auntie Goo

CLASSIFIED

ISO: community members w/ passion for outdoors, gardening, & desire to connect w/ street-involved ppl as equals, w/ supports. Set own hrs. Learn humility, listening, reconciliation.



ISO artists of all mediums interested in place-making w/ ppl w/ exp of homelessness to connect to place. All supplies paid.



Have you lost someone you love?

ISO: Grievers. Join me in exploring different rituals & practices for working through loss/ connect with other grievers/ learn what's sacred to you. Contact 780-102-2219 if you're looking for a safe space to express grief.

Seeking co-designers! Come and test new ways to support relationships b/w ppl with experience of homelessness & ones w/o. Coaching provided. Help us learn what works. 780-555-4039



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Inspiration Gazette,

I came in a little later in the 24/7 Connector Prototype process, so for the first little while, I just felt a bit confused and like I had no clue what was happening. This isn't necessarily the most comfortable feeling for me. But what I know is that it's really important sometimes to shake ourselves out of our comfort zones a little, unsettle, and surrender to the process because this is where real growth happens.

During the time I worked as a program manager in the inner city, my wish was often to have the time and space to step outside of the work with those being marginalized by systems to ask, "is it really working, or are we doing it this way because we have always done it this way?" And then to get out of the box of how things are "just done" in programming in order to imagine something different that might work better. Of course, this is not a comfortable process either; it potentially requires us to face some uncomfortable truths. And this is where real growth happens.

I feel this work with IWF has been such an opportunity to unsettle our ways a little, to go beyond what is normally done and to potentially weave some fragmented instances of innovative connectivity together to benefit Edmontonians as a whole. I can't wait to see where it ends up!

Sincerely,
Jane Slessor

Dear Inspiration Gazette,

I find the work is drawing on the relationships and experiences I've developed as an Edmontonian. I enjoyed pushing my research skills further and practicing it in a divergent way earlier on in this project. Through this project I am reforging and strengthening past relationships with the art and wellness community.

Trusting the process regardless of not knowing where things are headed is important for this project as it is very emergent and reflexive. Being adaptable to last minute changes is also a key component to the experience so far.

Originally, I was invested in the idea of improving the service navigation landscape in Edmonton. The ethnographic research made it clear that trauma and unresolved grief are major barriers for folks' healing journeys – if we had spent more time grounding ourselves in that research earlier or before this work started, we would have established that mindset sooner.

That said, being a process driven person, it is difficult adapting to last minute planning. Codesign interviews have been difficult to direct, not really understanding what the desired outcomes are. With work at REACH having grown substantially over the past month, giving this project the focus it deserves is a challenge. I also find that transferring face-to-face codesign strategies to Zoom collaboration isn't always working. The "ask" needs to be smaller and simpler for co-participants.

The rewarding part is developing new relationships in the community, seeing how those new relationships can potentially work with one another, and learning new processes in regards to human centered design and service design.

Cordially,
Jaime Calayo, Communications Strategist, REACH Edmonton

Dear Inspiration Gazette,

I would say that the work with IWF is thought-provoking. It is very thoughtful, very inward-focused and intentional, especially in the beginning. And then the focus will shift, and it will materialize into something that will impact lots of people. We're trying to imagine and describe what things could be like if we did things differently.

There's been a lot of discomfort, but the team is very supportive; people are really encouraging. I always get weepy when I read our stuff because I feel like we really want to do something transformative around healing with the community that we serve. My hope is that our intentions and hard work translate into something really unique and special for our community.

I would say that because of being raised by my mom, my whole life was around interesting ideas about healing yourself and healing others and it was maybe not what was normally accepted. I was raised around alternative healing, so this part was comfortable. And working with the community was also comfortable as this is my experience.

The part that was a challenge for me and forced me to grow was using all of the tools IWF uses, all of the prompts that they invited us to learn about, the homework, and the research; they're definitely not something I was skilled at; however that being said I endured, kind of, sort of, maybe...

Worst memory: trying to arrange Zoom sessions
Best memory: our first community leader co-design session with someone who wasn't familiar with our work – it helped me to see how far we had come and how much we had done! It cemented how much potential there is in our work and how important it is to push through.

Yours truly,
Hayley Irving

Dear Inspiration Gazette,

As a member of the City's Recover team, it's been really interesting to be able to do more of the work. It's been a learning curve that way, just to be immersed in it, and see the contrast from our work with Recover. I have appreciated the time to dive into the research but also wanted more time with it. The tensions I experience emerge from the time pressures of other work alongside this.

I have enjoyed googling and contacting strangers who do interesting things, and inviting them to codesign. I also really enjoy working with Mural (web-based visual & design application) and I use that and go back to it quite a bit. I like puzzles and so to see all the different pieces of our work together - 6 types of connections, international examples, ethnographic data, academic concepts - and see how they fit together... My nerdy puzzle-loving self really got into that.

Working through the codesign sessions and trying to get the type of creative response we're looking for is a challenge. People aren't used to engaging that way. I've had to learn how to ask different questions.

I'm really interested in what can come of the Morning Midwife. I think it can work to address a real need and create space that a lot of other organizations don't have time for because they are so strapped. I am interested to see where that one goes. It's a unique approach that fills a gap.

In terms of frustrations? Oh what's this? A last minute piece of homework from Natalie? She is so demanding with all this 'emergence' - she's always asking me to do yet another thing!

Must go do that other thing,
Nor'Ali

THREE MONTHS, ONE CHART

A jam-packed look at the Connector prototype process so far

We're three months into a nine-month learning process to figure out the elements of and conditions for a Connector role. Our process will culminate in a set of products documenting key interactions and insights for how to foster well-being and interrupt cyclical crisis. This timeline illustrates some of the milestones we've hit so far!

- Click on some of the visual diagrams to learn more about the artefacts.
- Click on the diagram directly on the right to learn more about how this project came to be in the first place.

INSPIRATION PHASE

MAY 2020

JUN 2020

During the inspiration stage, we brought together the perspectives of three organizations (Reach, Recover, and InWithForward) and multiple disciplines (design, social work, social psychology, cultural studies). Our focus was to surface key theories, concepts and examples to help us shape what future practice could look like.



Sarah Schulman
Feeling: Enthusiastic

Inundated with theories, concepts, examples that feel fresh. Not the same old reading on the problem space!

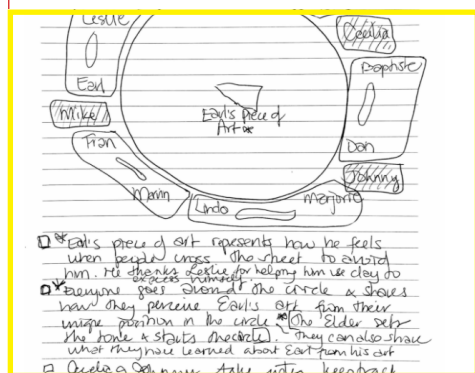
International research



Jane Slessor
Feeling: Uncertain

It's not really a natural process for me, but I felt we've got to step outside of our comfort zones to learn.

Script-writing our ideas



Three scene scripts

We each wrote a script for each of our ideas that covers three core scenes:

- How the connector meets people with lived experience of homelessness
- How the connector reaches out and involves broader community members
- How people with lived experience of homelessness and those without are brought together

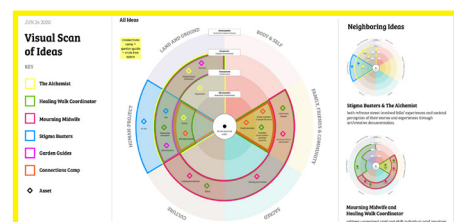


Jaime Calayo
Feeling: Enthusiastic

Coming up with concepts was easy, maybe even natural, with the help of the strong framework and design criteria established by the divergent and ethnographic research.

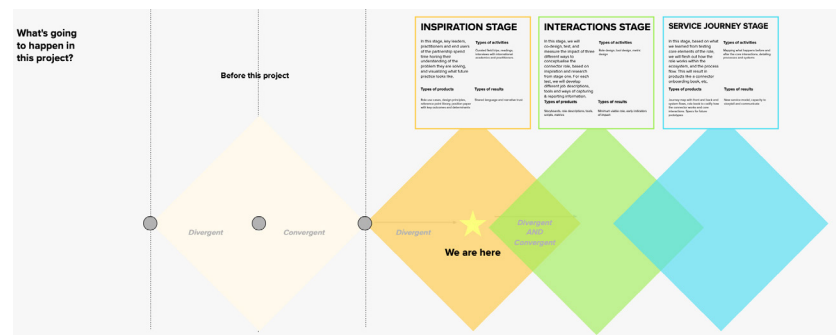
Connecting the puzzle pieces was supported by the framework.

Idea synthesis



Visualization of our idea spread

This diagram maps our ideas against the six types of connections and illustrates each idea's focus areas. The overlaps then informed how we merged certain ideas together.

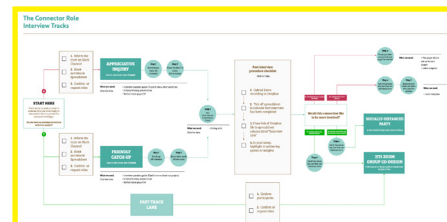


INTERACTIONS PHASE

JUL 2020

During the interaction phase, we are co-designing and testing three versions of the Connector role, building on research from ethnography and the prior Inspiration phase. Our goal is to build on early ideas, flesh out scenarios, and identify potential champions for prototyping and implementation.

Start of community outreach



Development of four-track prototyping plan

This flowchart illustrates our aspiration to reach out to "community" and identify specific people and resources to tap into, so that we can find out what might be attractive and resonant to identified community members.

Key:

- New month
- Milestone

Emotional status color

POSITIVE

UNCOMFORTABLE

Commentary from internal team

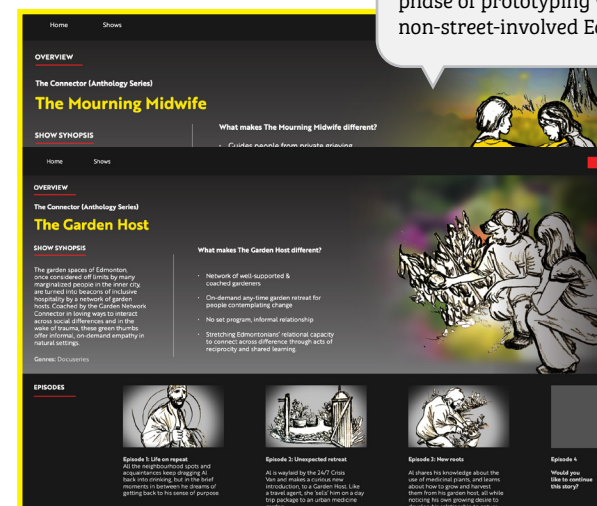
Commentary from co-designers

Interviews with resources



Natalie Napier
Feeling: Enthusiastic

Prototyping typically involves recruiting people to work closely with us to imagine and create in iterative rounds of testing. However, as street involved people's access to internet is dicey at best and totally dependent on services like libraries, or the stray signals of open businesses, going virtual didn't seem like a realistic proposition during COVID-19. Our first phase of prototyping will engage non-street-involved Edmontonians.



Connector Prototypes presented as Netflix shows

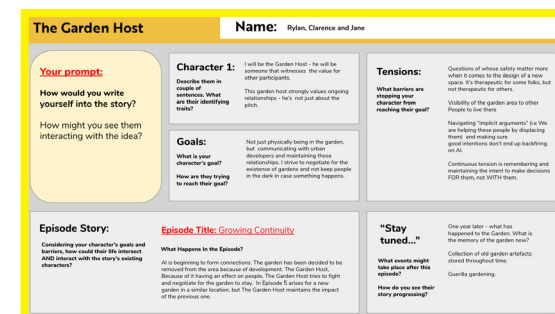
To better demonstrate the roles and actions of our Connectors, we're storytelling. We took inspiration from Netflix and shared our ideas of the Connector as if they were captured in a documentary series, as something already underway, changing the lives of Edmontonians.



Nor'Ali McDaniel
Feeling: Uncomfortable

It was quite awkward doing cold calls to get people to join our co-design sessions. I tried not to rely on my personal and professional contacts, but to reach out to others who may not have a traditional connection to this work. During the co-design sessions, we often tell the participants that we're not precious about our ideas, but a part of me is! It's hard to balance that feeling as we did put a lot of work into these ideas.

Digital Co-design Session



"Write Your Own Episode" Co-Design Canvas

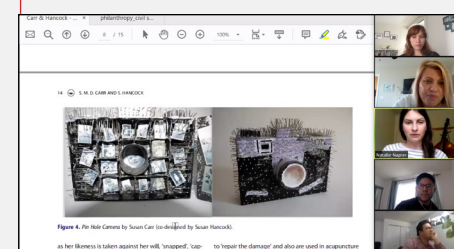
For our co-design sessions, we guided community members to share their expertise with us by writing their own episode. This way, we enabled the participants to fill out gaps they hear in the story and interpret our early ideas in ways that make more sense to them.

HIGHLIGHTS

THINGS WE MADE

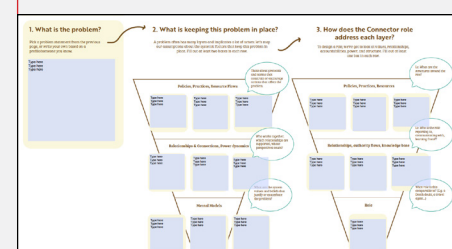
Team Mural

Working remotely across three different timezones pushed us to get creative in how we could recreate the spirit of being in the same room discussing ideas together. We developed a whiteboard on the site Mural to chart out every week's progress and ideas.



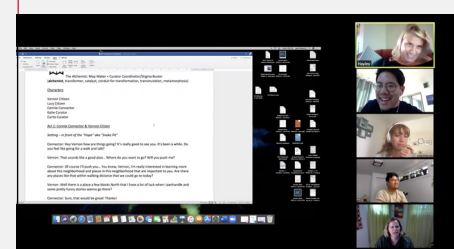
International Inspiration Treasure Hunt

We set a challenge for each other each week to go on a divergent journey to seek out and expand our horizons of what building connections and supporting healing might entail.



Idea Generation

We created an idea canvas that pushed us to question what enables problems to persist. This stretched our own thinking to generate ideas that work at an individual and community level.



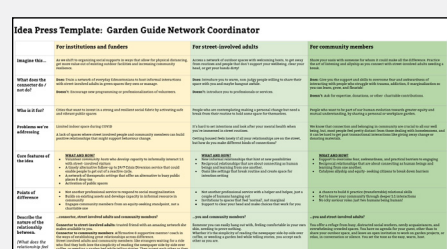
Script read-through

After writing our scripts, we got familiar with the content by inviting each other to step into the characters' shoes and read the dialogue aloud.



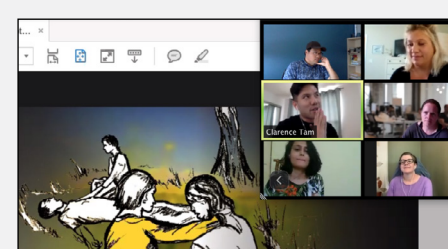
Design Principle Bingo

We designed our own version of Bingo as a means of analyzing each other's ideas, determining how closely they align with our design principles and informing our next iterations.



Storytelling ideas up and down

We created a template to document how our messaging for each idea would shift based on who we're speaking to. Going into this level of detail helped us strengthen our confidence in our ideas' differentiators.



Interview modeling

Before starting our interviews with resources, we invited some close contacts to stand-in as test interview subjects so that we could collectively rehearse and agree on a direction on how to best facilitate the interview.



Jill Koziey
Feeling: Energized

This is phenomenal work. Thank you so much for reaching out. I had been thinking more about community service when you're message arrived ...

(PEOPLE WE INVOLVED)

- Jane Slessor
- Nor'Ali McDaniel

joined our team!

- Bobby-Jo Halton
- Robin McClung
- Karen Bruno
- Gina Vliet
- Jill Koziey
- Skye Perry
- Chelsea Boos
- Alaina Thursby

- Marissa Nakoochee
- Sebastian Barrera
- Rylan Kafara
- Christie Pace
- Richard Thornley
- Paul Czerwonka
- Shawn Ottenbreit
- Dan Zimmerman
- Jonathan Muckle
- Lisa Ward

EDMONTON’S HOROSCOPE FOR 2020

It’s a year to go down in the history books, but in the midst of it, we might well wonder what to make of 2020. Naturally, in times of soul-searching, we can gain perspective by looking to the stars. 2020 is undoubtedly a year of multiple opportunities for earth dwellers. Edmonton, of course, is a Libra, if you take its founding date of October 8, 1905 at face value. But as the land and people have a history dating long before that, our team of astrologists have hedged their bets, paying as much attention to the planetary motions shaping all of our realities in 2020, as to Libran tendencies to interact with them.

SPRING: Spring in Saturn

Looking back to the first half of the year, we can now appreciate how deeply celestial motions have made their influence felt. As our first Lunar Eclipse arrived on January 10 in vulnerable Cancer we should have acted quickly to defend ourselves sitting in opposition, as we were, to communicative Mercury, calculating Saturn, and disruptive Pluto. The viral pandemic was making contact, and we took self-protective action slowly.

As Saturn, the planet of rules, moved into objective, and novelty-seeking Aquarius on March 21, we were hunkering down under a new set of physical distancing rules. However, a shift in mindset was called for as justice-seeking Pluto went retrograde on April 25 (until October 4) in systems-oriented Capricorn. Edmontonians took to the streets, joining Black Lives Matter protests, and later addressed their Council members in a move to address systemic inequities. Even the ever diplomatic Libra was pushed to outrage, reassessing power relations in our community.

SUMMER: Get visionary like Neptune

Catching up to the preset, we’re a city that’s becoming mindful of its self-imposed illusions and struggling to break free as visionary Neptune moves retrograde in reflective Pisces, starting June 22. As the third Lunar Eclipse of the year occurred in Capricorn July 5, we have taken stock of our irrational fears, let go of nervous energy and begun to confront the illusions that divide our fair city.

FALL: Subvert social heirarchy

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In the fall and winter of 2020, we’ll be continuing with the ‘year of awakening’ theme. The outer planets will not change houses, helping us to better adjust to new thought patterns and behaviours. As inventive Uranus stays on in material Taurus, and Neptune in Pisces, we have an unusual opportunity to re-imagine how we can grow spiritually and relationally while in pursuit of our everyday, earthly needs. The focus here is on connections between diverse individuals, supported but not substituted by government and social services.

As romantic Mars enters retrograde in Aries this September, our focus should shift to deepening platonic love, connecting to our neighbours and fellow Edmontonians to deepen the ties that bond, and struggling through the fears we began confronting in July, to emerge a tighter knit citizenry than we’ve seen before. This will mean shifting away from our unbalanced focus on systems and rules (remember Saturn is under the influence of Aquarius!) to see the potential in informal, organic relationships to protect and advance our wellbeing.

Another likely shift wrought by the continued mingling of Uranus in Taurus is our heightened capacity to subvert social hierarchies and reframe our potential kinship, shifting from charitable acts such as donating goods, or our time as ‘helpers’, towards acts of reciprocity that engage people of very different privilege in shared learning. By late fall, Edmonton, you may find strange pairings puzzling over a mutual challenge - an Edmontonian who has lacked a home and social support alongside another who has amassed stability and social capital. And you will gaze with pride and wide-eyed wonder as they wade through their uncertainty and discomfort, never fully emerging, nor sinking below the surface.

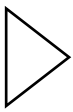
WINTER: Welcome a year for the body

Finally, the cosmos are energizing Edmontonians to connect with their physicality. Be prepared for a noticeable shift from a previous over-emphasis on talk and abstract thinking towards embodied mindfulness. If well supported, we can anticipate that as Venus moves retrograde we’ll be showing our own bodies more loving attentiveness, and seeing a city-wide reduction in incidents rooted in unaddressed trauma, moving into 2021.

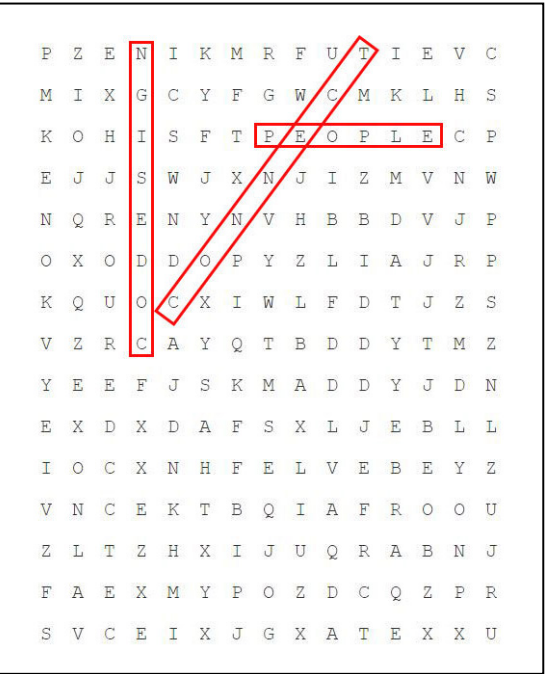
So there you have it! As lucky Jupiter stays in Capricorn until December 19, a tumultuous year will yield uncommon growth in unexpected and rewarding relationships.

WORD SEARCH

- (1)SELF
- (2)CULTURE
- (3)FAMILY
- (4)FRIENDS
- (5)SACRED
- (6)COMMUNITY
- (7)CONNECTION



Answer to previous puzzle



CROSSWORD PUZZLE

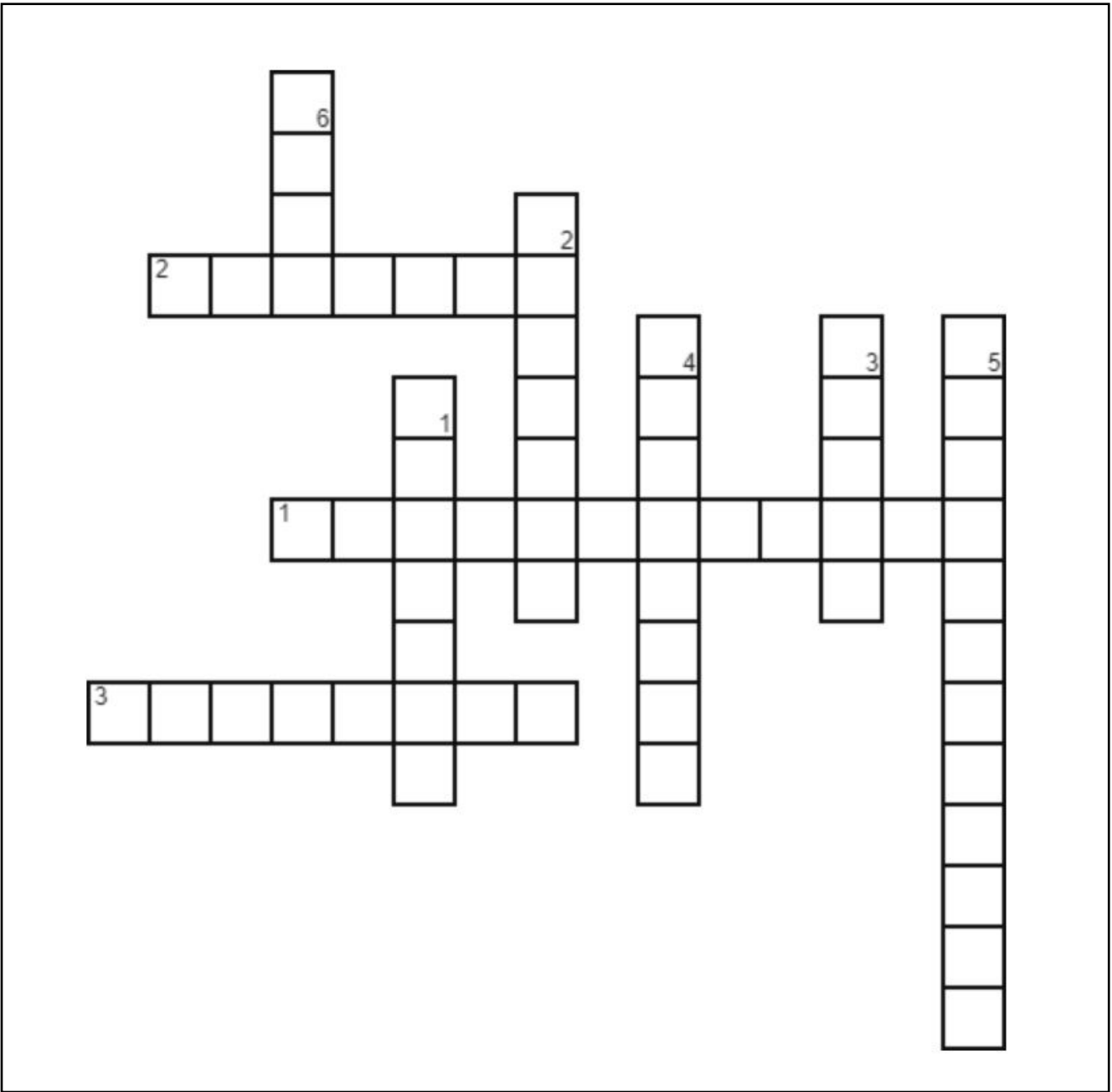
ACROSS

- 1. The ceaseless pursuit of potential, growth, and mutual understanding among our species
- 2. One that helps produce or bring forth something
- 3. A typical example or pattern of something

DOWN

- 1. Relating to the body, especially as distinct from the mind
- 2. The process of making or becoming sound or healthy again
- 3. Intense sorrow
- 4. The expression of sorrow
- 5. Addressing the root causes of social problems, which are often intractable and embedded in networks of cause and effect
- 6. An area of ground, especially in terms of its ownership or use

ANSWERS
ACROSS: human project, midwife, paradigm
DOWN: somatic, healing, grief, mourning, system change, land



The Idea Guide

A comprehensive analysis of our prototypes, from inspiration to integration.

What makes a concept?

If opportunity is like a blank canvas, ideas offer colour and concepts give shape. The opportunity for the Connector prototype is to (re)connect people with and without lived experience of the streets to six sources of wellness: friends, family & community, self & body, land, culture, the human project, and the sacred. But, how? “You have to have an idea of what you are going to do, but it should be a vague idea,” the prolific Pablo Picasso suggests.

Mashing together imagination with stories from the streets, international examples and social science research, the Connector prototype team brainstormed shards of ideas: a job title, a setting, an object, a practice -- connecting these elements into the beginnings of ideas. Piecing scenes together, a fuller picture or concept for the Connector role emerged.

One week, team member Natalie Napier brought forward portrait therapy: a practice where therapeutic conversations give way to a creative process, yielding paintings and sculptures which give feelings form. Another team member recounted an ethnographic moment with Earl as he described learning to carve from his grandfather, and how bereft he felt without material in his hands from the lands. A third team member shared their experience as a grief doula in hospices, where there was attention to good dying, but what about good mourning? With each of these fragments, the team began to see a version of the Connector role centred on loss, grief, mourning and healing using objects, materials, breath, body and nature.

Over three months, the team continued to experiment with different sources of inspiration, ultimately coalescing into three concepts. These three concepts of the Connector are not static still lifes, but evolving collages. They are starting points for deeper co-creation with the community. “If you have an apple and I have an apple and we exchange these apples then you and I will still each have one apple. But if you have an idea and I have an idea and we exchange these ideas, then each of us will have two ideas,” George Bernard Shaw famously said.



The Mourning Midwife



The Garden Host Network



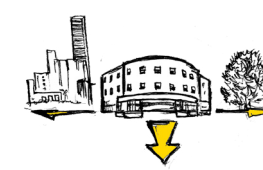
The Alchemist



Our five principles

Outward

The Connector Role connects street-involved adults out to community.



Connective

The Connector Role furthers at least one of six types of connection (connection to body & self, culture, the sacred, ground/land, the human project, and family,



Dual Level

The Connector Role operates at two or more scales (eg. individual, community, institutional, systemic, etc.)



Reciprocal

The Connector Role engages people as equals and experts in a two-way relationship where we give as we receive.

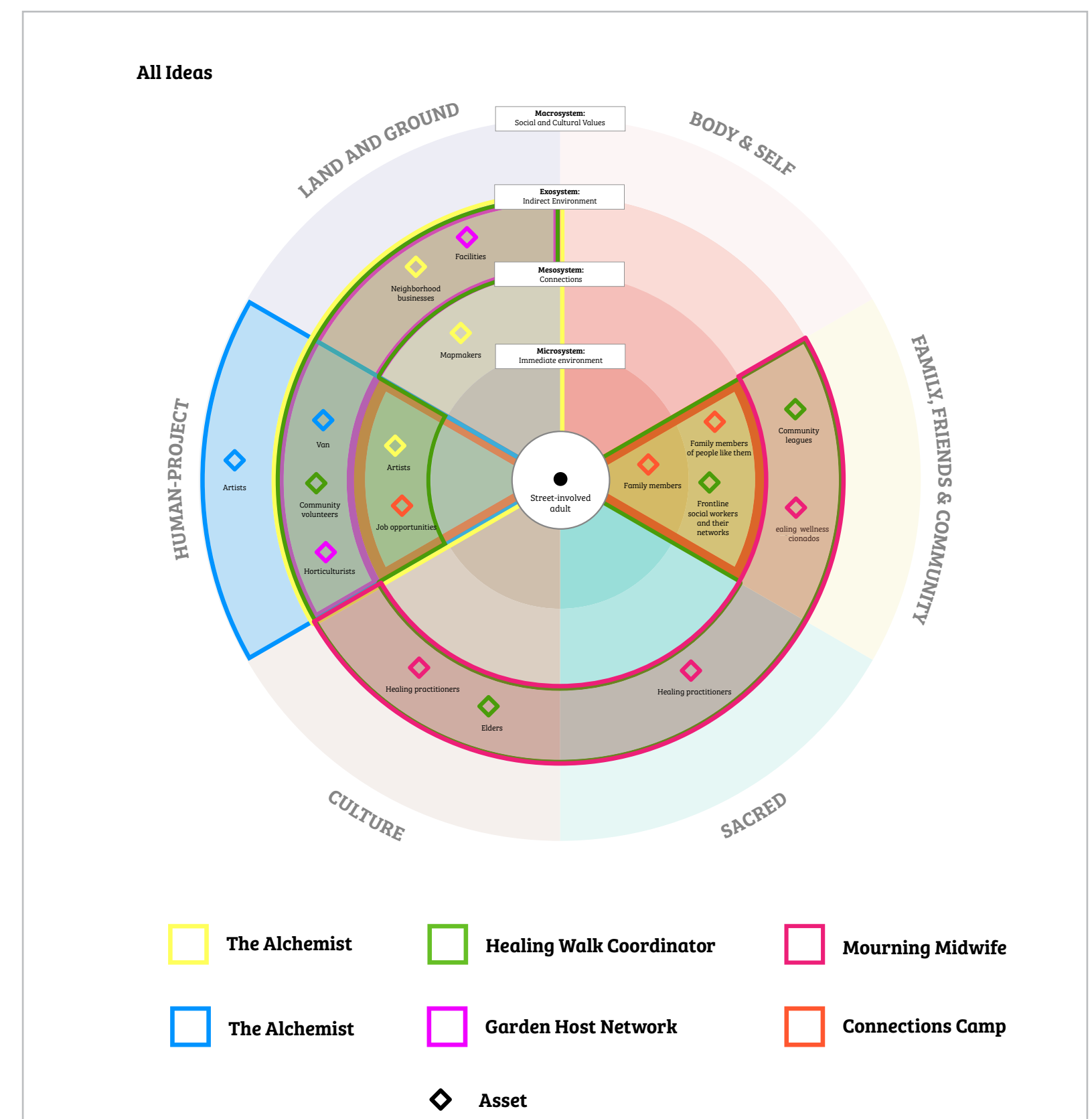


Organic

The Connector Role feels organic, grounded, empowering; not clinical



Our spread of ideas



THE MOURNING MIDWIFE



No one had time to listen -- even as Marjorie screamed for help. “She was making a scene,” the volunteers told the 211 team they had on speed dial. A year ago, they would have sent a first responder in uniform, forcefully ushering Marjorie out of the space. On particularly bad days, Marjorie would end up at the hospital, awaiting discharge without supports, and a return to the familiar and unforgiving streets.

This year, 211 coached the volunteers to pause, hold, and seek to find some meaning in the message. What was Marjorie trying to communicate? “She’s saying something about a brother, and a funeral, but that’s all we can really make out,” they noted. “OK, grief and loss underpins so many emotional moments,” the emergency responders replied. “We’re going to dispatch a Mourning Midwife and see if Marjorie would like an outlet for her pain.”

“I missed it. I fucked up again,” Marjorie told Joey, the Mourning Midwife. They’d left the noise of the drop-in centre behind, and headed for a walk in the river valley with a thermos of mint tea in hand. Joey explained she wasn’t a long-term therapist, but she could hold space to reflect. They could draw, paint, sculpt, make sounds, move, stretch and breathe to both explore her loss and celebrate her brother’s life. Marjorie didn’t have to go through this alone; if she wanted, she could join a healing community, share her brother’s story, and meet others navigating the treacherous terrain of grief. At next month’s healing procession, Marjorie would be welcome to share her brother’s story, engage in ceremony with Elders, plant a tree, try sound meditation, and do body work.

In grief, Marjorie had lost so many of the things that used to give her life: her intellectual pursuits, her spiritual practice, and the love and guidance of her extended family. Maybe the Mourning Midwife might help replenish her cup. The Mourning Midwife recruits practitioners of mind-body therapies: making space for people to express their grief by supporting reconnection to the sacred, the body and the self.

What’s the need?

Grief and loss runs deep. One hundred per cent of the 60 street-involved adults whose stories the InWithForward team has documented carry the hurt, pain, and trauma of losing husbands, wives, partners, parents, children, friends, cousins, street family, pets, and belongings. For most, this grief is not openly acknowledged, socially accepted, or publicly mourned -- even as its effects are all too visible: insomnia, physical pain, mood swings, anxiety, depression, substance misuse, shame, and diminished self-esteem (Reference).

“When a griever is disenfranchised, they feel like they can’t share their pain or feelings with others – that their grief is unacceptable, unworthy or wrong and that they don’t have the right to be feeling the way they do,” says Australian Centre for Grief and Bereavement Specialist Marie Hogarth. Professor Thomas Attig frames disenfranchisement of grief as a serious societal failure: not only a failure of empathy, but a “political failure involving abuse of power and serious neglect.”

Who is it for?



People like Marjorie:
The current grievers

At 51, Marjorie has been battered by grief. Her husband’s suicide shook loose the contents of her life. But no matter your intimacy with death, it can still take your breath away. Days before we meet, Marjorie learned that her brother has passed. She wasn’t there. And she couldn’t make the funeral. His absence and her absence gnaws at her. A raw, open wound.



People like William:
The continuous grievers

Every day he lines up for a meal and a bed, William is reminded of what he’s lost: his identity as a police officer, his sense of ‘righting’ wrongs, his mother, Indigenous culture and traditional lands. Indignity and shame feel as constant as the tides. The only way not to drown is to drift in beer and vodka.



People like Patrick:
The unmoored

Patrick marvels at how tenuous life can be. He had a house, a truck, a business. And then, over two short years, he lost his wife, brother, and nephew. The house, the truck, and the business soon fell too. Carfentanil was one of the only things he could hold onto. He wonders what might have been had he accessed an outlet verus a numbing agent.

“When a griever is disenfranchised, they feel like they can’t share their pain or feelings with others – that their grief is unacceptable, unworthy or wrong and that they don’t have the right to be feeling the way they do.”

- MARIE HOGARTH, AUSTRALIAN CENTRE FOR GRIEF AND BEREAVEMENT SPECIALIST

Pain, sadness and anger create discomfort that too often mainstream society seals off: regulating how, when, how long, and for whom people may grieve, whilst defining what is “appropriate” and “inappropriate” mourning techniques. Both COVID-19 and anti-racism protests have brought pain, sadness, and anger to the forefront of our public consciousness. Can we harness that energy to reposition grief and loss as a shared experience, opening-up new kinds of public spaces and outlets for mourning and healing?

What’s different about The Mourning Midwife?

Guides people from private grieving through to public mourning

Mourning Midwife knocks down the fear, discomfort, impatience, and shame that too often shrouds grief and loss. By naming and acknowledging grief in 1:1 and group settings, the Mourning Midwife helps normalize grief as a part of the human experience, experienced with the full range of human emotions. Rather than propagate a “right” and “wrong” way to grieve, the Mourning Midwife holds space for a blend of cultural and spiritual ceremonies, body-based practices, and experiential wisdom.

Unites community members (including street-involved adults) through shared experience

Grief hits all of us. None of us are immune to its unpredictable tentacles. That’s why the Mourning Midwife brings together community members for public ceremonies, commemorative walks, and cathartic gatherings. Instead of treating grief and loss as a marginal experience, the Mourning Midwife sees it as a vehicle for empathy, a way to foster recognition and solidarity, while de-stigmatizing the bereavement process.

Challenges medicalized models of grief and loss

Medications or prescriptions and talk-based therapy That’s the dominant response Western societies have to grief and loss, and even then, catharsis doesn’t come cheap. But, alternative ways abound. From somatic (body-based) therapies to prayer, meditation, art, music and cultural practices, the Mourning Midwife makes space for heart, soul, mind, memory, and nature -- drawing on the know-how of Elders, faith-based leaders, pro-bono practitioners, artists, musicians and fellow humans.

How might it work?

1

Recruiting

Mourning Midwife builds a network of body-based therapists, practitioners of secular and religious healing arts, including connections to Indigenous communities/elders, and other cultural groups. The Network gives visibility to practitioners’ work, and hosts a newsletter, learning moments, and open events.

2

Linking

Mourning Midwife links street-involved adults to group healing events, troubleshooting barriers. Mourning Midwife brokers connections between grievers from different backgrounds.

3

Supporting and Coaching

Mourning Midwife supports grievers 1:1 in ceremony or practice of their choice: writing obituaries, creating portrait art, constructing soundscapes, practicing breathing techniques, etc. Mourning Midwife pulls together tools and resources to coach community members in uncomfortable conversations, hosting active listening and grief acknowledgement coaching sessions.

What’s the business case?

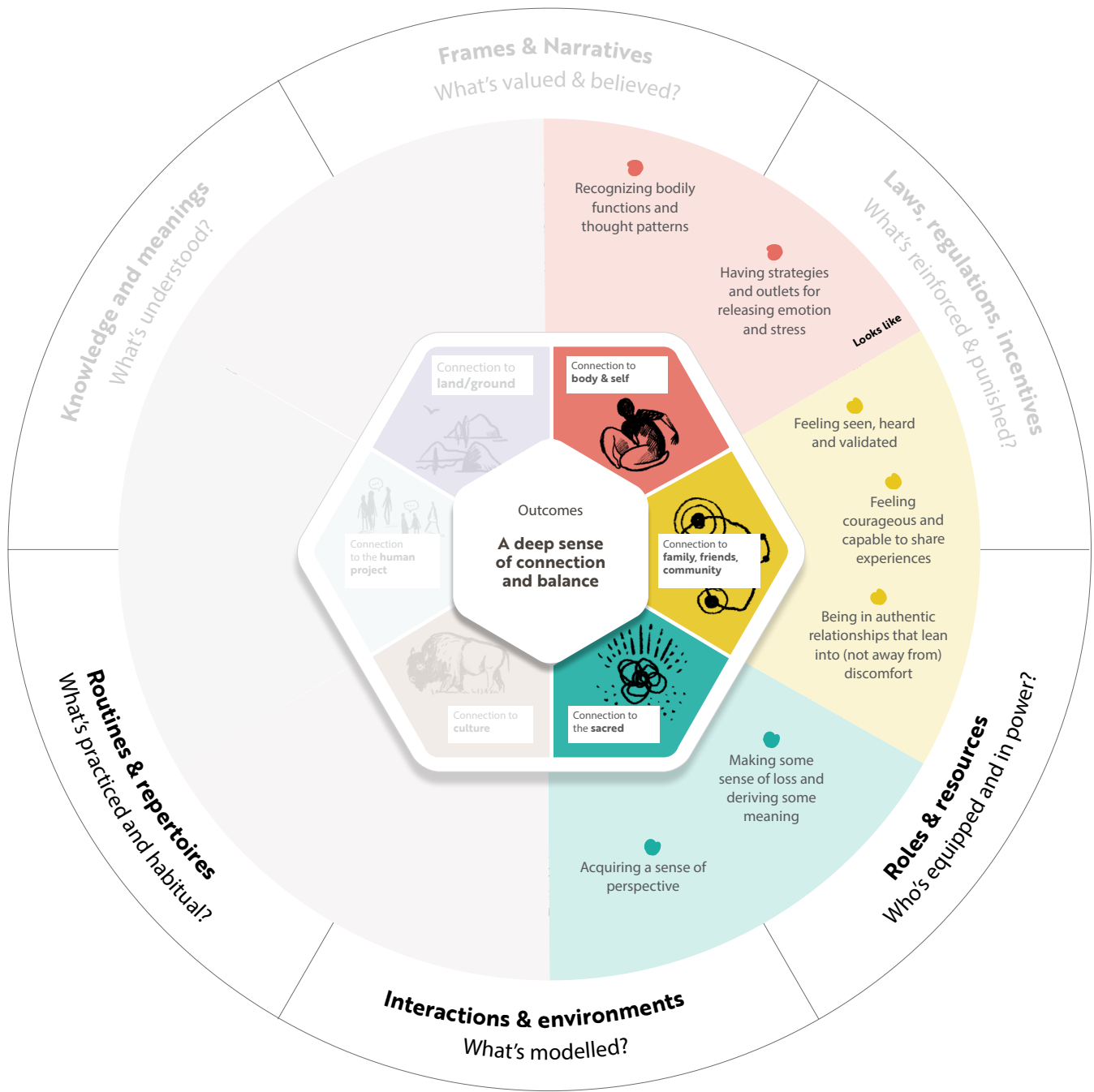
How Mourning Midwife interrupts cyclical crisis and might prevent downstream effects

Grief and loss is a root cause of homelessness, mental illness, and criminality -- and yet, most of our interventions (from hospital stays to jail time to housing work) treat the acute symptoms. The Mourning Midwife plugs a gap: addressing a chronic experience that too often goes unacknowledged.

How Mourning Midwife draws on and amplifies community resources

The Mourning Midwife gives cultural leaders, faith-based practitioners, somatic therapists and their practicum students tangible opportunities to learn, share, and shape public discourse on healing.

What’s the change?



The Mourning Midwife sets out to...

Advance these outcomes ...

That looks like people ...

Using these cultural change levers

Drawing on these behaviour change mechanisms

Connection to friends, family community
Connection to the self and body
Connection to the sacred


Feeling seen, heard and validated
Feeling courageous and capable to share experiences
Being in authentic relationships that lean into (not away from) discomfort
Recognizing bodily sensations and thought patterns
Having strategies and outlets for releasing emotion and stress
Acquiring a sense of perspective
Making sense of loss and deriving some meaning

<u>Routines & repertoires:</u> making grieving practices and healing ceremony more commonplace
<u>Environment & Interactions:</u> creating cross-cultural, community-wide spaces to mourn
<u>Knowledge & meanings:</u> legitimizing multiple ways of processing feelings and making meaning

<u>Barrier busting:</u> reducing pragmatic hurdles to engagement (timing, transit, etc.)
<u>Bridging relationships:</u> introducing people with different backgrounds but common experiences
<u>Story editing:</u> integrating grief into one's story of self, rather than ignoring or dismissing
<u>Modeling & rehearsing:</u> practicing ways to talk about and respond to the pain of loss

What inspirations does this draw on?

The Mourning Midwife draws inspiration from a diverse set of practices -- from portrait therapy to somatic therapy to ritual design to the death café movement. Here's some of what has influenced the thinking:

Culturally syntonc four-day psychoeducational intervention and grief resolution process in a Lakota community	
	
What is it and how does it kinda sorta work? Think key roles, props, scripts, settings	A four-day grief resolution initiation process. Setting: Sacred paha sapa (centre of Lakota universe) Props: Didactic and videotape stimulus material of Lakota trauma Scripts: Review of the dynamics of unresolved grief; small group exercises like diagramming the lifeline of traumatic experiences; a purification ceremony, and a traditional wiping of the tears ceremony. Roles: Co-facilitated by a Lakota female and male with lived experience
What's most different? What are its defining features?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• An immersive, mixed-media experience• Incorporation of traditional ceremony• Blend of psychoeducation with peer-to-peer bonding• Explicit focus on historical trauma: cumulative trauma that is collective and compounding emotional and psychic wounding.• Strong pre and post measurement.
What are the intended outcomes?	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Grief resolution initiated2. Resolution in grief affects over time3. Greater positive identity4. Commitment to individual and community healing
Where can I learn more?	https://www.dropbox.com/s/fe1qwn1ejo2b53m/Healing%20unresolved%20grief_Lakota%20nation.pdf?dl=0

Himalayan Singing Bowls



What is it? A practice, program, process, platform, product, tool, space, event, rule, policy, etc.	Also known as Tibetan singing bowls, the practice involves lying down and listening to the high-intensity, low-frequency combination of singing bowls, gongs, and bells in a sound meditation could induce a deep relaxation response and positively affect mood and sense of well-being. It is a practice that unites self with the body by creating vibrations on the same frequencies as people's bodies.
How does it kinda sorta work? Think key roles, props, scripts, settings	Props: mats and blankets, gongs, bells, and metal bowls usually consisting of a combination of metal alloys and originally used by Tibetan monks for spiritual ceremonies. Setting: darkened space / evening gathering Roles: Often combined with meditation, with a meditation guide Scripts: loving kindness meditation (varies)
What's most different? What are its defining features?	It is a low cost sound & mindfulness therapy that can be combined with other techniques, and practiced in a group setting. It is built on principles and techniques that have roots in many Indigenous cultures.
What are the intended outcomes?	Tibetan singing bowl meditation may be a feasible low-cost low technology intervention for reducing feelings of tension, anxiety, and depression, and increasing spiritual well-being.

Portrait Therapy



What is it? A practice, program, process, platform, product, tool, space, event, rule, policy, etc.	A therapeutic practice which result in tangible products (e.g sculpture, paintings, collage)
How does it kinda sorta work? Think key roles, props, scripts, settings	Scripts: Portrait therapy is a process of self-identity revisioning achieved through co-designing and viewing the portraits of self-identity, painted for patients by the art therapist. Roles: Artist Setting: In community, outside, studio Props: Found objects; photos; mixed media
What's most different? What are its defining features?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Making meaning through objects and the creative process• Art spins a kind of beauty out of trauma and struggle
What are the intended outcomes?	One of the aims of portrait therapy is to enable people to increase their 'creative capacity to adapt' to illness through increasing agency and flexibility and changing perceptions of 'control'.
Who might this be interesting for?	People with layers of unacknowledged grief who don't feel seen, like Bonnie, William, Mitch.
Where can I learn more?	https://www.portraittherapy.co.uk/

THE GARDEN HOST NETWORK



One night the 24/7 Crisis Diversion van was called for Al. The staff on the van asked him about the last time he'd felt a sense of wellbeing and the answer came so quickly and clearly. A trip back to his rural community last year had reminded him of another side of himself: the one who invites others on adventures, the artistic and handy son, and the listener. But when he returned to Edmonton to make some money, he soon found himself sliding. All his old friends, who lived on the streets with him so many years were inviting him to have a drink with them, and pretty soon all Al's adventures were leading to the same places, he wasn't making much of anything anymore, and he couldn't even bear to listen to himself.

The van staff said, "Al, it seems like you could use another change of scene and some space to reconnect with yourself." Al nodded, without much hope. "Can we introduce you to someone called the Garden Connector tomorrow? She's got a whole network of people and places for just that kind of thing." "Sounds...well, I don't know what that sounds like," Al thought aloud. "But I've got nothing else going on tomorrow so why not?"

The next day the Garden Connector came and found him, and she got him talking all about the Al that had built garden beds for his aunt, the Al that harvested medicinal plants for ceremony back home. She told him about a couple of people she knew with some common interests in plants, and cultivating. She also mentioned Robin, who had recently signed up as a Garden Host. Robin was a novice wild forager and government employee by day, who would be grateful for a foraging companion. Al felt a longing when he heard that, and the Garden Connector recognized it immediately.

A week later, Al, the Garden Connector, and Robin checked out a spot in the River Valley that Al had heard about. Robin was so interested in the teachings he shared around plants, and he recognized a good listener when he met one. After that, he and Robin began organizing weekly outings to different spots. They were often followed by a visit from the Garden Connector who coached him through moments of self-doubt and discomfort. Al and Robin learned to talk more openly too, about the ways in which their unusual little relationship challenged and rewarded them both. The Connector encouraged them both to connect with other foragers and medicinal plant gardens in the city. Soon Al's network was much more diverse than it had ever been.

What's the need?

Prochaska's Transtheoretical Model, or Stages of Change, describes people as moving through five possible stages of change, which can be applied to any kind of behaviour change. Of the five stages -precontemplation, contemplation, preparation, action, and maintenance - contemplation is perhaps the most poorly supported in social service landscapes. About 25 per cent of street-involved adults we spent time with in Edmonton identified themselves as contemplating change.

The stage of contemplation presents particular challenges to our service model: for example, contemplation can be a fleeting moment before a reversion to precontemplation, so timeliness is key. DiClemente, Prochaska's co-author, described it as " a very paradoxical stage of change... ambivalence can make contemplation a chronic [and extremely frustrating] condition... Clearly, interest [in change]

Who is it for?



People like Marjorie:
The nostalgic hopefuls

Marjorie, 51, remembers a time when her life was in order: she was a teacher, had a good relationship and a close knit family. She knows she is capable. Looking around her now, she often feels dragged down by her friends and her environment, and her anger rises. She'd like to stop drinking, get housed and get her "self respect and dignity back" but "it's hard" - is she still the person who can make her own destiny?



People like Vernon:
The interruption seekers

Vernon, 60, has a deep memory for things that have supported him in the past: a mother, a sister, painting, singing, and helping others. He can imagine himself sobering up. But none of these people or activities are present in his life right now. Instead, there's a lot of waiting and opportunities to drink. They win out every time.



People like Bonnie:
The fearful yearners

Bonnie, 55, says "I'm not strong enough." She has survived an awful lot but has little sense of self efficacy when it comes to the change she most wants for herself: "Life is struggling to quit drinking. Sometimes I drink just to pass out. It's hard to escape when you're trapped. I'm aging." For Bonnie, contemplation always gives way to a sense of futility.

is not commitment... Ambivalence is the archenemy of commitment and a prime reason for chronic contemplation." Interventions that jump to planning a behaviour change can quickly turn the contemplator off. Similarly, no new intervention or right-sized challenge, often means the feeling peters away, which quickly becomes a cycle.

People in contemplation are needing to boost their self-efficacy so they feel more prepared to weather the challenges of the change they are undertaking, anticipate barriers, and decrease the desirability of the behaviour they want to change. They are facing giving up a behaviour that has brought some comfort and joy, and that is likely bound up in their sense of identity. So contemplation also comes with the anticipation of loss, along with the perceived gain. What if we could offer the contemplator a right-sized challenge, along with coaching to boost self-efficacy, within 24 hours of registering that someone is in contemplation mode?

What's different?

Helps people contemplating change build sense of commitment

The Garden Host Network is a short retreat triggered by an expression of interest in an intentional behaviour change. Interactions are geared to increase self-efficacy, reduce the noise and distraction of the environment in which the existing behaviour takes place, and open up people's sense of possibility.

Creates a network to support informal relationship building

Garden host volunteers are coached and supported to develop healing-focused relational skills based in reciprocity, humility, and deep listening.

Focuses on connection to land, self, and multiple communities without agenda

The Garden Host Network creates space for informal experiences and interactions. There is no program, no expectation, only a desire to create the conditions for these three types of connection.

How might it work?

1

Recruiting

The Garden Connector builds a network of Garden Host volunteers who have access to garden or wild spaces, a well-developed sense of connection to land, and a real desire to develop their capacity to connect to others.

2

Linking

The Garden Connector takes urgent referrals from front line and crisis intervention workers who have identified someone contemplating change and meets the individual within 24 hours to propose a mini-retreat hosted by an on-call garden host.

3

Supporting and Coaching

The Garden Host coordinates training and pre- and post- event coaching for Garden Hosts (possibly drawing on peers and people with lived experience), to ensure strong feedback loops.

The Garden Connector uses story editing and appreciative inquiry methods in short pre- and post-event check-ins with 'Contemplators' to boost self-efficacy and commitment.

What's the business case?

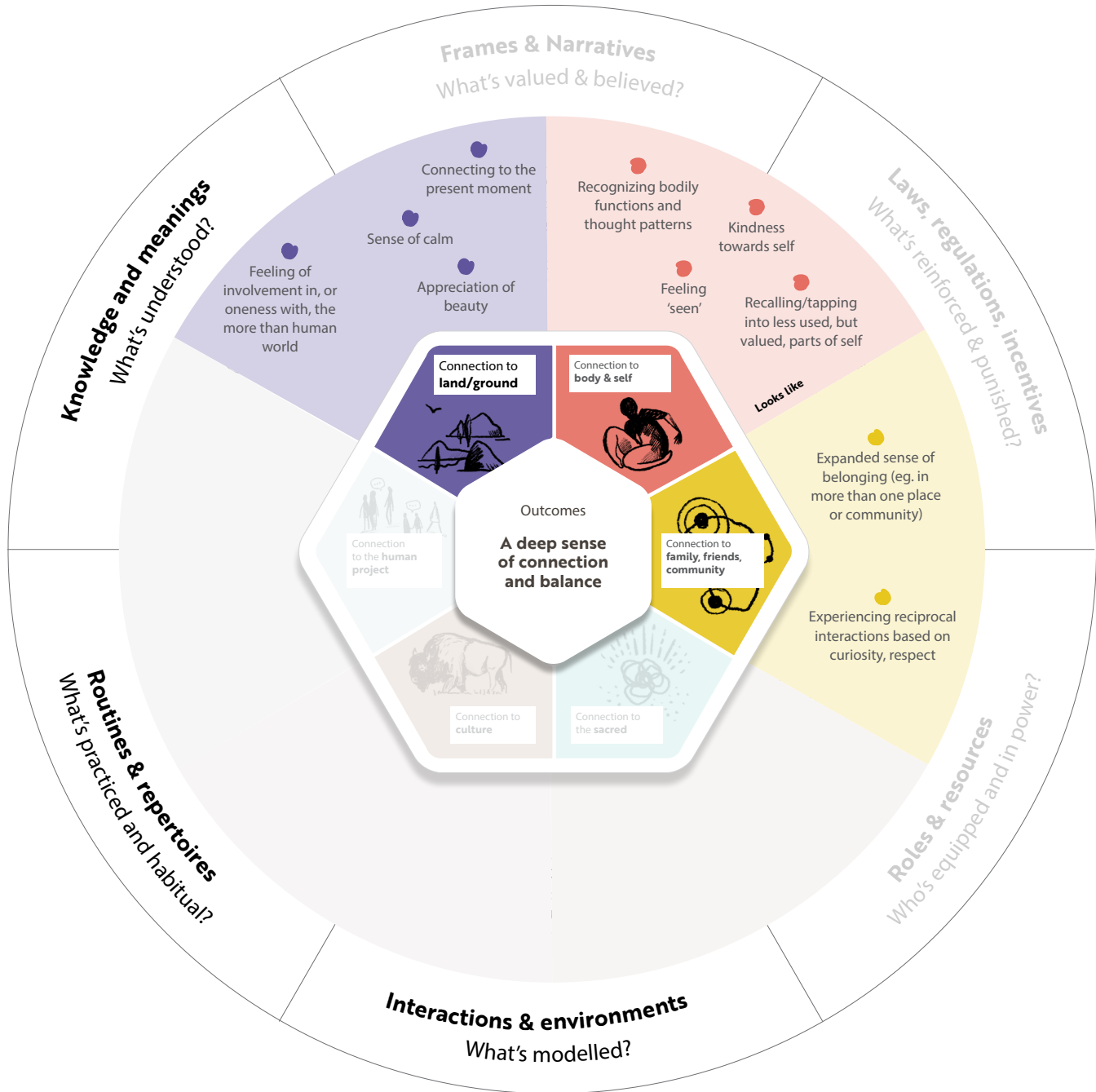
How The Garden Connector interrupts cyclical crisis and might prevent downstream effects

The Garden Connector offers people who are contemplating change (often chronically so) targeted support to increase commitment. Timely supports that increase self-efficacy and motivation can help people commit to move forward in directions they value, decreasing use of supports over time.

How The Garden Connector draws on and amplifies community resources

The Garden Connector draws on under-utilized city assets that offer green space, and connects with community members who have a desire to put reconciliation into action.

What’s the change?



The Garden Host Network sets out to...

Advance these outcomes ...

That looks like people ...

Using these cultural change levers

Drawing on these behaviour change mechanisms

- Connection to land/ground
- Connection to the self and body
- Connection to friends, family, community

- Feeling of involvement in, or oneness with, the more than human world
- Connecting to the present moment
- Sense of calm
- Appreciation of beauty
- Recognizing bodily sensations and thought patterns
- Kindness towards self
- Recalling/tapping into less used, but valued, parts of self
- Feeling ‘seen’
- Experiencing reciprocal interactions based on curiosity, respect
- Expanded sense of belonging (eg. in more than one place or community)

- Routines & repertoires:** Creating an interruption in the routines that facilitate the troubling behaviour, and offering a taste of alternatives
- Environment & Interactions:** offering respite from an environment wrapped up in the troubling behaviour
- Knowledge & meanings:** Offering an intense dose of messaging that recognizes and celebrates a person’s self-efficacy, motivation, and potential
- Roles & Resources:** Practising empathetic and welcoming behaviours from one community member to another, despite differences. Moving from charity to reciprocity model.

- Barrier busting:** connecting inner city community members to many different outdoor spaces and activities
- Bridging relationships:** connecting street involved people to other community members to open up opportunities, while recognizing the value and contribution of both parties
- Story editing:** integrating new learning and sense of possibility into the picture of self.
- Modeling & rehearsing:** practicing listening, curiosity, humility

What inspirations does this draw on?

The Garden Host Network draws inspiration from a range of practices based in a philosophy of nature connectedness -- from forest healing to the nordic concept of friluftsliv, to bird watching as therapy. Here’s some of what has influenced the thinking:

Bird therapy

What is it? A practice, program, process, platform, product, tool, space, event, rule, policy, etc.	It’s actually the title of a book by a man named Joe Harkness who used birdwatching as a kind of mindfulness approach to coping with depression, anxiety, and OCD.
How does it kinda sorta work? Think key roles, props, scripts, settings	Roles: You as novice bird watcher - a reminder you are part of something bigger and more majestic than yourself; also, a network of fellow bird watchers to help you expand your practice Props: binoculars, camera (for nature photography, optional), and a log for records, to submit online Scripts: Familiarize yourself with the natural sounds of your bird community, either in your own garden or in a place you visit often. Harkness seems to balance familiarity of place, sound, and routine, with integrating changes (weather, new place, new company) Setting: Harkness recommends finding a local birdwatching patch. The consistency and security that visiting a regular patch provides can also help you to connect with yourself and with nature.
What’s most different? What are its defining features?	Self-guided practice, cheap to free, connection to others through record-keeping & connecting with fellow birders.
What are the intended outcomes?	Calm, connection to self/body and land/nature, possibly also to spirit.
Where can I learn more?	http://www.birdingpal.org/alberta.htm

friluftsliv

What is it? A practice, program, process, platform, product, tool, space, event, rule, policy, etc.	A philosophy and set of practices: it’s the lifestyle of outdoor life that creates a deep involvement and engagement with the more-than-human world. Genuine friluftsliv, thus, is something more than plain outdoor activities such as canoeing, climbing, skiing, hunting, fishing, collecting, painting, etc.
How does it kinda sorta work? Think key roles, props, scripts, settings	Spending time in outdoor spaces <i>without</i> goal-directed activities: aim is to enjoy the moment and move forwards, not on a time schedule, but on individual internal rhythms and the rhythms of nature. Paying attention to: day rhythm, moon rhythm, seasonal rhythms, etc., as well as rhythms in patterns and structures. When pursuing friluftsliv you often do things together with friends, like sitting around the campfire, travelling together, sharing experiences, and being dependent on each other.
What’s most different? What are its defining features?	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Appreciation of beauty versus commoditizing2. Going with nature versus fighting or conquering3. Harmonizing with nature versus destroying
What are the intended outcomes?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Love not fear• Respect not control
Where can I learn more?	https://www.bbc.com/worklife/article/20171211-friluftsliv-the-nordic-concept-of-getting-outdoors

Healing Forest

What is it? A practice, program, process, platform, product, tool, space, event, rule, policy, etc.	Healing Forest is an online resource, virtual community, and collection of nature-based activities to foster learning on the art of finding peace, purpose and healing through nature and to know the science behind nature healing
How does it kinda sorta work? Think key roles, props, scripts, settings	Setting: digital platform or sharing Roles: organize nature walks (forest bathing), curate nature-based meditations; run a forest friends program for change leaders Props: arts & forest games from around the world; bank of stories & case studies; maps of healing forests Scripts: sharing forest wisdom of the elders and Indigenous people
What’s most different? What are its defining features?	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Free and accessible2. Inspirational3. Global reach
What are the intended outcomes?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Healing through nature.• Helping forests heal.
Who might this be interesting for in our story set? Why?	People like William and Vernon who miss their lands and feel ungrounded.
Where can I learn more?	https://healingforest.org

THE ALCHEMIST



Vernon was lost in a memory, when he pulled out a folded piece of paper from his pocket and unfurled his map. He traced his finger along the hand-painted lines, pausing at the corner where Norman died, past his favorite sleep spot at the Chinatown Hotel, just down the road from the noisy Graybar Hotel. The map wasn't so much to physical scale as human scale. To the right of the inner city was Saskatchewan and to the left was Poundmakers, visual reminders of the family and culture he had left behind.

"Oh hey, Vernon," Katie called out. "Look what I've found -- a big box of rocks for our memory wall!"

A few weeks back, after hopping onto the 24/7 Crisis Diversion Van, Vernon received a different offer. Usually, the van ferried him back to the 'snake pit' at the shelter. But, that day, The Alchemist was riding along. After he got some rest in one of the sleep pods, they went for a meal and swapped some stories of the inner city.

For Vernon, the inner city streets were his living room, kitchen, bedroom and backyard. He knew their tempo and moods, secrets and ambitions. Over several afternoons, Vernon and The Alchemist revisited all the sidewalks and alleyways, corners and doorways, recording his chosen place names and their significance onto a physical and digital map. Vernon kept coming back to the doorway where Norman passed. Norman had been his link to home, a cousin who knew the plains of Saskatchewan as well as Edmonton's concrete jungle. Not honouring Norman kinda felt like not honouring a piece of himself.

The Alchemist wondered whether Vernon would be interested in creating a memory marker: a physical object or installation that would put Norman's story on the city's map. The city, the Alchemist explained, was learning that meaningful reconciliation meant reckoning with all kinds of histories and experiences. The mostly white, male, place names and historical records kept the city and its citizens from a larger shared memory and mutual understanding.

Vernon worried he wouldn't be up for the task. "I'm not so good with my hands anymore," he said. The Alchemist invited him to meet Katie, a local sculptor, and Ian, a sound engineer. Together, they'd have a budget to create something befitting of Norman that could go on the street pavement, as a marker on the building, or in a park. The Alchemist would offer behind-the-scenes support. And so that's how Vernon found himself painting rocks with Norman's words of wisdom and rediscovering threads of his culture. By matching local creatives with people with lived experience of marginalization, the Alchemist enables communities to reclaim and remake familiar places from multiple points of view. Together, collaboratives make maps, public art, and provocative installations that tell a different personal and public story.

What's the need?

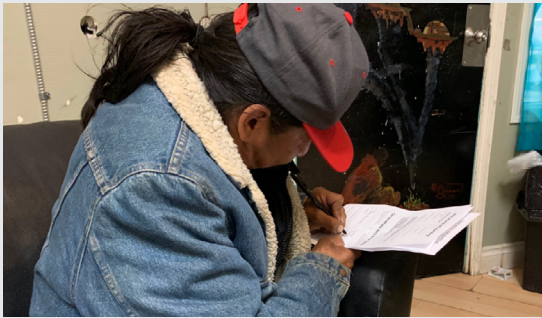
Place names are powerful, elevating one history, while rendering other histories invisible. "Most of Edmonton's place names create a veneer of colonialism that colours our view of this place," says Matt Dance, an urban geographer and open data advocate. About sixty five percent of people experiencing homelessness in

Who is it for?



People like Renée:
The free spirits

Renee, 56, wants to live life on her terms and conditions. Right now, that means camping in the River Valley with her adult son. While a house would be nice, for Renée, home is about caring for others, and that requires some autonomy. Renée tends her camp with love. Stories of her childhood convey a deep connection to place, even though she never lived in one spot long.



People like Earl: *The self-reformers*

Earl, 44, has been pursuing self improvement. He stopped using cocaine and smoking cigarettes. He took up carving. However, drinking and sleeping on the pavement are still taking their toll. His environment, and his friends can reinforce his habit but Earl is also finding new connections and landmarks, such as the pharmacy down the street where he is developing relationships.



People like Mitch:
The silenced philosophers

Mitch, 38, is a father and self-taught person struggling to come to terms with how a degenerative disease (mis) shapes family relationships, and dictates a marginalized social status. He is grieving the loss of his future plans but also the social role they would have afforded him. "There are homeless people who are talented and exceptional. They get lost in the fray..."

Edmonton identify as Indigenous. Of the thirty three stories from urban Indigenous people collected by InWithForward, nearly all recounted the loss of culture and collective memory. Respect featured as one of the top three desired outcomes.

This data is consistent with the literature on the long-term effects of colonization. Professor Mary Ellen Kelm writes that, "Colonization is a process that includes geographic incursion, socio-cultural dislocation, the establishment of external political control and economic dispossession, the provision of low-level social services and ultimately, the creation of ideological formulations around race and skin colour that position the colonizer at a higher evolution level than the colonized (Source)."

Gentrification uses a similar playbook: geographic incursion, dislocation, economic dispossession, and place-based stigma.

Reclaiming geographies, re-storying spaces, restoring local control, and rearticulating place-based narratives can be critical facets of personal and community healing. By exploring how unacknowledged (and often, misrepresented) histories further conflict and division, we might start to repair relationships and foster more inclusive belonging. What if we could bring people living on and off the streets together, across the usual divides, to not only acknowledge but make visible the myriad stories of place?

What's different about The Alchemist?

Reclaims place through the creation of maps, artefacts, etc.

The Alchemist applies storytelling techniques to the making of maps and physical artefacts that honour memories and speak to the personal meaning of place.

Supports personal and place-based storytelling

The Alchemist facilitates public expressions of personal, place-based stories that create windows of opportunity for increased belonging, shared understanding, and re-valuing of the inner city.

Focuses in relationship-building over time, not a program

The Alchemist brings creative Edmontonians, with and without lived experience of homelessness, together for artistic and storytelling collaboration. Relationships act as a site of learning, challenge, and artistic expression.

How might it work?

1

Recruiting

The Alchemist recruits a network of creatives who are wanting to collaborate across differences, and learn about artistic allyship.

The Alchemist works with developers and business associations to find sites for installations, and curates professional opportunities for collaboratives with lived experience.

2

Linking

The Alchemist recruits street-involved community members and matches them with creatives to achieve partnerships in which all parties believe they can grow artistically and deepen their relational capacity.

3

Supporting and Coaching

The Alchemist provides tools and resources to support artistic partnerships and relational development; coordinates field trips and other experiential learning opportunities; and helps navigate bureaucratic approval processes.

What's the business case?

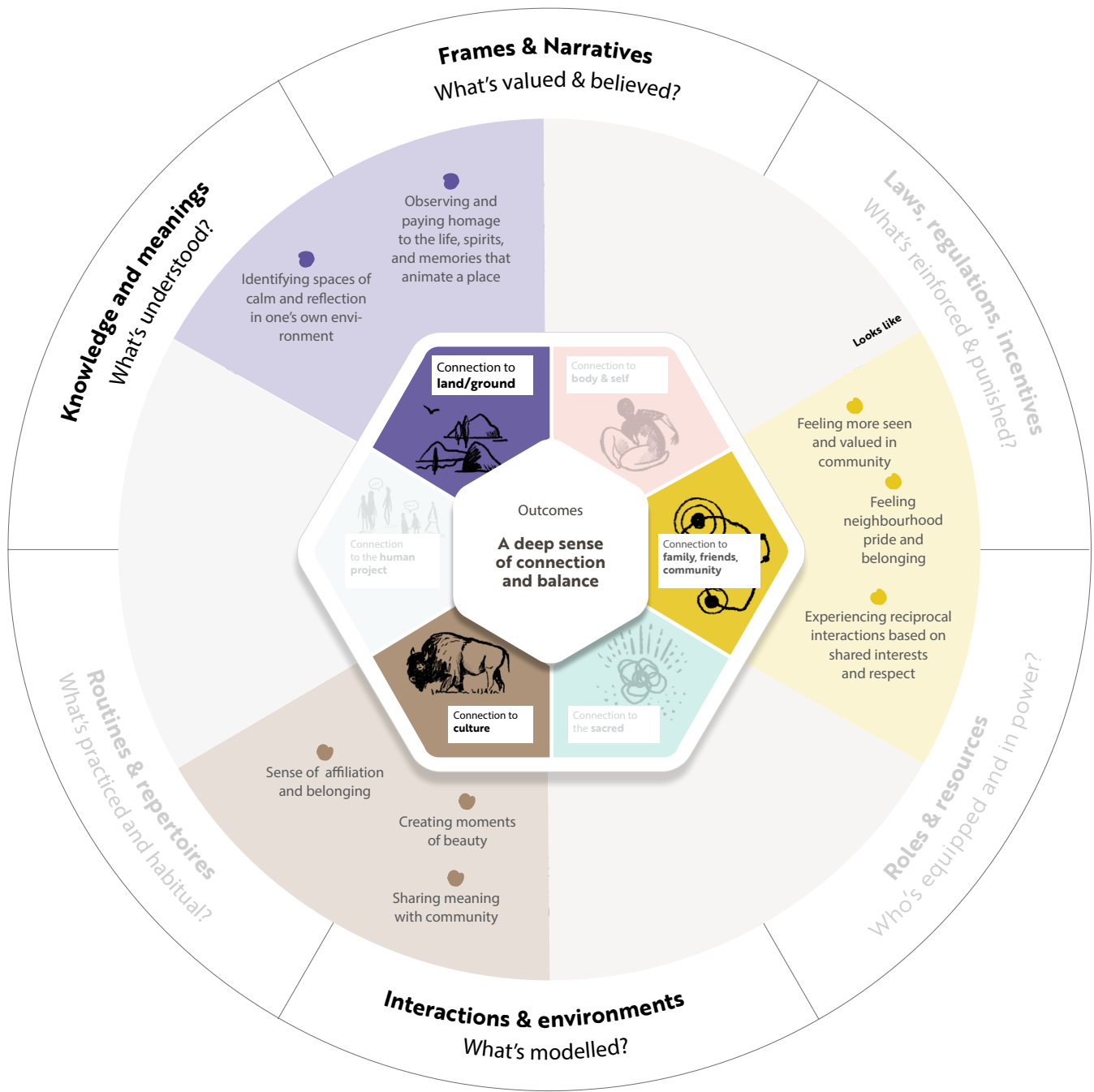
How The Alchemist interrupts cyclical crisis and might prevent downstream effects

Placemaking is a "collaborative process by which we can shape our public realm in order to maximize shared value." Both an outcome and a process, it "facilitates creative patterns of use, paying particular attention to the physical, cultural, and social identities that define a place and support its ongoing evolution (source: Project for Public Spaces)." The Alchemist is a decolonizing approach to placemaking that recognizes the value that comes from honouring the memories of people and place, reflecting the beauty and strength in a neighbourhood that is also the site of collective trauma and loss.

How The Alchemist draws on and amplifies community resources

Taps into latent artistic talents of people with lived experience of homelessness while leveraging Edmonton's artistic community to commemorate and engage citizens in the City's present and history from under-represented view points.

What’s the change?



The Alchemist sets out to...

Advance these outcomes ...

That looks like people ...

Using these cultural change levers

Drawing on these behaviour change mechanisms

Connection to friends, family community
Connection to land
Connection to culture

Experiencing reciprocal interactions based on shared interests and respect
Feeling more seen and valued in community
Feeling neighbourhood pride and belonging
Observing and paying homage to the life, spirits, and memories that animate a place
Identifying spaces of calm and reflection in one's own environment
Sense of affiliation and belonging
Creating moments of beauty
Sharing meaning with community

Frames & Narratives: challenging colonial logics and narratives by making visible different ways of knowing, alternative value sets, and agendas for social change.
Environment & Interactions: disrupting Edmontonians’ colonial, and class-based relationships to the inner city with surprising, emotive, and thought-provoking installations that transform interactions in space.
Knowledge & meanings: expanding what’s understood and commemorated to include place-based teachings, memories, and the subjective

Contributing and reciprocating: creative contributions of people with lived experience are awarded space and value.
Bridging relationships: relationships with practicing artists encourage people with lived experience of homelessness and latent creative talents to excavate that side of themselves. Practicing artists deepen their artistic and empathetic practice together.
Story editing: interactions in partnerships use narrative therapeutic technique to draw out stories of strength and love.

What inspirations does this draw on?

The Alchemist draws inspiration from a range of artistic and storytelling responses to trauma, loss, and transition -- from Burundi’s use of theatre to heal from genocide, to Mixed Methods Storytelling as a way to engage and connect with refugee women. Here’s some of what has influenced the thinking:

Musicians

SEGD’s The Rwanda Healing Project

What is it? A practice, program, process, platform, product, tool, space, event, rule, policy, etc.	Two-year, multi-dimensional art project that expands the boundaries of art and design in the environment as a vehicle for social change. Lily Yeh is a center figure of The Rwanda Healing Project, and plays the role of the connector. Her approach combines practice.
How does it kinda sorta work? Think key roles, props, scripts, settings	Programs: Drawing and mural painting workshops, focused on remembering the past and imagining the future, enabling them to subsequently acquire home improvement skills for their own communities. Roles: Participants become planners themselves, to learn practical skills of organizing, documenting, implementing. Engaging 100 female-headed families to lead. There is a traveling exhibition of the artwork to showcase the project and BAs launched a pen-pal program to connect and write to art creators. Props: Murals, art materials Scripts: Reminisce > Imagine > Learn > Document learnings > Learn from people who learn from you.
What’s most different? What are its defining features?	Describes itself as a two-pronged project. Simultaneous work streams - one is the development of a memorial. The other of a community village that is home to refugees. One looks at the past, the other looks at the future.
Where can I learn more?	Watch the film The Barefoot Artist

Theatre & Justice in Burundi: Si Ayo Guhora (We Cannot Be Quiet) and Habuze Iki (This That Has Lacked)



What is it and how does it kinda sorta work? Think key roles, props, scripts, settings	Theatre reconciliation that: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Uses an improvisational, community-based, elicitive methodology; uses participants’ personal experiences as a basis for the performanceWorks with child soldiers, folks in prison, refugees, youth, adultsSupports journey to reconciliation - questions the spectators responsibility in the violenceCreates and artistic display (musical theatre) to share the process with the community
What’s most different? What are its defining features?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Participatory aspectBoth process and outcome are important
What are the intended outcomes?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Participation in a therapeutic healing processSupport creative process in areas where violence and war have been destructiveGo beyond narrative and generate community conversationsRedefining and reclaiming symbols/narratives
Where can I learn more?	https://www.theatreconciliation.org/?fbclid=IwAR2iaZ3wxeVO6TIFKNF4_77YfDxktCtly4lTRH_dJNrOpdyVua7dgzXMn4M

Meditative Story



What is it? A practice, program, process, platform, product, tool, space, event, rule, policy, etc.	A podcast that combines the emotional pull of first-person storytelling with the immediate, science-backed benefits of a mindfulness practice.
How does it kinda sorta work? Think key roles, props, scripts, settings	Every week, you’ll receive a new Meditative Story from a storyteller who will transport you to a time and place where everything changed for them — a story you might find yourself relating to deeply. As the story unfolds, mindfulness guide Rohan will offer gentle prompts designed to calm your mind and help you connect with your own observations, empowering you to feel restored and refreshed at any moment of the day.
What’s most different? What are its defining features?	Storytelling that highlights the meditator’s mind at work, that is a mix of meditation, and sensory story. It gets at the application of mindfulness in an experiential way.
What are the intended outcomes?	Mindfulness in the context of disruption, change, and constant distraction.
Who is it for?	Unspecified, but based on the partners and sponsors involved, probably fast-paced, high-earning, digitally immersed people looking to actively enhance their wellbeing...but the first episode is about leaving prison.
Where can I learn more?	http://podcast.meditativestory.com/p/3