

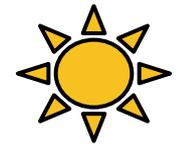
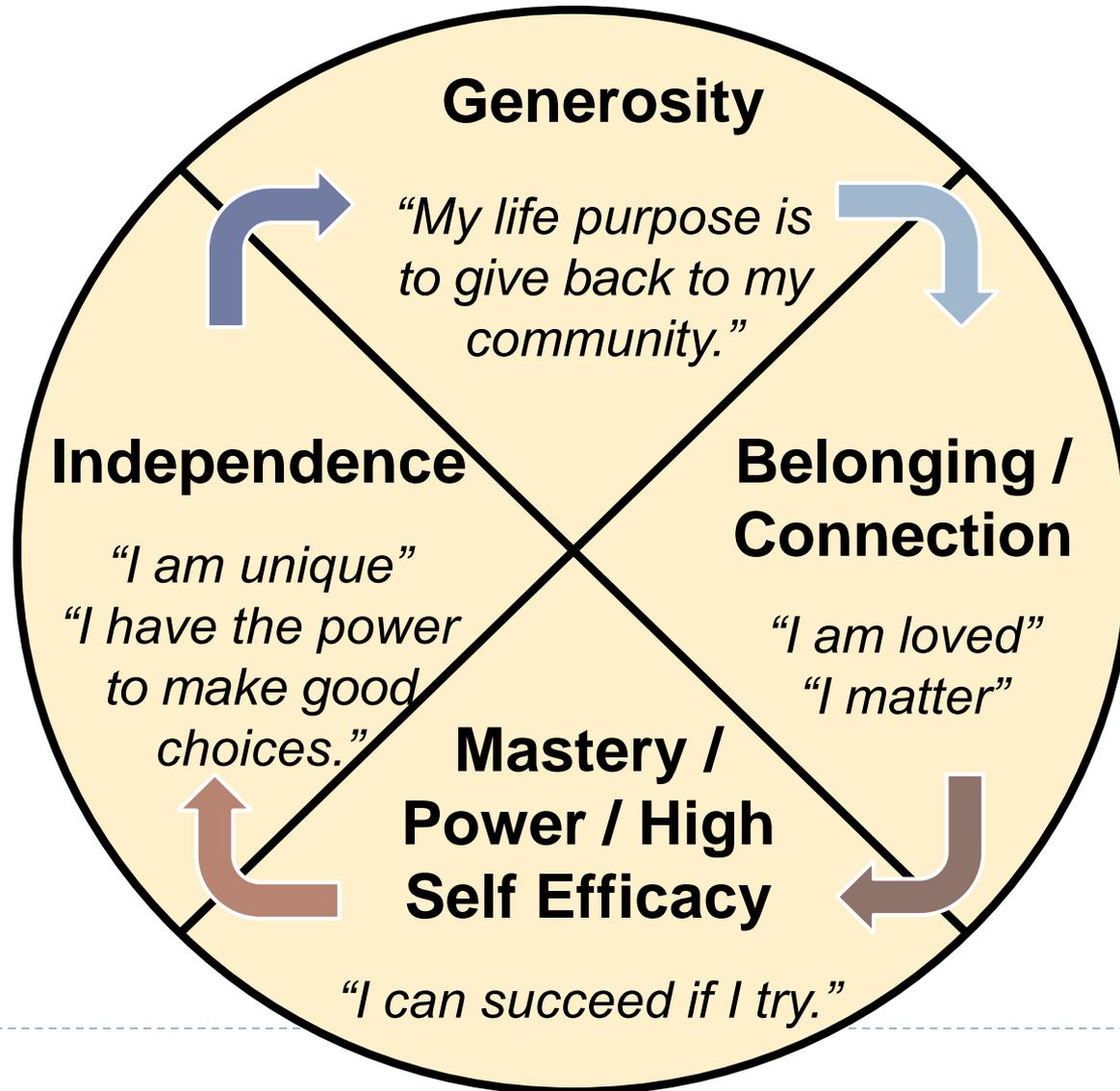
Taking Power Away & “Giving” Power Back:

Understanding & Facilitating Empowerment in First Nations

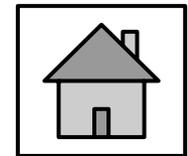
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Cape Breton University

June 16th 2011

Brokenleg's "Circle of Courage" depicts Collective Well-Being



Start in the East

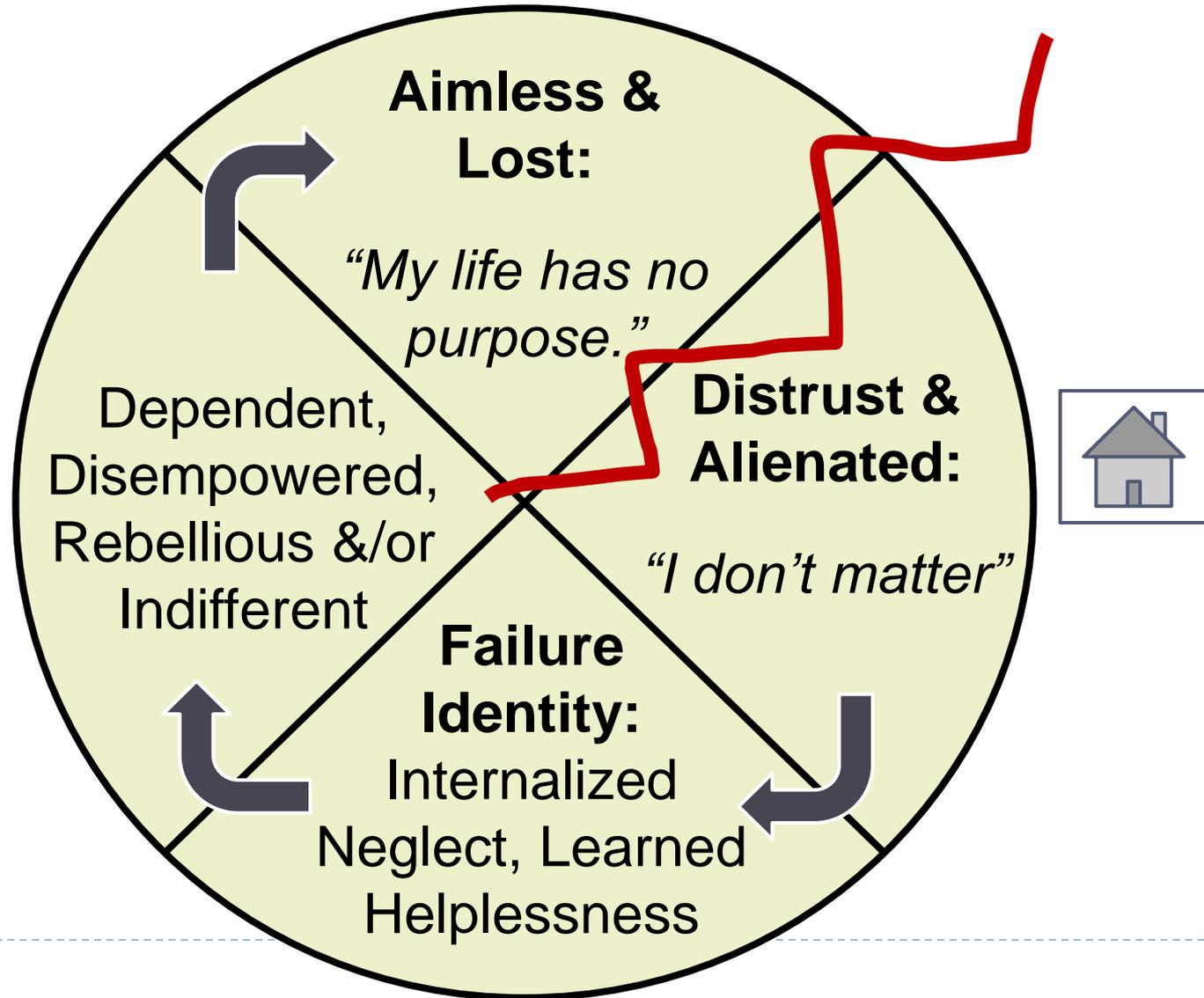


Taking Power Away: **Brief History of First Nations Oppression**

- ▶ ***Canadian Government's Forced Assimilation Policies (attempted cultural genocide):***
 - ▶ **1867 Indian Act:** “status” for only some → turns people against one another
 - ▶ **Laws** prohibiting language, traditions, spirituality
 - ▶ **Forced Relocation**
 - ▶ **“Imposed Democracy”** (to undermine leadership)
 - ▶ **Residential Schools:** “*Kill the Indian to save the child*” (1920s – 1960s)
 - ▶ **The “Sixties Scoop”** (1960-1980s)
 - ▶ Chronic underfunding
-



A Broken Circle of Intergenerational Trauma:



“Giving” Power Back: Facilitating Empowerment

▶ ****Note:**

- ▶ *Empowerment cannot be forced / “imposed”*
- ▶ *Takes time to heal from centuries of oppression; issues are immensely complex*

▶ **1. Build Trust: Researchers as advocates & allies**

- ▶ Must create ‘safe space’ + minimize power differences

▶ **2. Operate according to highest FN Ethics Protocols**

- ▶ → expectations of respectful protocols, control, rights...
- ▶ **Pre-consultation Phase:** develop research procedures in on-going collaboration → tailor to best meet comm. needs
- ▶ **End Products:** FN control what gets published & where



Facilitating Empowerment cont'd...

- ▶ **3. Give all community members the tools to participate:**
 - ▶ Inclusive language + FN terms / concepts / models
 - ▶ Inform about complex issues in a respectful manner
 - ▶ Giving Encouragement (no right or wrong; local expertise)

- ▶ **4. Foster Optimism & Hope:**
 - ▶ Emphasize FN strengths & resilience in research methods
 - ▶ E.g., *“How did Anishinabek ways of raising children persist in spite of disruptions from the White Man?”*
 - ▶ End on a positive note: Suggested Solutions & Visions for an ideal future

