

Aboriginal Women's Health Collaboration in Action

PHCRED Statewide Collaboration

Adelaide, Thursday 21 September 2006

Rose Daniel – Aboriginal community woman

Janet Kelly - PhD Candidate, Flinders University

SARNet bursary recipients



Co-authors & co-researchers

Aboriginal women

- Rose Daniel
- Lily Lebois
- Jo Gurney

Elders in Reference Group

Auntie Veronica Brodie
Auntie Josie Agius
Auntie Gloria Sparrow

Aboriginal mentors

- Ros Pierce
- Kim O Donnell

**We wish to acknowledge
the Aboriginal people
upon whose land we are
visiting and talking**



This presentation



Focus - process rather than results



Research/evaluation goal - to find effective ways of working together to improve Aboriginal women's health and well-being (model of practice)

Location - suburban Adelaide community health



How this research began

continuation of previous research

by invitation

What about
the young
women?

Elders

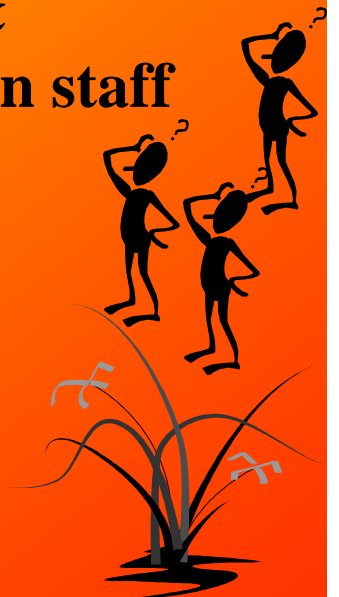
community consultation

How can our
services best meet
Aboriginal
women's needs?

**Health &
Education staff**

Its not
working for
us

**Aboriginal
women's group**



Who is involved in this research/evaluation

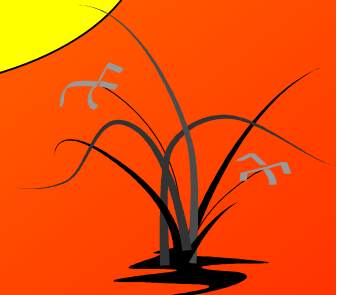
Aboriginal Reference Group
Elders and health professionals

Aboriginal
women

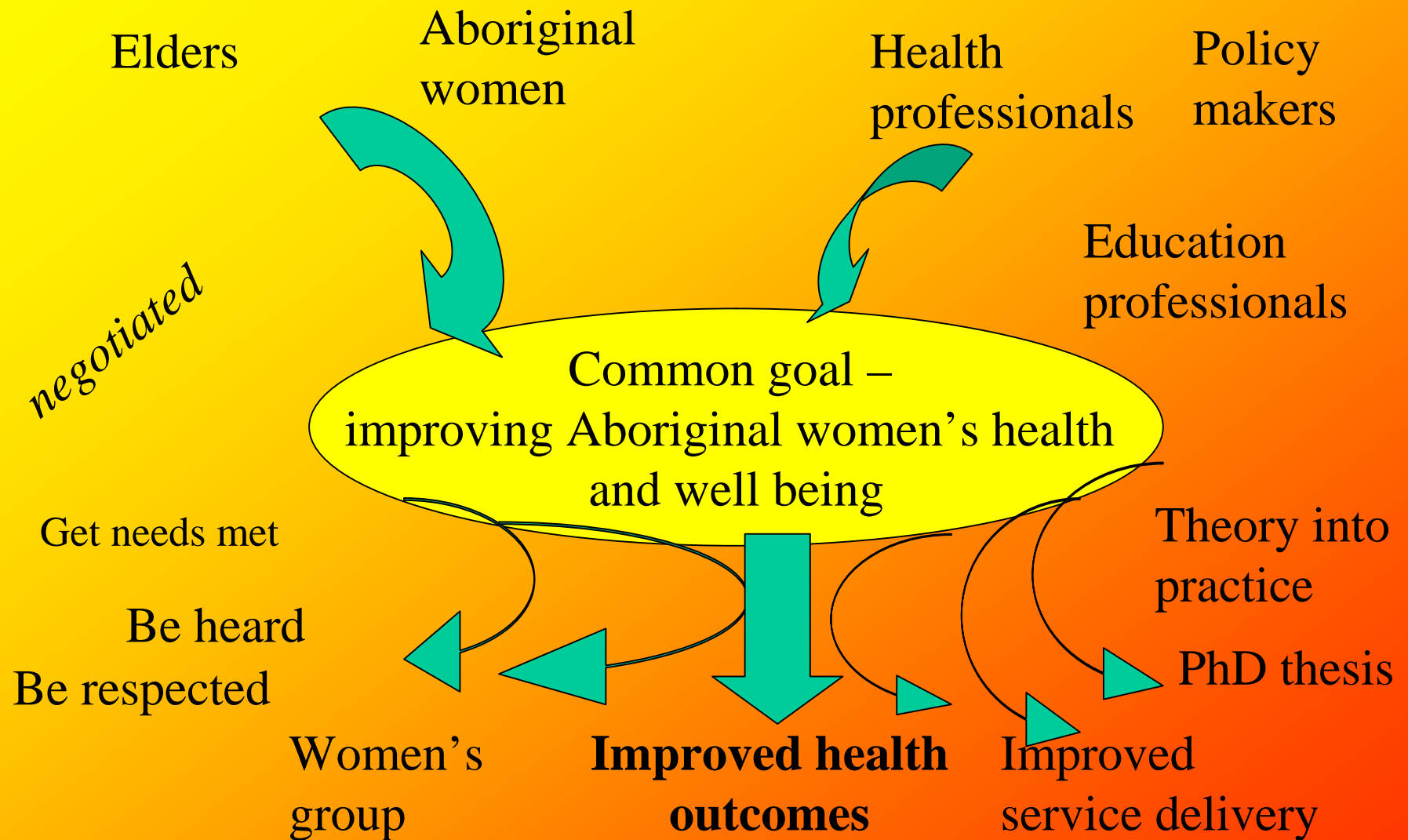


Janet

Health &
education
services



Goals & strategies – individual and collective



Objectives



- Support Aboriginal women to influence, inform, co-plan and co-evaluate their own health care

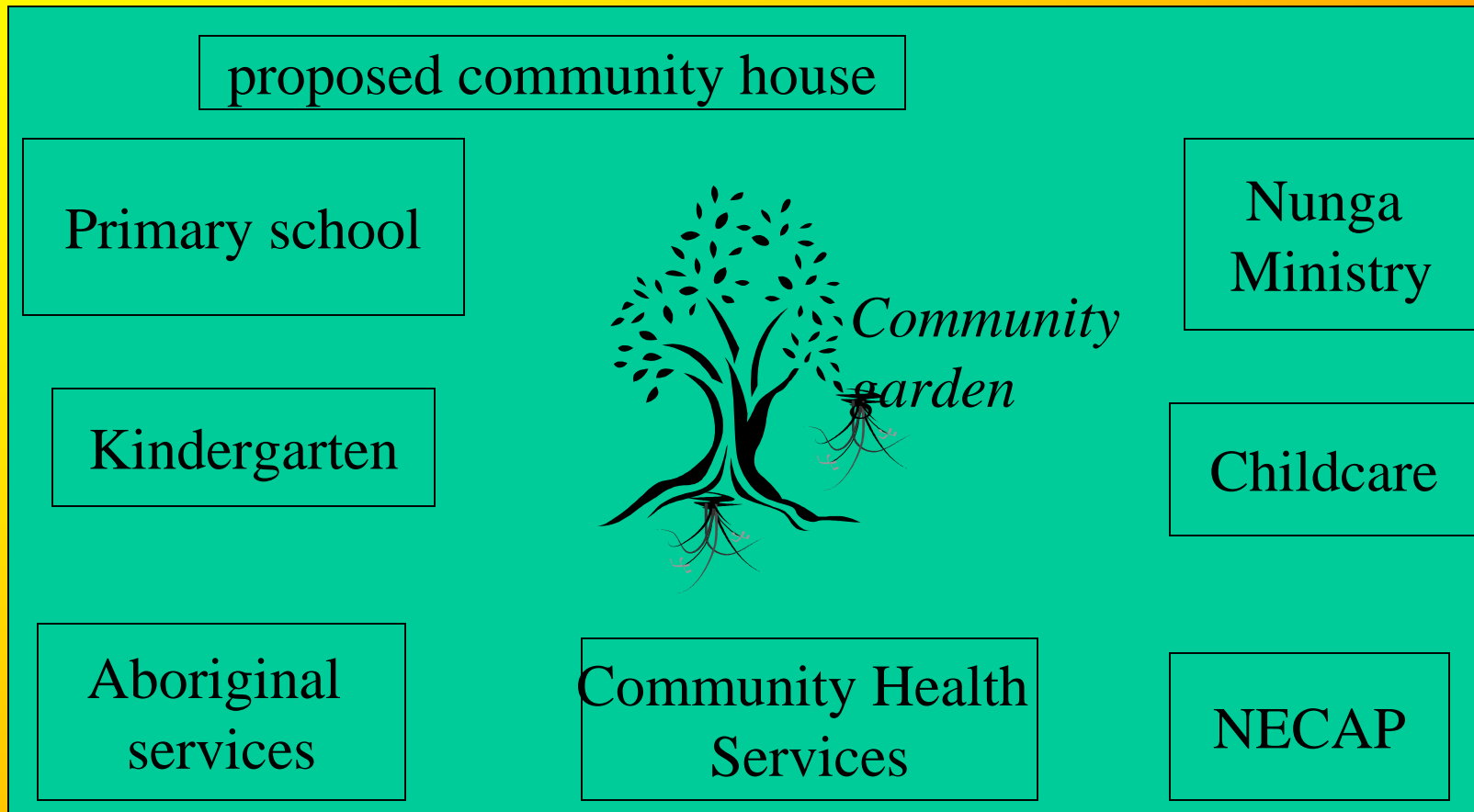
- Provide key stakeholders with opportunities to work collaboratively toward listening to, raising, discussing and responding to Aboriginal women's health needs



- Encourage culturally safe and respectful ways of working together



The location of research



Aboriginal terms

'Sis, the community has had enough of people coming in and doing surveys and research, and then nothing happens and they never hear of it again. I think you'd better work with them and make sure that something actually happens'

Ros Pierce & Aboriginal Reference Group



Challenges to effective Aboriginal women's health

Society

- Past and current colonising practices
- Negative health experiences
- Daily acts of racism & discrimination

Health services

- Short term funding
- High turn over of staff
- Organisational changes
- Skills shortage
- Difficulty putting theory into practice
- i.e. community participation
primary health care
access and equity





Aboriginal health research ethics

- Reciprocity 
- Respect 
- Equality 
- Survival and Protection
- Responsibility
- Spirit and integrity

Values and Ethics: Guidelines for Ethical Conduct in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Research (NHMRC, 2003)



Participatory Action Research

Grassroots
collaboration

Linking head, heart and hand

Links to
Primary
Health
Care

Look 

Sustainable

Link theory and
practice



Act



Think

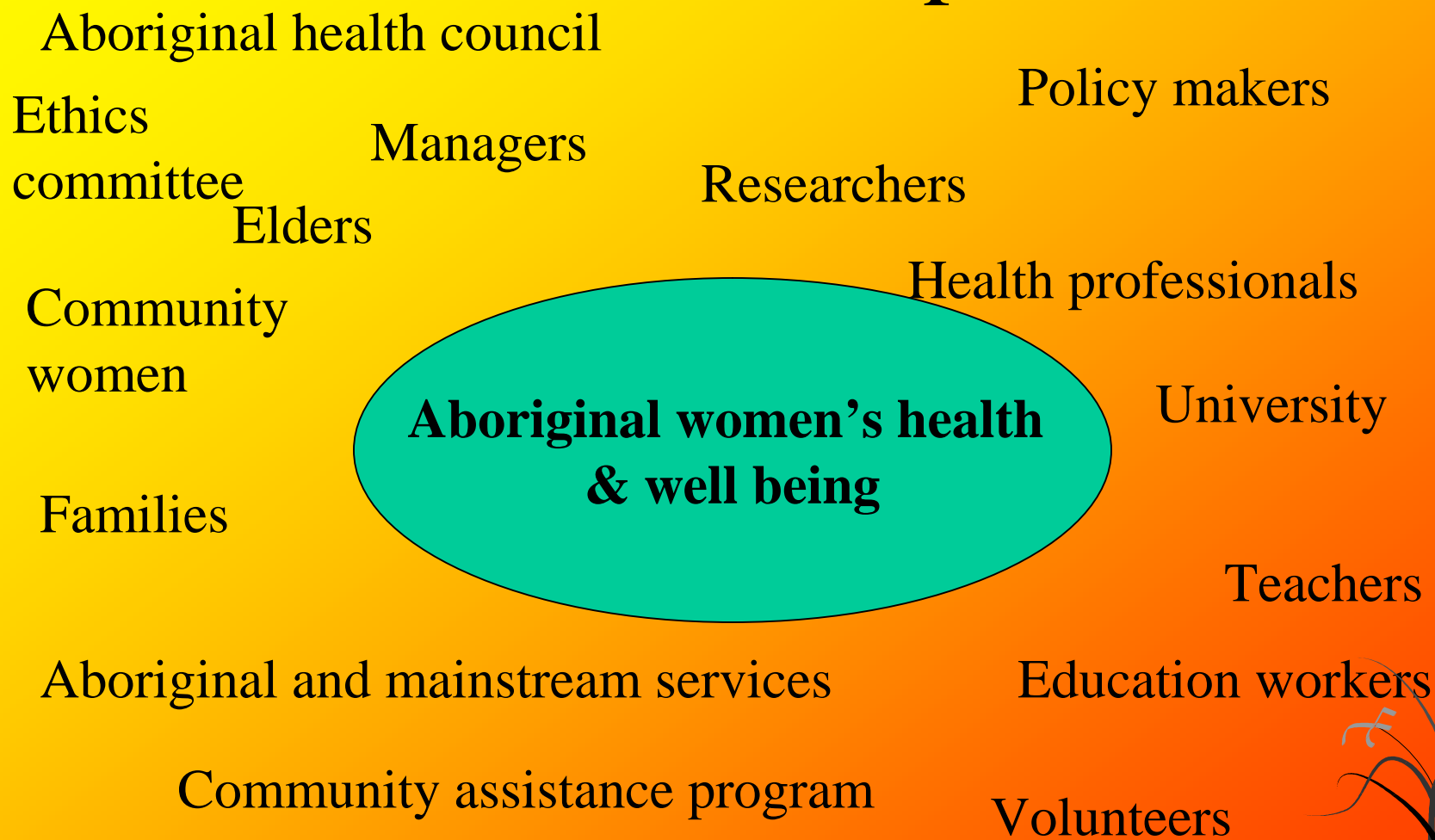


Organisation
& policy
considerations

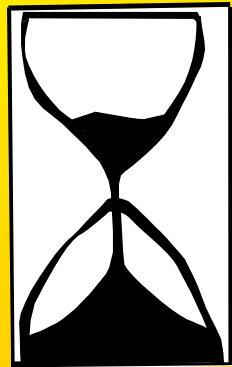
(Stringer 1999)

Capacity building

Include all of the stakeholders on and off campus



Building collaborative and effective relationships



+



=



Time + Respect = Trust

Time



Time



recognising different peoples relationships to time
& the finding time to work in respectful ways



Timing

waiting until the timing is right, but also
responding when community and co-researchers are
ready for interaction and action





Respect

- Sitting and listening respectfully (Dadirri)
- Recognising different cultures, opinions, knowledge & ways of knowing.
- Two-way learning
- Connecting with head and heart (Elders)
- Strengths based
- Working with Health & Education services – listen to them, try to work in with what they are doing



Trust

- Must be earned and re earned
- Building & nurturing trust relationships with co researchers, community and key stakeholders
- Building bridges
- Insider/outsider
- Nurse/researcher



Having a personal and collective vision

- Pragmatism but also optimism
- Working with what you have, but always believing that there can be more.
- Collaborative work $1 + 1 = 3$
- If at first you don't succeed, try, try again (and double check if you are on the right track)
- Acknowledge the issues and barriers, but always work with people's strengths



What we have learnt includes the importance of

- negotiation
- power differences
- the journey Vs outcomes - walk the talk
- flexibility
- location
- shared goals
- collaboration
- working together





Practical ways forward

‘keeping the fire in the belly’
‘moving from survival to living’

- Recognising & celebrating resilience
- Believing in people
- Celebrating in the little successes
- Supporting people as they move from survival to ‘living’
- To have a level playing field
- Believing in the vision

Keep questioning - who's knowledge is valued?



Aboriginal
women's ways
of knowing



Western
medical
knowledge



How can we value both?





Our journey continues...

As we continue to seek ways of working together in culturally safe and respectful ways to improve Aboriginal women's health and well being in urban as well as rural and remote areas

Often whitefella services do something once, and think it is done...



...but its not a one off, it is an ongoing journey.