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Transnational Children on the Move

Adopting Nature-Based and Culturally-Responsive Social Work Interventions

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I would like to acknowledge the traditional territories of the people of the Treaty 7 region in Southern Alberta, which includes the Blackfoot Confederacy (comprising the Siksika, Piikani, and Kainai First Nations), as well as the Tsuut'ina First Nation, and the Stoney Nakoda (including the Chiniki, Bearspaw, and Wesley First Nations). The City of Calgary is also home to Métis Nation of Alberta, Region III.



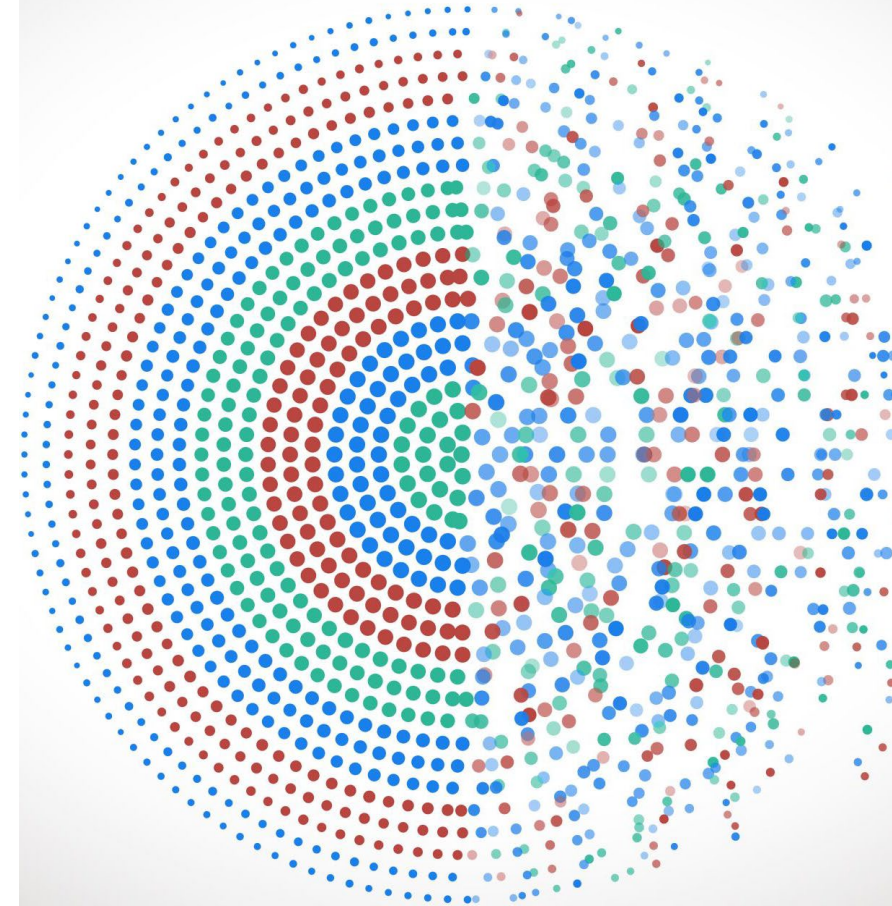


Nature-based Interventions

- ...programs or activities where people engage with natural environments aiming to improve their wellbeing
- Engagement in nature is key in many people's lives;
- Increased recognition in health and wellbeing benefits;
- Shift in thinking of risks – diseases, climate change vulnerabilities to benefits;
- Green connection, care and protection – eco-therapy
- Nature is experienced subjectively –with meaning and interpretation being contextually shaped...personal yet political

Transnational Migration and Children

- 642,000+ migrant or displaced children currently live in South Africa (UNICEF)
- South Africa has the largest child migrant population in Africa
- Most of the children are from the SADC region.
- Motivations for migration vary
- Increased vulnerabilities (UN, 2020) vs the protection-migration nexus
- Tackling migrant children's issues is essential to achieving the goals set in the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, the Global Compact on Refugees and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).





Rationale (Boomfield, 2023; Cleary et al., 2022; Sommerfeld & Danto, 2019; Tambyah et al., 2022)

- Psychosocial challenges contribute to burden of disease
- Fragmentation and limited interventions leading to inconsistencies with children's needs
- We know causes and consequences but not support measures
- Nature-based interventions are culturally-appropriate approaches
- Western approaches mostly pathologizing/bio-medical rather than recognition of contextualized, natural, and humanistic supports
- Active participants and responsibility of healing journeys
- Importance to find fit between needs and nature of support required
- Mobilization of community resources to augment professional responses

Research Question/s

- *What types of nature-based interventions can be used to engage with children on the move, from a culturally-responsive lens?*
- *What are the ways in which nature-based interventions support the development and wellbeing of children on the move?*





Methodology

- Literature review
- Key words used “nature-based interventions”, “child migration”, “children on the move AND interventions”, “child migrants AND Social work”
- Grey literature search
- Selection criteria: journal articles and reports, not older than 15 years and peer-reviewed. This also included reports by organisations e.g., UNICEF
- This process is ongoing...

Photo: Isuaneye

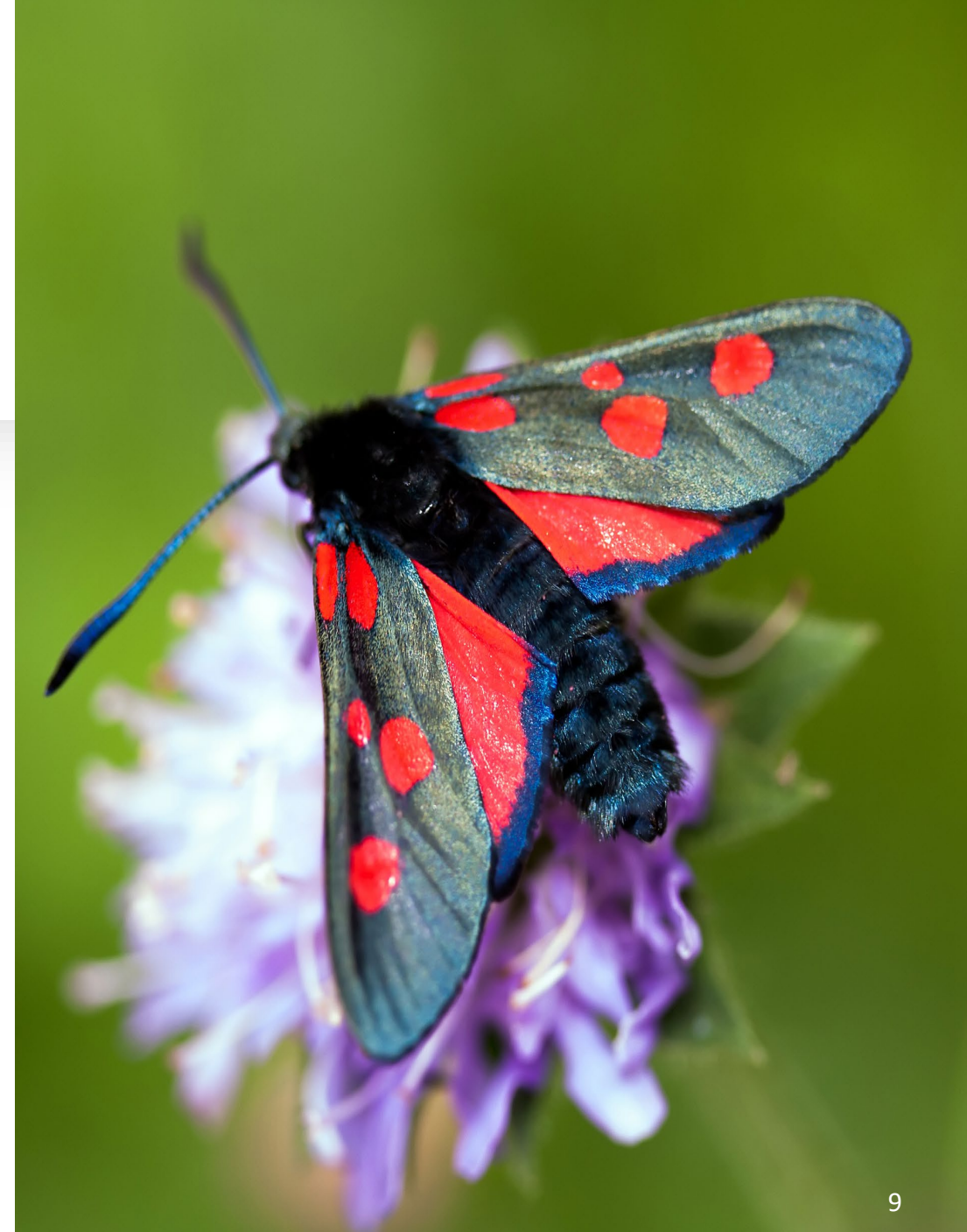
Application

- Supportive traditional practices surrounding socialization incorporated elements of nature
- Qualities of nature through the 5 sense –activate emotional healing to process thoughts and emotions
- Deep connection and significant meaning that the land holds for African people – children by extension
- Spiritual and ancestral ties to the land are strengthened, building a sense of identity, purpose, belonging and improving confidence/empowerment
- Repair trauma caused by the forced transnational movement through comfort, compassion and gratitude...relaxing, refreshing, therapeutic (Rest, Recover, Reset)
- Barriers- motivation, anxiety, technology, geographic accessibility, safety & risks (suicide), stigma, red tape

Closing Thoughts...

- Further exploration on the various types of nature-based interventions and identify effectiveness and efficiency
- Consideration of innovative, alternative and culturally-grounding interventions
- How does one take a client/service user from a clinical setting to a non-clinical social setting for intervention?

Photo: Marta Jonina





Nature Connection

(Photo credit: Galyna Andrushko)