

DECOLONISING THE CURRICULUM; DECOLONISING OURSELVES. EXPERIENCES OF TEACHING SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS

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Introductions & Acknowledgements

- Who we are
- Acknowledgements to:
 - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, colleagues and teachers
 - This work is predominantly performed on Whadjuk Noongar land in WA
 - Respects to Elders past, present and to come
 - Respects to the traditional peoples of this place



Non-Indigenous teachers teaching non-Indigenous students about working with Indigenous people – some problematics

- I recall my first year at university. It was in Anthropology and the lecture was on the Western Australian Aborigines Act 1905 (WA). An Aboriginal girl sat close by. I was shocked to hear, for the first time, about this policy and its impact upon Aboriginal people – my sister and family. The Aboriginal girl sitting next to me was hearing this for the first time too. The shock. The disbelief. The grief. The silences.
- “We don’t need to know about working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples because we won’t be working with them”
- “Australia is a multicultural society. Why focus only on Aboriginal peoples?”
- “Aboriginal people get stuff for nothing and that’s not fair”
- “I’m not Aboriginal so I can’t work with Aboriginal people”

Our Purpose: we don't presume to teach non-Indigenous students about Indigenous people; instead we tell them how we have learned to work with Indigenous peoples. This presentation is a synthesis of that learning. We have several aims:

- To demonstrate the framework we use for our practice, which includes our educational practice
- To demonstrate the uses of practice frameworks to encourage students to develop their own
- To offer some thoughts on Ally work for further discussion

THIS IS NOT A ‘BLOODY BLACK’ ISSUE

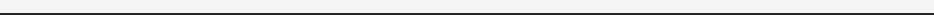
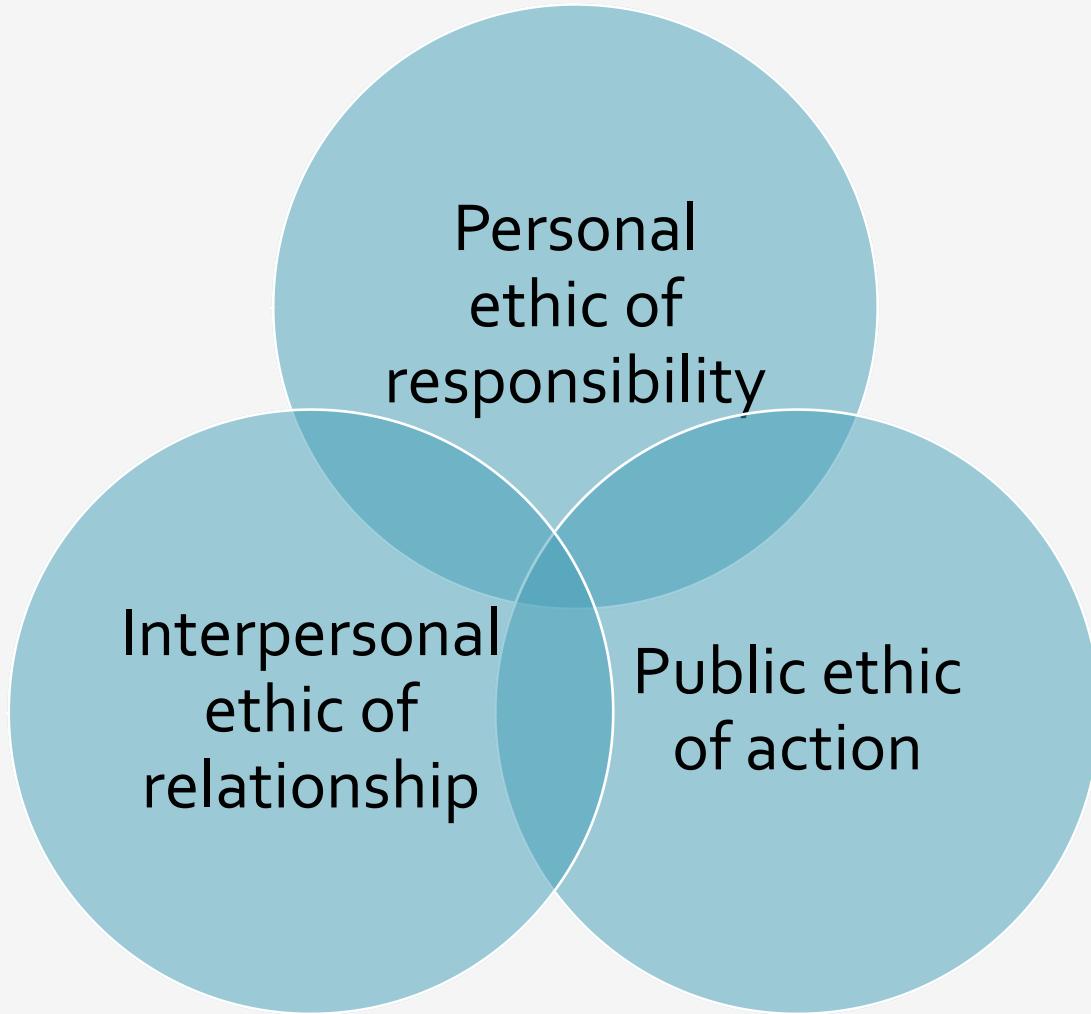
Decolonising practices in and outside the classroom

Some definitions/explanations

- **Becoming/being an Ally** – Canadian Anne Bishop
- **Decolonising solidarity** – Australian Clare Land
- **Courageous conversations about race** – African American Glenn Singleton



Ethical practices for Ally work



Responsible relating

Acknowledging own white privilege

'Keeping the spotlight on race'

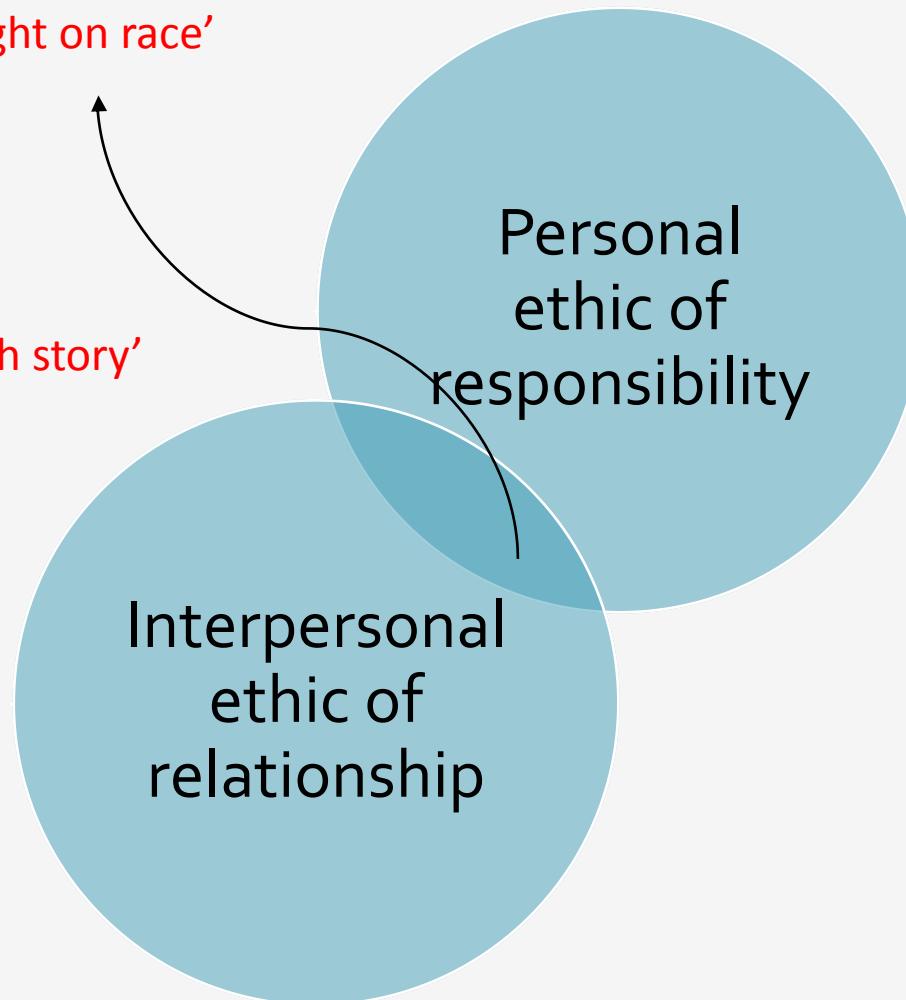
Asking honestly

Listening quietly

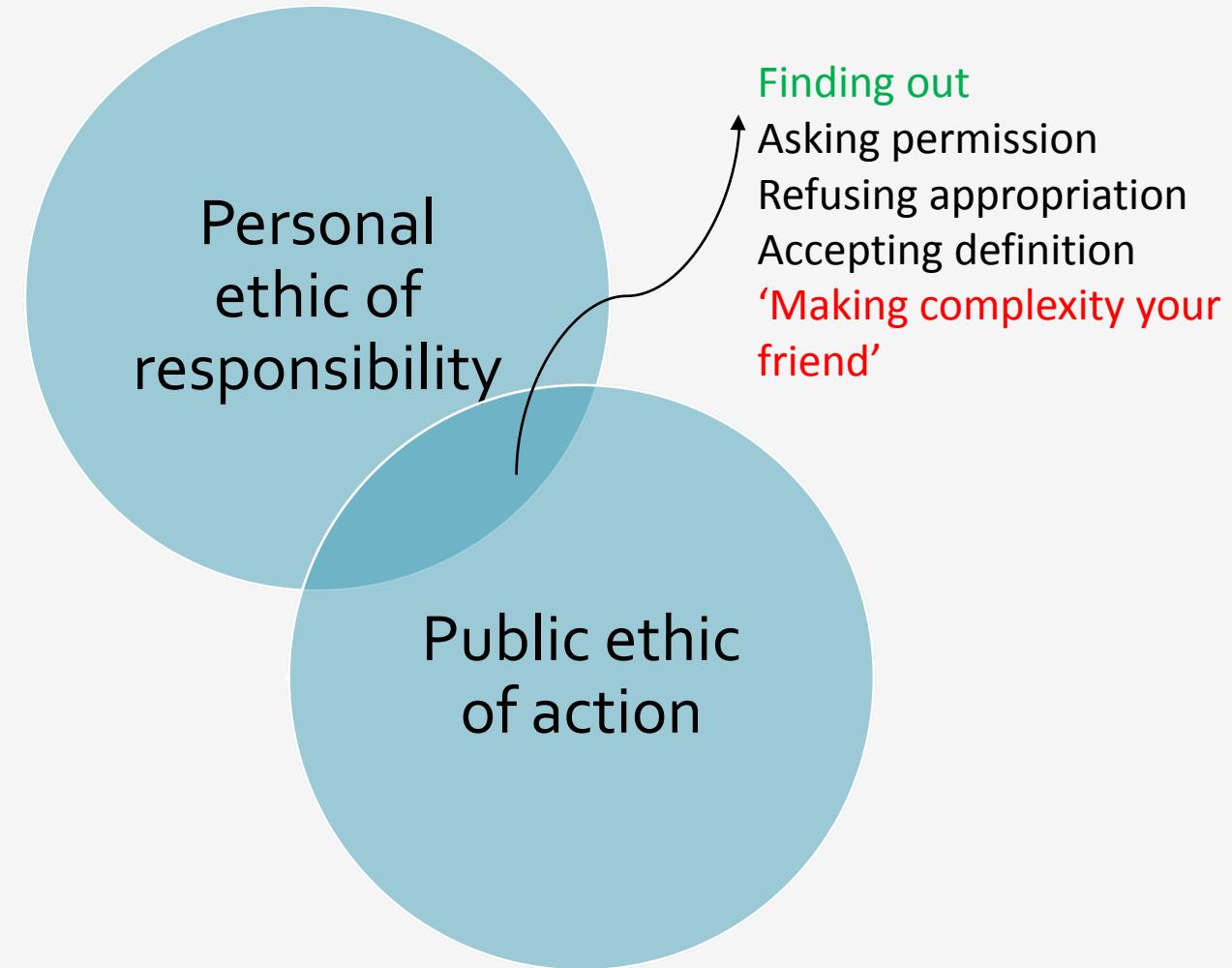
Treading softly

Taking time

'Connecting through story'



Acting responsibly



Acknowledgement: **Singleton, Bishop**

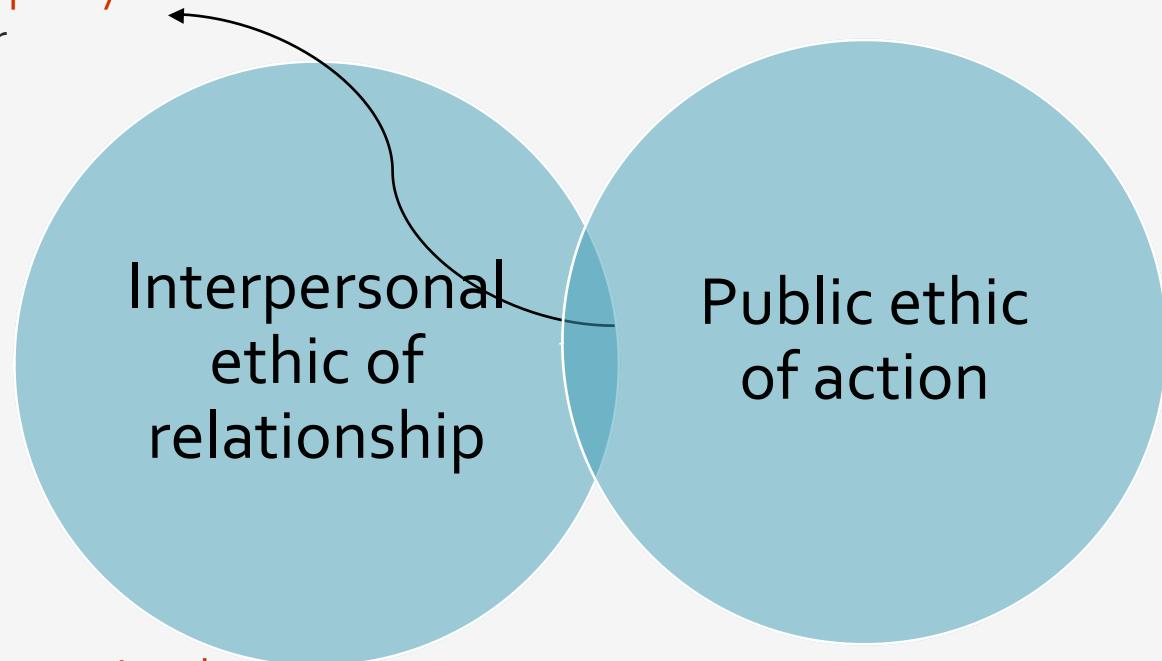
Acting with

'Acting politically with self-understanding'

'Reconstructing non-Aboriginal
people's interests: a moral and
political framework'

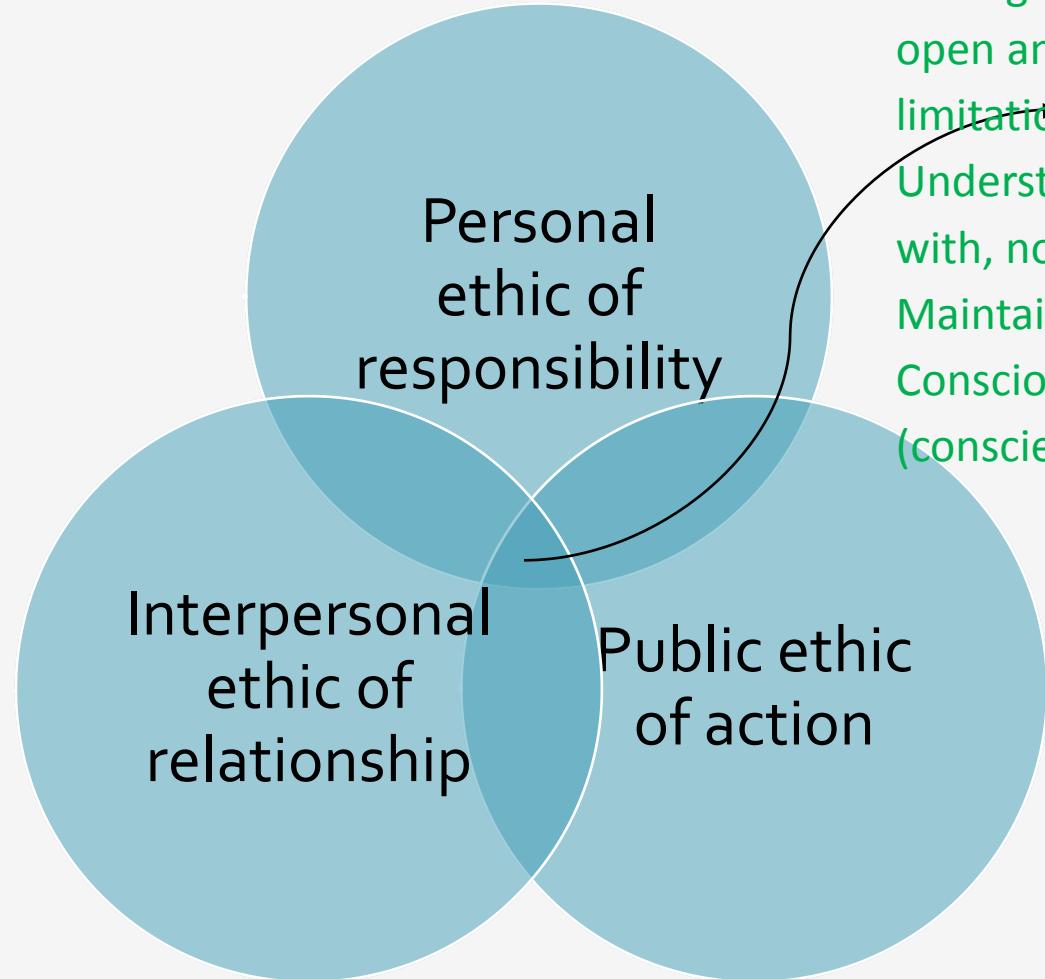
'Confronting complicity'

Walking together



- Acknowledgement: Land

Being an Ally



Having a strong sense of self, being honest, open and without a lack of shame for own limitations

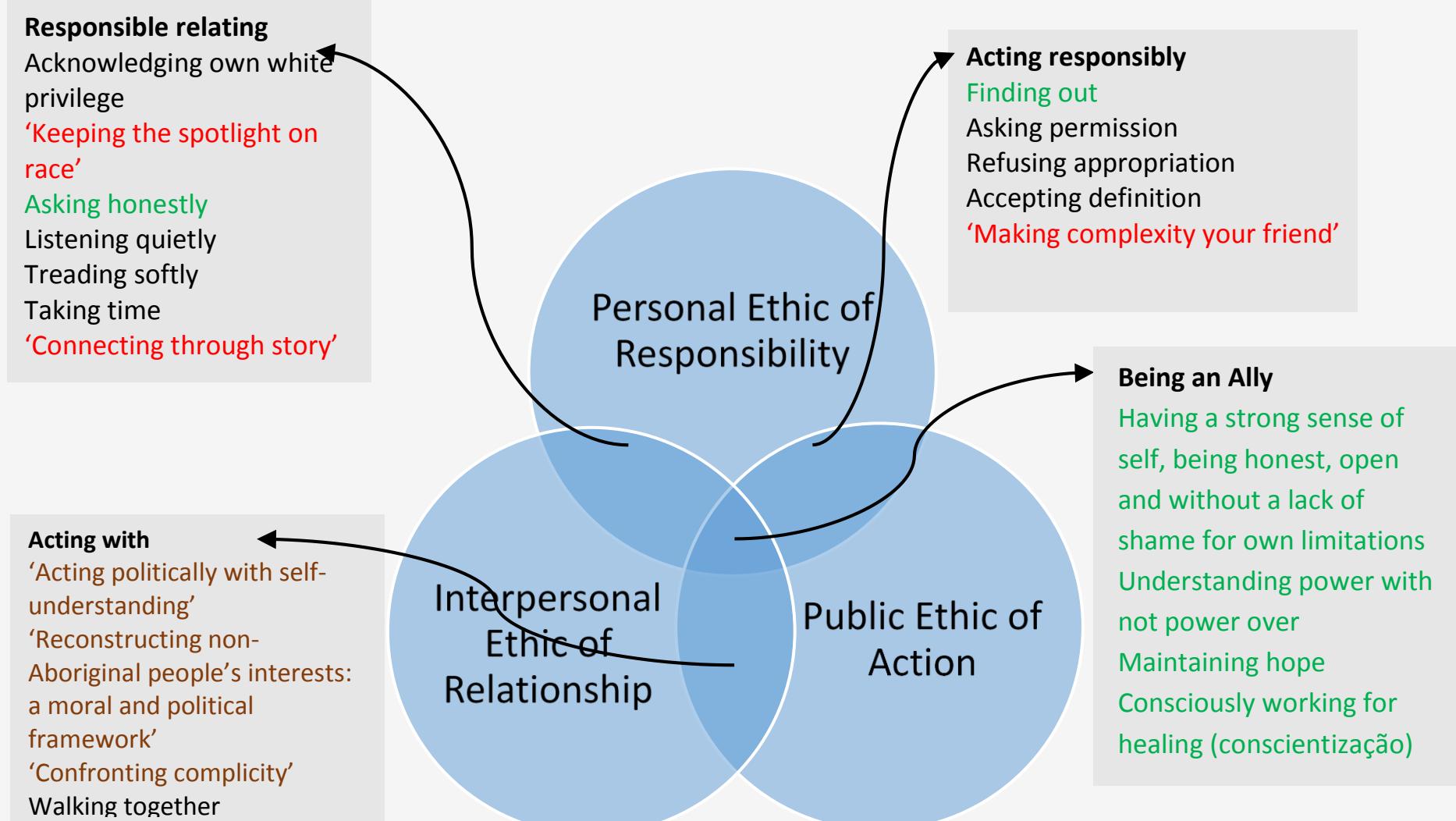
Understanding and working with power with, not power over

Maintaining hope

Consciously working for healing
(conscientização)

Acknowledgement: Bishop

A framework for Ally work



With gratitude to **Land**, **Singleton** and **Bishop**

Being an Ally is to realise ...

- the imperative of critical self-awareness and that without a clear articulation of our own values, beliefs, experiences and biases we will not be able to join with others as supporters in the struggles;
- the power of the relational self with others and that these relationships are characterised by honesty, humility, openness and, above all, with no expectations that these relational offerings will be accepted or welcomed;
- this is a joint struggle, but that in our engagement we are clear that it is not the equivalent to 'helping'. Allies are not 'helpers' or wanting to 'do good'; rather they are political actors who are also working to reconstruct their own interests which will lead to a differently positioned set of social relationships in which they are partners in designing a new landscape of interactions;
- that it is founded on an ethics of practice encompassing both self-rule and a process of self-formation, albeit acknowledging the value of codified and generalised ethics standards; and
- the journey towards being an Ally never ceases; there is no fixed end point.



*THANK YOU
ANY QUESTIONS?*

