Examining the contributors and responses to uncertainty, ambiguity and overload in the arena of Indigenous mental health through accounts of role conflict and liminality

Darren Garvey
PhD Candidate
School of Psychology and Speech Pathology
CURTIN UNIVERSITY

http://bmw.curtin.edu.au
Negotiating the ‘contested arena’ of Indigenous mental health: A causal layered analysis of the arena and the responses to it of clients, professionals and students.
Role ambiguity

• …the generally accepted concept is that role ambiguity occurs when individuals lack a clear definition of their role expectations, and the requirements/methods to complete their job tasks (Rizzo, House, & Lirtzman, 1970).

Role overload

• Role overload exists when role expectations are greater than the individual's abilities and motivation to perform a task (Schaubroeck, et al., 1989; Spector & Jex, 1998; Conley & Woosley, 2000).
uncertainty, ambiguity and overload in the arena of Indigenous mental health

“Nothing travels faster than the speed of light with the possible exception of bad news, which obeys its own special laws.”

Adams, 1992
uncertainty, ambiguity and overload in the arena of Indigenous mental health

**Role conflict**

Results from two or more sets of incompatible demands involving work-related issues (Kahn et al., 1964; Katz and Kahn, 1978).

**Liminality**

Refers to that temporary state during a rite of passage when the participant lacks social status or rank, is required to follow specified forms of conduct, and is expected to show obedience and humility.
uncertainty, ambiguity and overload in the arena of Indigenous mental health

Table 1: Relationship between threshold concepts and liminal states
uncertainty, ambiguity and overload in the arena of Indigenous mental health

- Discrepancy between a person’s past and current statuses
- Conflict between a person’s aspirations and his/her real self
- Simultaneous occupancy of conflicting structural positions
- Different definitions of status between interacting individuals
- Different definitions of status between groups to which a person belongs or with which she belongs

Status inconsistency
How to find us:

http://bmw.curtin.edu.au

http://www.facebook.com/pages/Building-Mental-Wealth/152130671468063

http://twitter.com/BMW_group_WA

*The story of our logo:* The logo uses the central symbol of a head to represent the field of mental health. It is surrounded by large circles which symbolize the organizations and community groups which contribute to a combined effort to improve mental health in Australia. The smaller circles in between the larger circles represent the individuals affected by mental ill-health and their families. The roads in the outer section of the logo symbolize the many pathways that lead to mental ill-health and back to restored mental health. The logo was designed by Allison Bellottie, an Aboriginal artist belonging to the Malgana and Nanda tribal groups from the Shark Bay area of Western Australia.