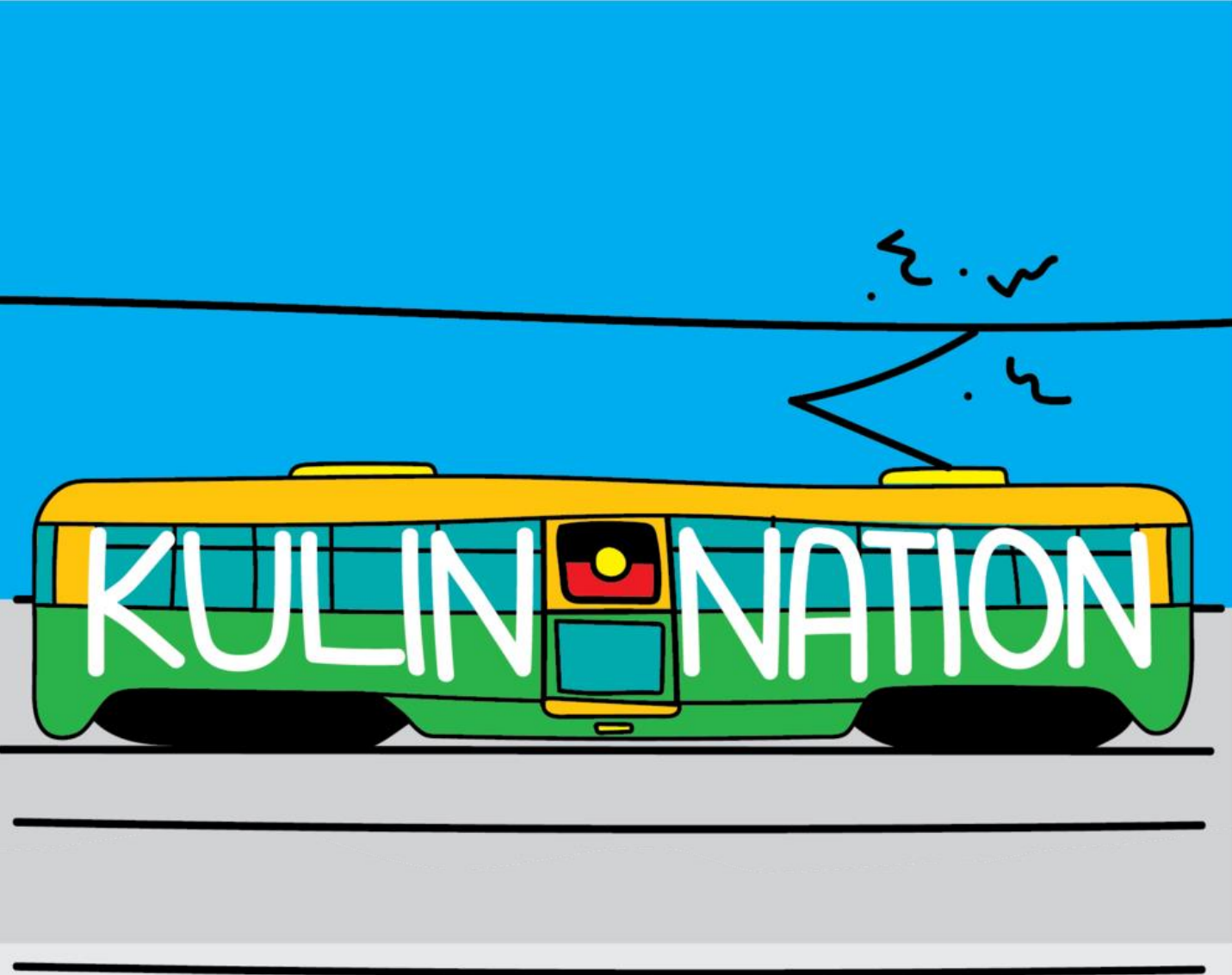


Access & Equity | Breakout Session 2

Bicultural Workers - Building bridges with multicultural communities

Jasmine Phillips | cohealth
Vanbawi Thawng | cohealth



We acknowledge the Traditional custodians of the land on which we are meeting – the land of the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung peoples of the Kulin Nation. I pay my respect to their Elders, past and present, and extend that to any first nations people who may be here with us today. We acknowledge that Australia Always Was, Always Will Be, Aboriginal Land.

#ALWAYSWILLBE

Nungala Creative

Who are we?



Workshop Topics

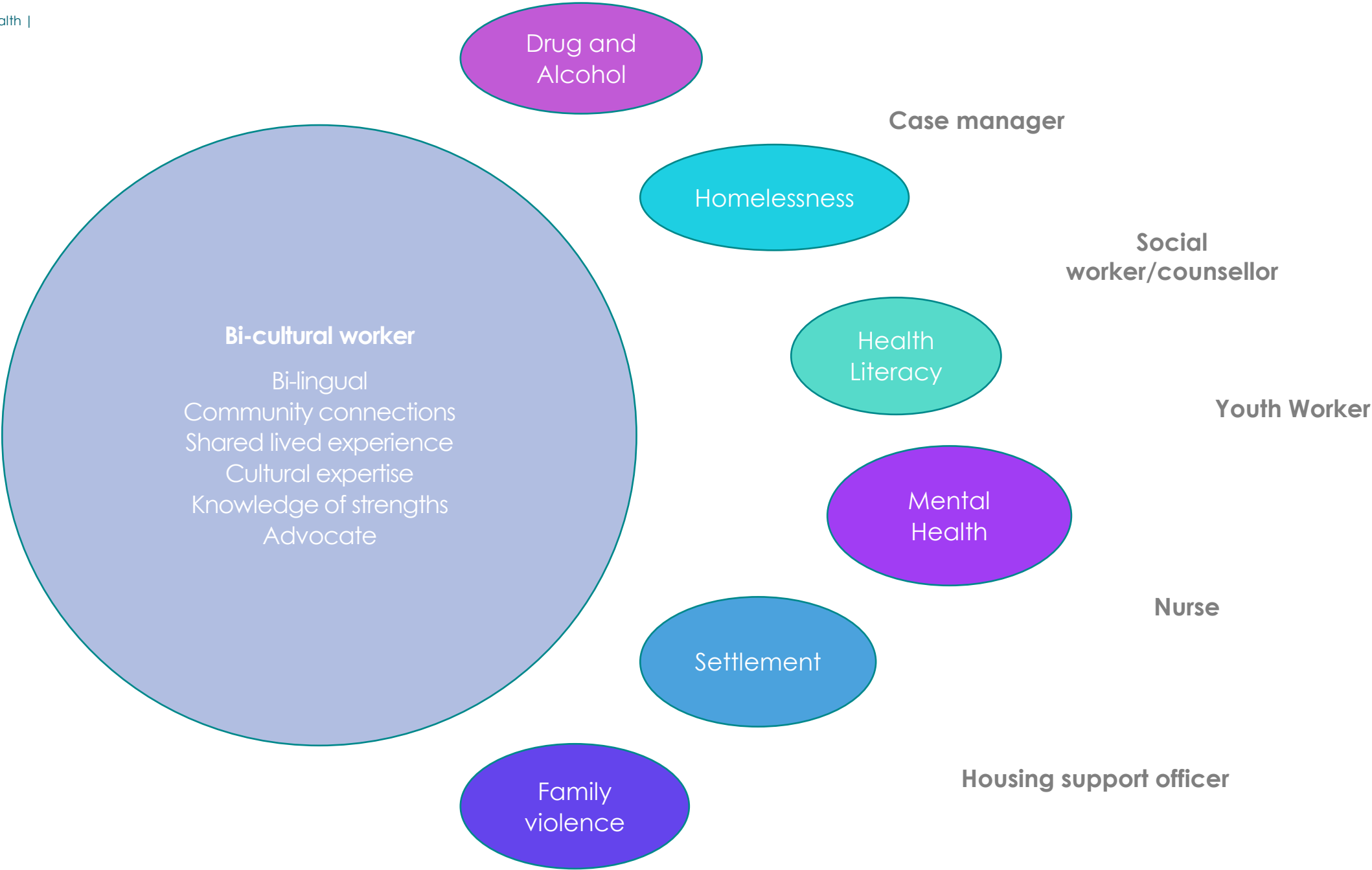
- Bicultural Work – Definition
- Roles and responsibilities
- Community and organisational benefits
- Chin community AOD projects and outcomes
- BCW challenges
- Structural and systemic support for BCW
- Introducing cohealth's Professional Standards for BCW

Who is a Bicultural Worker?

A bi-cultural worker is a person employed to use their cultural knowledge, language skills, lived experience and community connections to work with people who they share a lived experience with and with mainstream organisations. Bi-cultural workers elevate community voices, advocate for their needs, co-design and deliver programs, share information and facilitate cultural safety. (cohealth 2020)

Multicultural Education Aid, Community liaison officer, bi-lingual worker, community engagement workers, cultural support workers, community connectors, peer workers, Lived experience workers

What is the difference between a bi-cultural worker and a worker who is bi-cultural?



Bicultural Worker

- Brings shared lived experience and cultural understanding
- position description says BCW
- Main responsibilities are community engagement focused
- Generally, work with their own cultural community
- Draws upon BCW community connections

A worker who is bicultural

- Brings shared lived experience and cultural understanding
- Representation/diversity in staff
- May or may not use their lived experience to inform their work
- Biculturalism is not needed for their role but adds value

A Bicultural expert

- A professional who draws upon their lived experience and cultural expertise to develop their model of practice
- cultural expertise and lived experience informs their specialization
- Work generally focusses on either culturally safe service provision (eg psychology) or advocacy system improvement (eg D&I)



Bicultural Worker Roles at cohealth

- Identify and advocate for community needs
- community engagement and co-design
- Deliver community-led projects
- Review materials, resources and services to assess accessibility and cultural safety
- Assist in recruitment
- Support evaluation, planning and service design
- Share information in relevant language and culturally appropriate ways
- Educate community members about services and facilitate access.
- Remember – BCWs are NOT interpreters!

Community Benefits

- Organisations are representative of the community
- Community led projects meet community needs
- Improved engagement with hard-to-reach groups
- Increased knowledge of and access to available services
- Increased employment opportunities
- Increased understanding of rights

Organisational Benefits

- Increased trust and improved reputation of organisation
- Increased referrals to services
- Improved cultural safety
- Improved understanding of community needs/priorities



AOD projects with Melbourne's chin community

Youth camp

- 34 young people attended Camp
- AOD Education Session by MCWH & CEH
- Activities to enhance social connection



AOD education videos in Hakka Chin

Shared and promoted through, community platforms

- Benefits of not drinking alcohol
- Standard Drinks
- Alcohol and the Body
- Educational video on Drug



Social connection

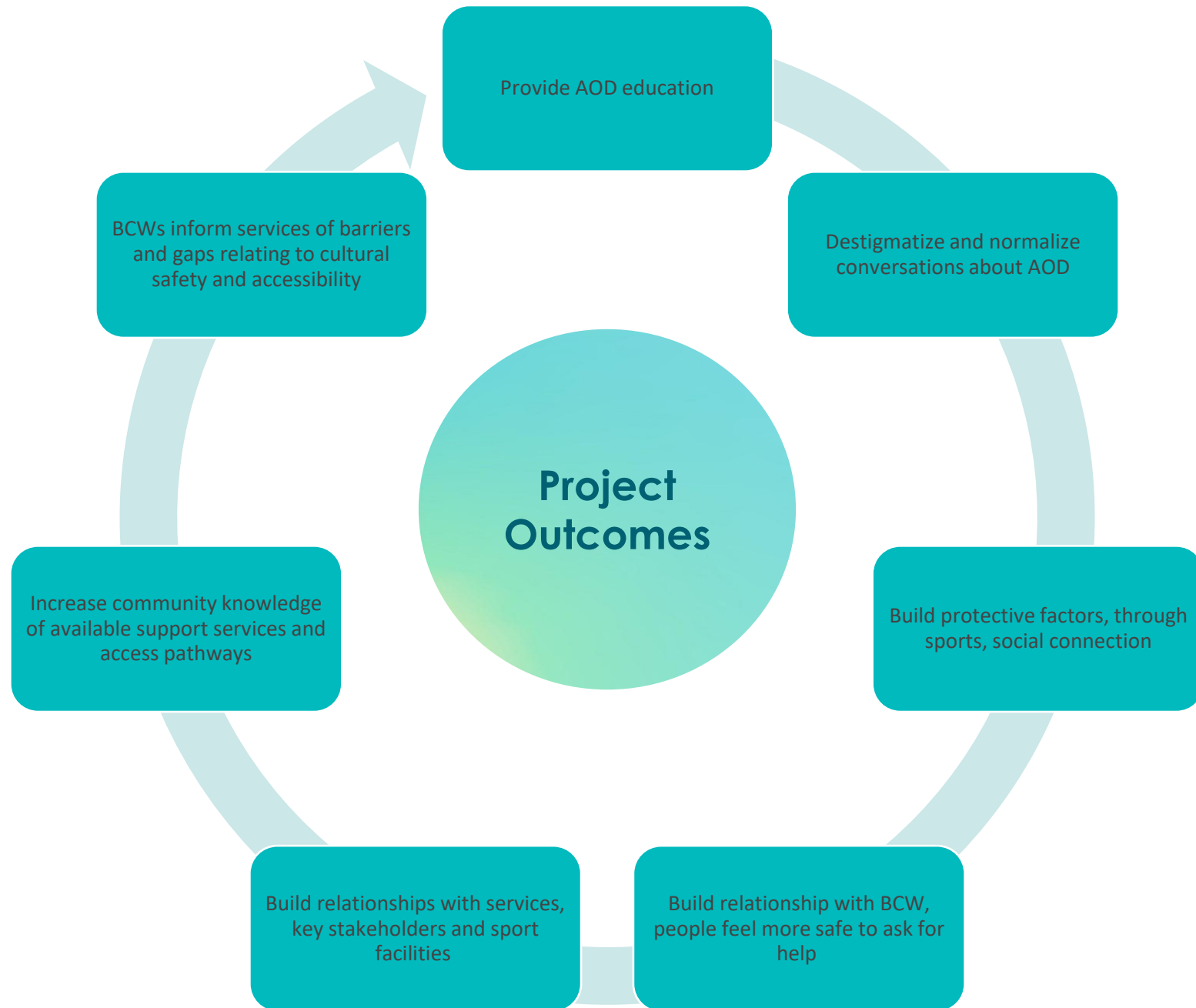
- Wellbeing Day and videos
- Youth events
- outdoor activities



Sports programs

- Badminton
- Volleyball (First ever Chin women's Tournament!)
- table tennis
- Kane Ball





AOD Referrals

Having a BCW in the community talking about AOD, not only builds capacity and protective factors in the community it also enables community members to ask their peer for help.

BCWs are known to have the skills to navigate the AOD system and are seen as a safe person in the community who will not judge or perpetuate stigma.

This is important as many migrant and refugee communities do not feel safe to engage with mainstream organisations.

This is due to trust, language barriers, fear of stigma, experiences of discrimination and not knowing how to navigate the system .

Sector wide challenges

Unclear roles and expectations

Limited targeted capacity building

Culture of volunteerism

Lack of career progression

Short term contracts & limited sustainable funding

Lack of cultural safety

Privileging western ways of knowing

Tokenistic engagement

Triggering - due to shared lived experience

Professional boundary setting clash with cultural norms

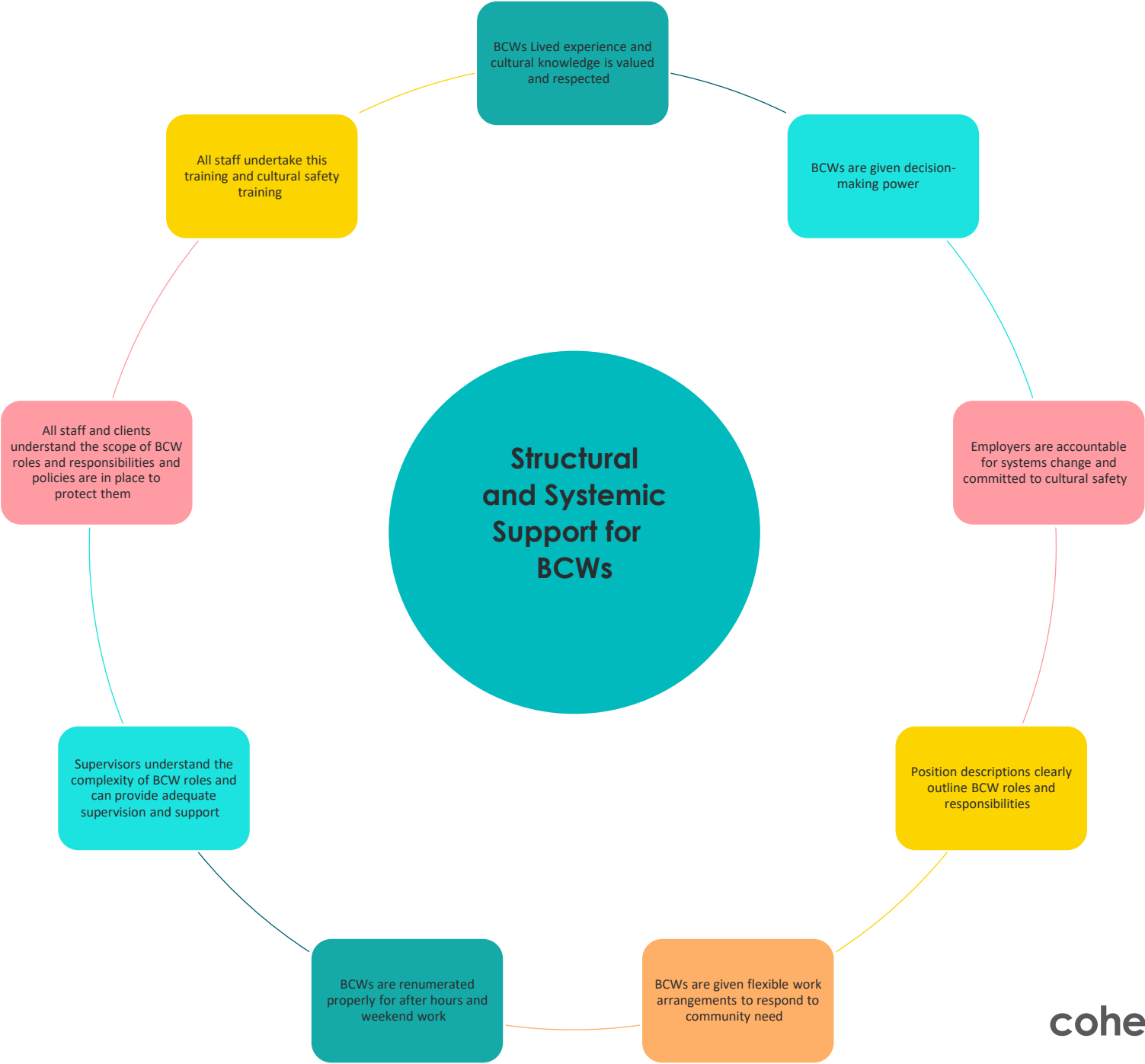
Professional actions can have negative impact on personal life

High level of community expectation

Role Bleed - Expectation to Interpret etc.

Subject matter expertise expected by employer and community

Use of personal phones/cars etc





Working Together Guide

<https://www.cohealth.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Bicultural-Worker-Working-Together.pdf>

