



Reflection: Embodied Practice

DFX
therapy
that fits

STAR Institute Symposium 2023
Tracy Murnan Stackhouse, MA, OTR/L
Developmental FX | Denver, CO, USA

2023 STAR
Sensory Symposium

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Truth is a river that is always
splitting up into arms that reunite.
Islanded between the arms, the
inhabitants argue for a lifetime as
to which is the main river.

~ C. Connolly

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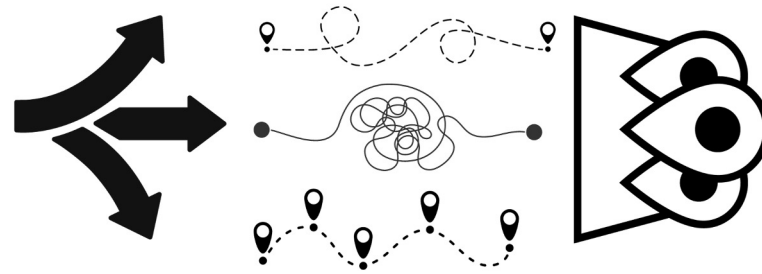
“Truth, like infinity, is to be forever
approached but never reached.”

—A. Jean Ayres (1972, p. 4)

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Reflective Practice: in the service of enhanced outcomes



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Invitation to Reflection



Kawa is the Japanese word for 'river'

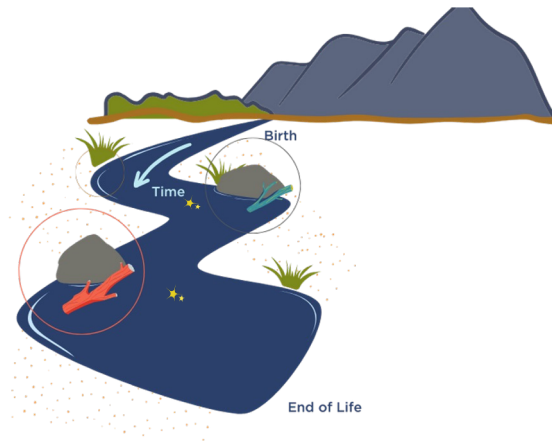
The Kawa Model (2006)

- ◆ Created by a team of occupational therapists in Japan led by **Dr. Michael K. Iwama**, a Japanese-Canadian occupational therapy scholar
- ◆ Goal: enable occupational therapists everywhere to "ask the client how they want to live their lives so that it is more meaningful to them, and look together with them what they can do to achieve that."

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The Kawa Model (2006)

- ◆ The Kawa Model uses the natural metaphor of a river to depict one's life journey.
- ◆ The Kawa Model can be used as a conceptual model of practice, frame of reference, assessment tool and modality.
- ◆ It is encouraged to be used where it serves; it is adaptable to the context of the user (Iwama, 2006; Iwama et al., 2009)



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KAWA Model as a Reflective Practice Tool

- ◆ KAWA is most typically used as a Clinical Tool

Additional Applications of of KAWA:

- ◆ Organic SWOT Analysis (van Wijngaarden, Scholten, & van Wijk, 2012)
- ◆ Employee Performance Appraisal
- ◆ Continuing Professional Development (CPD) • Tripathi & Middleton (2018): USA

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Kawa Elements Embody Your Reflection

Kawa - River

Water (mizu) interacts with **rocks, driftwood, and river walls** and **riverbed** to represent the current life flow of the person



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River Walls and Riverbed

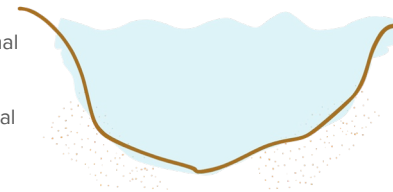
(kawa zoko - collective terms for walls and floor of river)

River bed & river sides = environment – friends/family, religion, pets, culture, living situation

Context → social, physical, cultural, occupational

Kawa zoko can impede or facilitate life flow

- ◆ Thick river walls and riverbed → contextual difficulties; barriers to life flow
- ◆ space, flow



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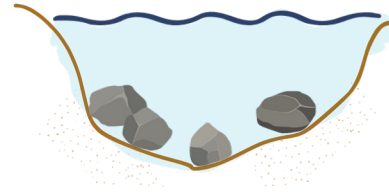
Rocks

(iwa (large crags, obstacles); ishi (small rocks))

Perceived barriers to optimal life flow

- ◆ Objects, persons, circumstances, events
- ◆ Unique number, shapes, sizes, textures, and/or locations
- ◆ Fewer, smaller iwa → barriers, difficult issues → flow

Rocks = Difficulties/problems you are currently experiencing – symptoms/diagnosis, work, education, health and well-being of loved ones, anger, trauma.



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Driftwood

(ryuboku - ryu - flow; boku - wood (hoku))

Driftwood = Personal attributes and resources – values, personality/character, finances, relationships.

Personal assets and liabilities

- ◆ Characteristics, skills, attitudes, behaviors, beliefs, resources, people, objects, or phenomena
- ◆ Change function circumstantially
- ◆ Driftwood can:
 - Float without affecting water
 - Push rocks/silt out of the way
 - Create blockages when stuck between river walls and rocks

Position, size, & function of driftwood in the kawa → life flow (Iwama, 2006)



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Spaces

(sukima)

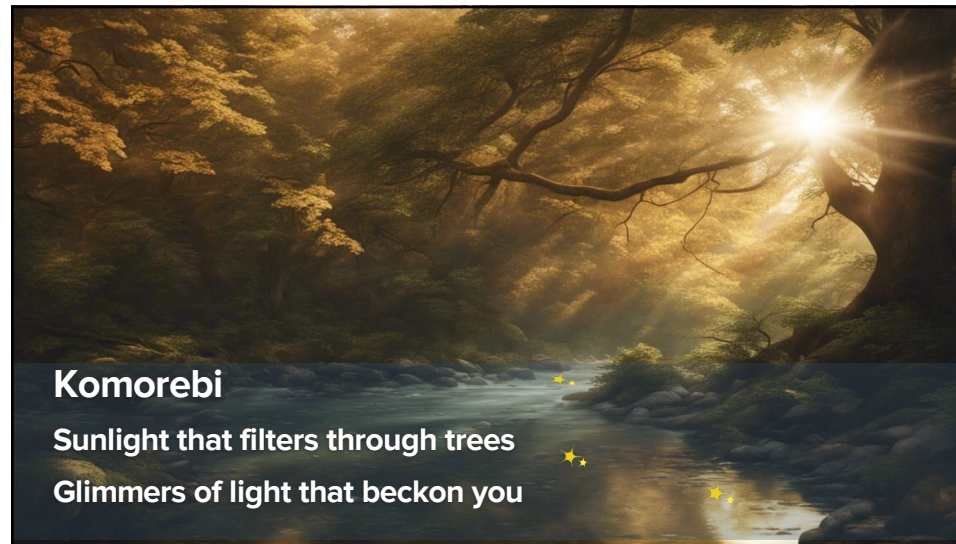
Spaces between kawa elements for water flow

- ◆ Harmonious interaction between elements → sufficient large spaces → optimal life flow
- ◆ Spaces, flow → Focus of intervention

Spaciousness and Ease allow for presence as a clinician/practitioner/person.



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Komorebi

Sunlight that filters through trees

Glimmers of light that beckon you

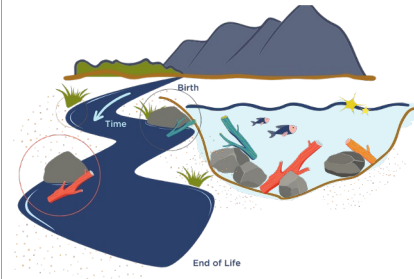
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For this embodied reflection:

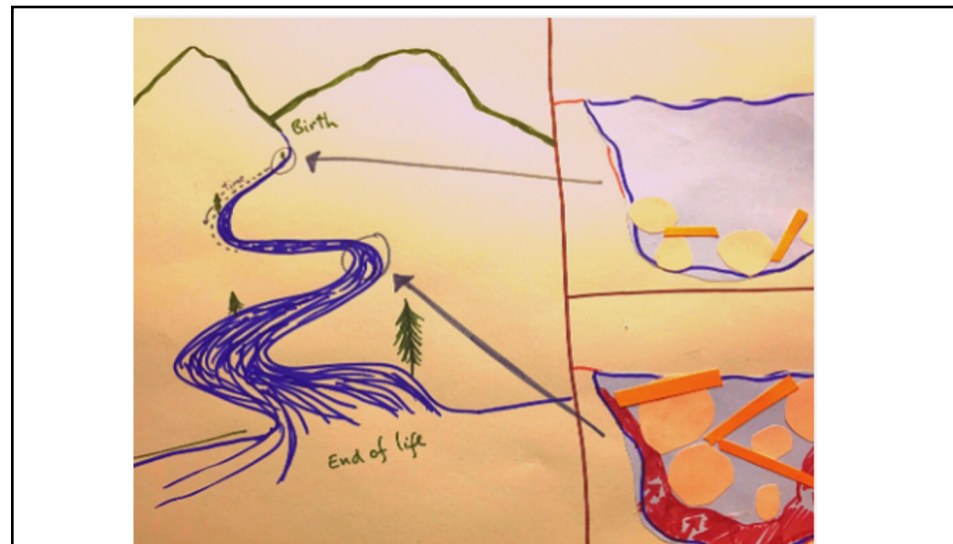
Begin to think about what your KAWA might look like.

What is most helpful?...your journey from the start of your career into the future, or this moment in time, here at this conference as point of reflection?

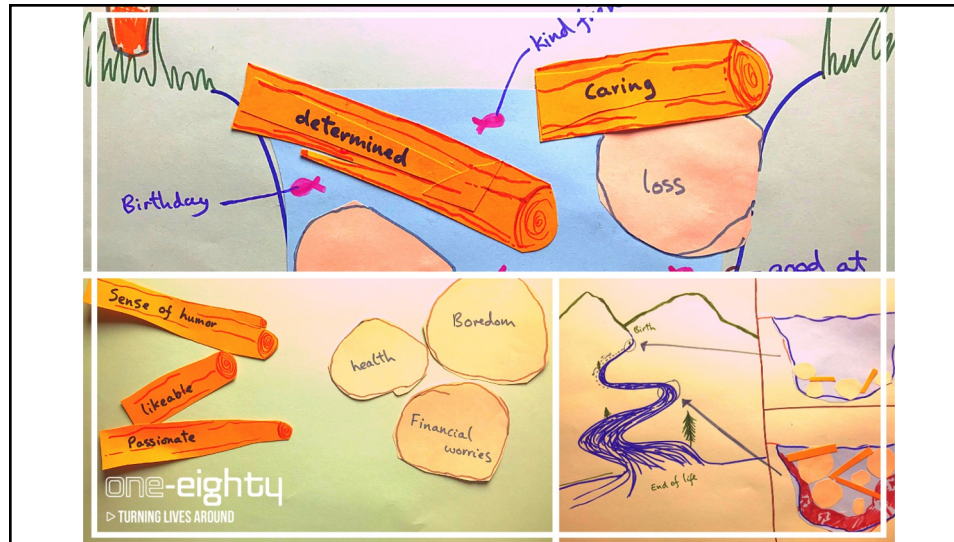
Think about the river flow, its banks, the rocks, driftwood, and sunlight—jot your ideas and/or draw your KAWA as a reflective practice.



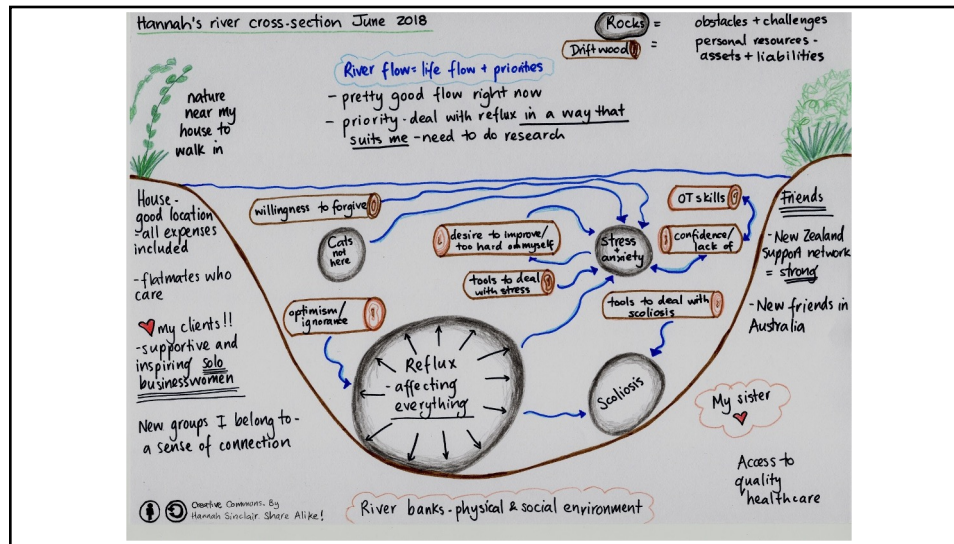
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During this embodied reflection session, we will create 2 KAWA depictions

Your own professional journey

How are things going for YOU as a professional related to your work in sensory integrative processing?










Your view of the overall profession's flow

How are things going for the Profession that holds the container of sensory integrative processing?










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Processing of KAWA elements *(Iwama, 2006)*

	River flow 	Riverbed/River sides (environment) 	Rocks (problems) 	Driftwood (personal qualities) 	Spaces (open/spacious) 	Light (glimmers) 	Compass or other things that you would like to add... 
My Kawa							
The Profession's Kawa							

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Handouts for processing of KAWA elements *(Iwama, 2006)*

	River flow 	Riverbed/River sides (environment) 	Rocks (problems) 	Driftwood (personal qualities) 	Spaces (open/spacious) 	Light (glimmers) 	Compass or other things that you would like to add... 
My Kawa							

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Handouts for processing of KAWA elements *(Iwama, 2006)*

	River flow	Riverbed/River sides (environment)	Rocks (problems)	Driftwood (personal qualities)	Spaces (open/ spacious)	Light (glimmers)	Compass or other things that you would like to add...
The Profession's Kawa							
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Handouts for processing of KAWA elements *(Iwama, 2006)*

River Flow (Life Flow and Priorities) Guiding Questions:

- If your professional journey as a practitioner utilizing **sensory integrative processing (SIP) theories and approaches** was a river, what does your river look like?
How would you describe the flow of your river right now?
- Can you describe how you typically spend your professional application of SIP?
What do you most enjoy? How competent do you feel?

If Optimal flow is fast, voluminous, unobstructed, what is your tacit reflection of the flow for you?

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Handouts for processing of KAWA elements (Harris, 2009)

River walls and riverbed (kawa zoko) Guiding Questions:

1. If your professional journey as a practitioner utilizing **sensory integrative processing (SIP) theories and approaches** was a river, what does your riverbed look like?

What makes the banks/boundaries/shape of your river right now?
1. Can you describe how you typically spend your professional application of SIP?

What allows you to integrate your practice and maintain integrity as the work flows? How do you feel competent to share your practice? To advocate for your practice? To deepen your practice?

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Handouts for processing of KAWA elements (Harris, 2009)

Rocks (iwa) Guiding Questions:

1. If your professional journey as a practitioner utilizing **sensory integrative processing (SIP) theories and approaches** was a river, what are the barriers, rocks, obstacles in your river? Think about the obstacles/challenges that you encounter:

Are you having any difficulties right now? What are they? Why do you think (those things) are difficult for you? How is it difficult?
1. Are these rocks within the flow things that you can navigate and appreciate, or do they catch you and challenge you? Are they in your control or out of your control?
2. Is there anything about your professional life right now that you would like to change? What is it? Why? How would you like things to change? If things were better, what do you think would be different?
3. Is there anything in particular which you are worried or unsure about that you would like to follow up with - and what resource can you name to gather that support?

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Driftwood (ryuboku) and Space (sukima) Guiding Questions:

1. If your professional journey as a practitioner utilizing **sensory integrative processing (SIP) theories and approaches** was a river, what driftwood can you identify that is a part of the flow of your river?

What varieties of driftwood (resources & supports) do you access?

How do the spaces, opportunities to enhance flow become available for you?

1. What are the best supports to your practice? What have been your key learning moments? How do you deepen your practice? Are you a part of a learning community?

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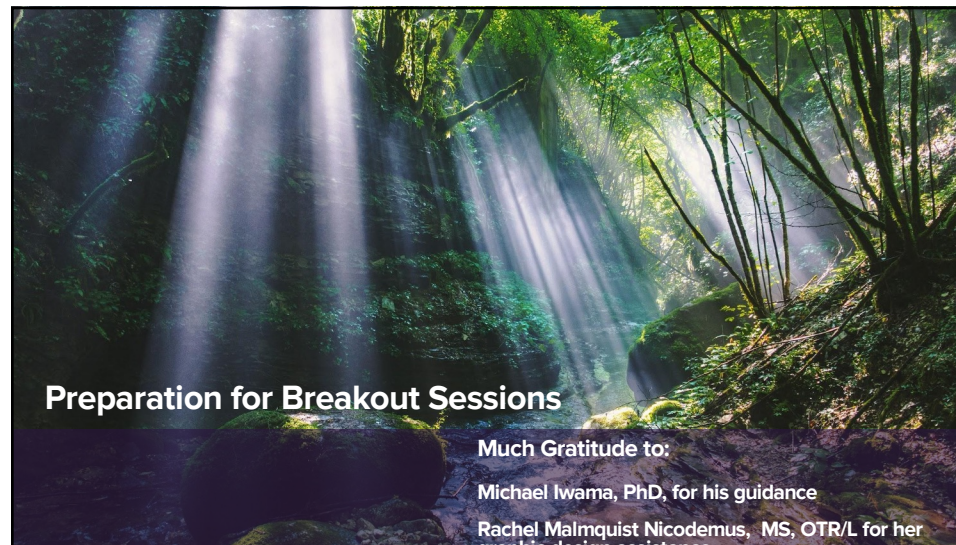
A non-traditional KAWA element added for today: Sunlight on the water (komorebi) Guiding Questions:

What brings you glimmers and goosebumps? What light do you see that motivates you, brings you joy and illuminates your journey?

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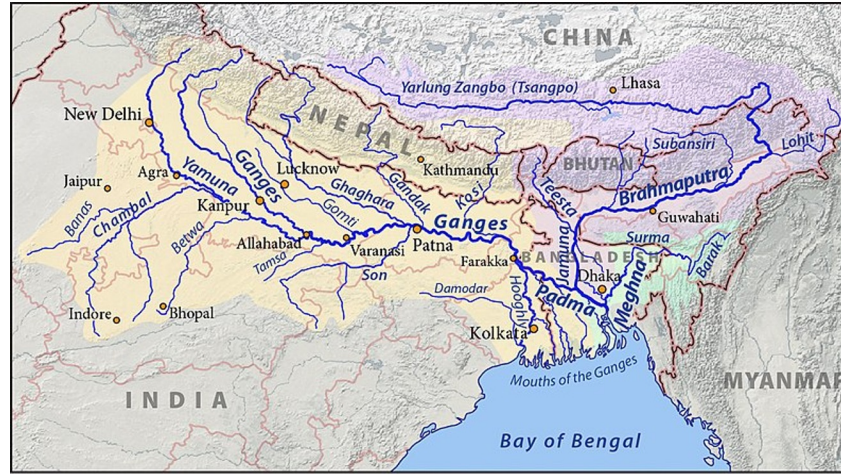


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The Ganges - A story of tributaries and healing



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KAWA Reflective Sharing - Breakout Groups:

For YOUR OWN KAWA:

For your PROFESSION KAWA:

How has this symposium contributed to your overall KAWA- now that you have added all the elements?

What questions do you have now?

What has been clarified for you? For your thoughts about the profession?

What are the glimmers, hopes and aspirations for you, for the profession?

What are your hopes, dreams for you? For the profession?

What do you need from your colleagues? What do you need from the thought leaders?

What are your next steps?



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THE KAWA MODEL: RESOURCES

Primary Resource:

<http://www.kawamodel.com/> • The Kawa Model Made Easy

FREE concise handbook:

<http://www.kawamodel.com/download/KawaMadeEasy2015.pdf>

- Original Kawa Model book: The Kawa Model: Culturally Relevant Occupational Therapy (2006) by M. K. Iwama
- Kawa Model Facebook Community: <https://www.facebook.com/KawaModel/>
- Published literature review related to the Kawa Model: Tripathi, N. S., Sweetman, M. S., & Zapf, S. A. (2017). Use of the Kawa model for culturally responsive occupation-based occupational therapy in India. *Indian Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 49(4), 148-153.

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Thank You

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The wholeness of ourselves
depends on
the integrity and flow
of the river of integration.

Tracy Stackhouse MA, OTR/L

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