



*Caring for Aboriginal
children and families*



WORKING WITH OUR MOBS, INCLUDING MEN A CULTURALLY SAFE AND TRAUMA INFORMED CARE APPROACH

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GAMARADA UNIVERSAL INDIGENOUS RESOURCES PTY LTD

Acknowledgement of Country

In the spirit of Gamarada (meaning friends or comrades with a common purpose) we acknowledge the

Gadigal people of the Eora Nation, whose land on which we gather. We pay respects to Elders past, present and emerging and give thanks for the thousands of years of protection of these lands.

We endeavour in all our work to uphold the human rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and acknowledge that sovereignty was never ceded in this place now called Australia.

Always was, always will be, Aboriginal land.

'Healing is a process; it is not just a strategy and a nice formula of a funding program.'

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Healing is a spiritual process that includes recovery from addiction, therapeutic change and cultural renewal. It can't just be one, it must be all of those things.

However, what is striking about the definitions above is how healing is different from health services, housing, aged care, or family support. These are crucial services that can help establish the foundation for healing to take place and support people during the healing process, but they are not healing in and of themselves.

Similarly, unless healing services reach the crux of therapeutic change and cultural renewal, they will not achieve their aims and could be construed as a rather cynical attempt to re-badge basic entitlements. Primary health care, housing, aged care and family support are basic services and opportunities that all Australians should be entitled to.' <https://www.indigitube.com.au/video/5c130288af201e3b7abd8223>

Tom Calma, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner,

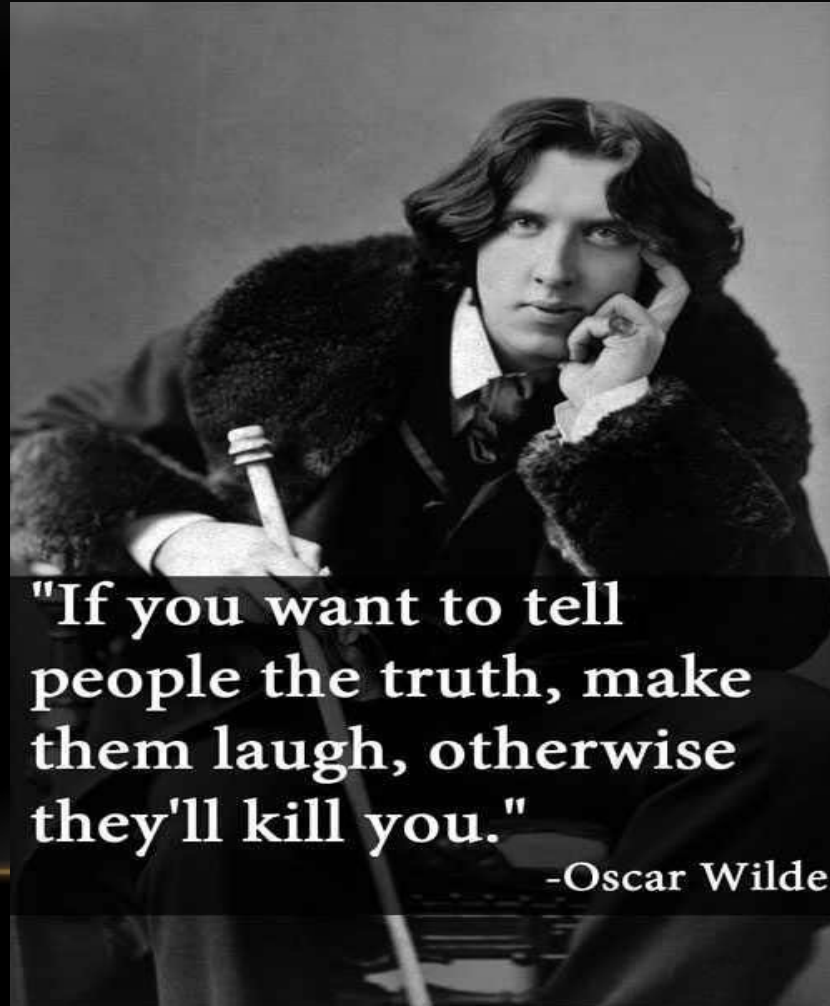
<https://humanrights.gov.au/our-work/chapter-4-beyond-apology-agenda-healing-social-justice-report-2008>

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Gain an understanding of the principles of trauma informed care and the link to cultural safety
 - Understand Makarata, the Uluru Statement of the Heart and the collective conscious of First Nations Australians in 2019
 - A familiarization with the practice of implementing trauma informed care principles when communicating with Indigenous Australians
 - The reason for learning this ... Increase engagement and retention of your clients
 - By the end of this session, you will be able to confidently implement some Trauma Informed Care principles, have gained a broader understanding of the context in which you are working in and have an example of at least one CS TIC First Nations led program.
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WORKING WITH FIRST NATIONS AUSTRALIANS

VOICE. TREATY. TRUTH. NAIDOC WEEK THEME 2019



"If you want to tell
people the truth, make
them laugh, otherwise
they'll kill you."

-Oscar Wilde

[HTTPS://WWW.THEJUICEMEDIA.COM/HONEST-
GOVERNMENT-AD-VISIT-AUSTRALIA-2019-2/](https://www.thejuicemedia.com/honest-government-ad-visit-australia-2019-2/)



ABORIGINAL HEALTH – DEFINITIONS

- Aboriginal health” means not just the physical well-being of an individual but refers to the social, emotional and cultural well-being of the whole Community in which each individual is able to achieve their full potential as a human being thereby bringing about the total well-being of their Community.
- It is a whole of life view and includes the cyclical concept of life-death-life.
- As defined in NACCHO’s Constitution as amended 9 March 2006 also from the National Aboriginal Health Strategy (NAHS) 1989.
- <https://www.naccho.org.au/about/aboriginal-health/definitions/>

GARMA FESTIVAL – ARNHEM LAND, NT- 2011



2020 VOICE. TREATY. TRUTH. 2023 OUR ELDERS

MAKARRATA

- Makarrata is a word from the language of the Yolngu people in Arnhem Land. The Yolngu concept of Makarrata captures the idea of two parties coming together after a struggle, healing the divisions of the past. It is about acknowledging that something has been done wrong, and it seeks to make things right.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people want their voice to be heard. First Nations were excluded from the Constitutional convention debates of the 1800's when the Australian Constitution came into force. Indigenous people were excluded from the bargaining table.

APOLOGY TO THE STOLEN GENERATIONS OF AUSTRALIA PRIME MINISTER KEVIN RUDD 2008

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SUVnAp4lXfl>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1k0597GfXFQ>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l4yaBmp8ioM>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CHd4MsfCDFw>

Tools for building capacity in our most important
space

Putting Makarrata into action locally...

**A step-by-step guide to GUR COURAGE Coaching
Model: Culture, Optimism, Understanding,
Relationships, Acceptance, Gratitude,
Encouragement**

DADIRRI AND DBT



Carolyn Minchin with US psychologist, Marsha Linehan, Byron Clinic training, 2016



Miriam Rose Ungunmerr-Baumann, from Nauiyu (Daly River) with Ken Zulumovski, Kiradah and Kubbi-Kubbi, Healing Foundation, 2010

CULTURE

We place culture first, valuing safe culture and allowing members from diverse backgrounds to benefit from becoming more aware of their own cultural baggage, giving permission to 'un-pack' and innovate, bringing forward tools that are effective in the community, workplace or study environment. It includes showing respect for our environment and our peers, acknowledging each other with acute awareness of history and attributes that everyone brings to the reconciliation experience. Indigenous cultural protocols provide a platform for all cultures to be welcome, and for each member to develop awareness of the aspects of culture that can create growth and support wellbeing. Exploring cultural safely allows for personal validation and creativity through being in touch with heritage and the legacy of our forebears.

OPTIMISM

Optimism is hugely important, holding a conviction that growth and transformation is possible, no matter what our circumstances.

Holding a faith and a commitment to the reconciliation process, even when the way forward is not clear.

At this stage, goal setting is supported through allowing each person to articulate their values and the actions each person commits to in order to embody their values.

UNDERSTANDING

This stage is about being able and willing to listen (Dadirri, deep listening), to hear the perspectives of others. Valuing knowledge and process, finding the right human resource to get the job done, and learning to 'back yourself'.

The Collaborative Inquiry Process (CI) is a great resources for turning understanding into positive, value based action..

Reference - *Collaborative Inquiry in Practice. Action, reflection and making meaning*
John Bray, Joyce Leem, Linda Smith, Lyle Yorks, Sage Publications Inc 2000

RELATIONSHIPS

The foundation of our wellbeing depends on meaningful and purposeful relationships. Our sense of self worth is reflected back to us by those we interact with. In the workplace, the classroom and in society, meaningful relationships contribute to our productivity, our learning and our wellness. It involves knowing our relationship to the world to better ground us and help us plan for our future. Reciprocity for balance in relationships is a core practice in Dadirri. Relationships can suffer when boundaries are not respected, or when boundaries are held so strictly that learning and mutual support cannot take place. Psychological flexibility and Dadirri awareness creates relationships based on creativity and respect, and form a foundation for effective peer support.

ACCEPTANCE

Third Wave Psychology grounded in compassionate action can assist us to clarify personal values and define a valued direction through goal setting.

e.g Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT)

The fundamental question ACT poses to us is:

What do YOU value ? what are YOU going to do about it ?

GRATITUDE

Gratitude is a practice shared through the learning circles.

We look at what has been given to us, what has been taken away and for what remains.

It guides us toward positive perspective taking, meaningful connections and helps us to see the way forward.

ENCOURAGEMENT

Encouragement is about peer support, coaching and mentoring. Giving each other permission to coach and mentor one another.

Acknowledging that everyone has bad days, and no one has everything together.

We help and support each other to recognise our strengths and to see our value in times when it is difficult to see for ourselves.

<https://www.facebook.com/Gamarada/videos/338293500433921/UzpfSTYxMjM2MTU3MDoxMDE1NjEzMjg1MjE4MTU3MQ/>

INTERPERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS.

CROSS CULTURAL COMMUNICATIONS SKILLS – USING
VIGNETTES

DISCUSSIONS ON BARRIERS TO EFFECTIVE
COMMUNICATIONS

[HTTPS://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/WATCH?V=38FV9ITDBP](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=38FV9ITDBP)

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[HTTPS://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/WATCH?V=8NLE841_CH](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8NLE841_CH)

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A framework for reconciliation action

Reconciliation Australia defines reconciliation through five critical dimensions that together represent a holistic and comprehensive picture of reconciliation.

The five dimensions are: Race relations, Equality and equity, Institutional integrity, Unity, and Historical acceptance

Read more about the five dimensions in the *State of Reconciliation in Australia Report*. The five dimensions of reconciliation set out a clear roadmap toward a reconciled, just and equitable Australia. Whilst significant progress has been made in the past 25 years, much unfinished business remains. All sections of the community; governments, civil society, the private sector and Aboriginal and Strait Islander communities have a role to play.

How can individuals, organisations and communities know where to start?

Reconciliation Australia promotes a simple framework of relationships, respect and opportunities for implementing reconciliation action. Through these three core pillars individuals, organisations and communities can turn their good intentions into action.

GAMARADA COMMUNITY HEALING AND CULTURAL
LEADERSHIP

CELEBRATES 849 WEEKS OF EMBODYING MAKARRATA

[HTTPS://WWW.INDIGITUBE.COM.AU/VIDEO/5C59270A86E
1A14C0472B05E](https://www.indigitube.com.au/video/5c59270a86e1a14c0472b05e)



THE LOWITJA INSTITUTE INTERNATIONAL INDIGENOUS HEALTH AND WELLBEING CONFERENCE 2019 MET IN DARWIN, AUSTRALIA, FROM 18 TO 20 JUNE 2019

The Lowitja Institute International Indigenous Health and Wellbeing Conference 2019 met in Darwin, Australia, from 18 to 20 June 2019. Based on deliberations under the theme Thinking. Speaking. Being: First Nations Solutions for Global Change, 760 national and international conference delegates make the following statement: THINKING

1. Nation state governments must reform the way health resources are shared. Community health initiatives and programs that are built on place-based knowledge must be supported and recognised for the leadership and expertise they contain.
2. Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing are norms and should not be marginalised. They are not alternatives; they are not perspectives: they are our lived truth.
3. Our health is connected to our land and our seas. As Indigenous peoples of the world we are the protectors of these sacred lands and waters. It is our responsibility to connect our knowledges for positive change.

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4. We have the right to our own institutions where we mentor our emerging thinkers, where we speak our truths, where we celebrate our ways of being.

SPEAKING

5. Colonialism and racism are determinants of ill health. We call for comprehensive truth telling processes, and the acceptance of these truths, to dismantle colonial narratives and systemic racism in health research, policy and service delivery.

6. First Nations knowledges and languages are our assets. We must protect, repatriate and rejuvenate cultural practices relating to health and wellbeing — including medicinal; therapeutic; and nutritional and healing-related knowledges and practices.

7. Data is part of our narrative. First Nations must be empowered with the knowledge and infrastructure to collect, monitor and interpret our own health and wellbeing data.

8. First Nations people living with a disability want their voices heard, and require a space to sit, hear, share, and reflect on issues that affect our wellbeing. We require resources and goodwill to develop structures and networks that will connect the First Nations living with disability community with researchers, services and policy-makers within values and cultures that promote their inclusion.

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BEING

9. First Nations and dominant languages and literacy are fundamental rights and a foundation of empowerment. Lifting levels of literacy in our first and dominant languages is key to our self-determination and the development of our children.

10. Our future generations are central to our being. The mass removal of our children through incarceration and institutionalisation is a source of ongoing trauma and must stop.

11. Our collective rights, as described in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People, provide a framework for our health and wellbeing. These include the right to freedom from discrimination, the right to good health, and the right to self-determination.

12. First Nations health research funding should go to First Nations organisations and researchers. 20 June 2019

ULURU STATEMENT FROM THE HEART

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xB-31jD4XcA>



Cultural Safety and Trauma-informed care

What is it and why is it important?

PREVALENCE

There are more than 2 million adult survivors of childhood trauma in Australia

All trauma invokes fear, horror, helplessness and can overwhelm a person's capacity to cope.

Majority of consumers presenting to services have unresolved multiple traumas

CHILDHOOD TRAUMA

Physical, sexual and emotional abuse as well as chronic neglect, witnessing domestic violence

Perpetrated by those in positions of trust

Series of traumatic events

Disrupts attachment

Affects growth, structure and function of brain

Interpersonal, premeditated, planned – complex trauma

IMPACTS OF CHILDHOOD TRAUMA

Lifetime patterns of fear and mistrust

Affects self-esteem,

sense of self worth relationships with self, others, the world,
emotional regulation

Stress management

Self-soothing

COPING STRATEGIES

- Adopted in childhood but persist
 - Becomes risk factors for health issues
 - Smoking, excessive eating, physical inactivity,
 - high risk sexual behaviours, substance abuse
 - Suicidality, self-harm, re-enactments of abusive relationships.
 - In context of trauma these coping strategies make perfect sense
-

CHALLENGES OF SUPPORTING CONSUMERS

- Disadvantaged by trauma and accompanying socioeconomic disadvantage
 - deep feelings of insecurity
 - low self-esteem
 - poor frustration tolerance
 - difficulties with trust and interpersonal relationships
 - sensitivity to criticism
 - risk-taking and life threatening behaviours
-

COMPLEX TRAUMA - AETIOLOGY

- Compounded
- Cumulative
- It can include all forms of violence experienced within the community – civil unrest, war trauma, genocide, cultural dislocation, sexual exploitation, incarceration
- As well as the impacts homelessness, poverty and chronic disadvantage and mental, physical health issues and disability, grief and loss.

CURRENT SERVICE RESPONSES LIMITATIONS

- Lack of recognition of relationship between trauma, mental health, health and substance abuse
 - Medical model – principle is something is wrong with the patient. In trauma – What happened to you?
 - Lack of understanding around complex trauma
Characterising as PTSD and responding accordingly
-

SERVICE RESPONSES

- What happened to you to affect you so profoundly?
- Recognition and integration of experienced trauma is fundamental to the recovery process.
- Recovery – slow phased process but neural pathways can repair themselves

TRAUMA INFORMED CARE

- Moves away from prioritisation of diagnosis
- Recognises traumatic life experiences on development
- Integrated recover-oriented approach
- Trauma informed approach to care must be supported by trauma specific services, to address the consequences of trauma in the individual and facilitate recovery.

SO WHAT IS TRAUMA-INFORMED CARE AND PRACTICE?

- strengths-based framework grounded in an understanding of and responsiveness to the impact of trauma
 - emphasizes physical, psychological, and emotional safety for both providers and survivors
 - creates opportunities for survivors to rebuild a sense of control and empowerment
-

TRAUMA INFORMED CARE AND PRACTICE

- changes assumptions about services
 - creates holistic open organisational cultures
 - services that do no harm
 - facilitates recovery, minimises re-victimisation
-

CULTURAL SHIFT

- New generation' of transformed medical, mental health and allied human services
 - Systemic transformation
 - When a human service program becomes trauma informed, every part of its organisation, management, service delivery system is assessed and modified to ensure a basic understanding of trauma
-

TRANSFORMATIONAL OUTCOMES

When organisations, programs, and services are based on an understanding of the particular vulnerabilities and or triggers that trauma survivors experience and avoid re-traumatisation, services and programs can be more supportive, effective

SYSTEMS WITHOUT TRAUMA SENSITIVITY

- Institutions that emphasize “compliance” rather than collaboration
 - Institutions that disempower and devalue staff who then “pass on” that disrespect to service recipients.
 - High rates of staff and recipient assault and injury
 - Consumers are labelled & pathologised as manipulative, needy, attention-seeking
 - Misuse or overuse of displays of power - keys, security, demeanour
 - Culture of secrecy - no advocates, poor monitoring of staff
 - Staff believe key role are as rule enforcers
 - Little use of least restrictive alternatives other than medication
 - High rates of adult, child/family complaints
-

TRAUMA INFORMED SYSTEMS

- Are inclusive of the survivor's perspective
- Recognise that coercive interventions cause traumatization / re-traumatization – and are to be avoided
- Recognise high rates of psychiatric disorders related to trauma exposure in children and adults
- Provide early and thoughtful diagnostic evaluation with focused consideration of trauma in people with complicated, treatment resistant illness
- Recognise that mental health treatment environments are often traumatizing, both overtly and covertly
- Value consumers in all aspects of care
- Offer individually flexible plans approaches
- Avoid all shaming / humiliation
- Provide awareness/training on re-traumatizing practices
- Provide training and supervision in assessment and treatment of people with trauma histories
- Focusing on what happened to the client rather than what is 'wrong with you' (i.e. your diagnosis)
- Presume that every person in a treatment setting may have been exposed to abuse, violence, neglect or other traumatic experiences

EMBRACING A MODEL OF TRAUMA-INFORMED CARE

- increase community awareness around relationship of trauma to mental health
 - work to eradicate stigma and discrimination, facilitate access and equity
 - develop evidence based models and practice programs
 - build capacity through supporting workforce education and training
-

SUCCESSFUL MODEL

- Collaborative
 - Respectful
 - Hopeful
 - Informative
 - Holistic
 - Integrated
-

TRAUMA-INFORMED SYSTEM

- Safety from physical harm and re-traumatization
- Understand survivors and “symptoms” in context
- Open collaboration between workers and those seeking help
- Build on strengths and acquire skills
- Understanding symptoms as attempts to cope
- Perceive childhood trauma as a defining experience/set of experiences that forms the core of an individual’s identity
- focus on what happened to a person rather than what is wrong with the person.

Harris, M., & FalLOT, R. (2001). Using trauma theory to design service systems. *New Directions for Mental Health Services*, 89. Jossey Bass.

Saakvitne, K., Gamble, S., Pearlman, S., & Tabor Lev, B. (2000). *Risking connection: A training curriculum for working with survivors of childhood abuse*. Sidran Institute

IMPROVED OUTCOMES

- USA reports of a Trauma informed approach have included decrease in:
 - Psychiatric symptoms
 - Substance use
 - Trauma symptoms
 - Hospitalisation and crisis care
 - Improvement in consumers' daily functioning
 - Cost effective

REFERENCES

- <https://www.creativespirits.info/aboriginalculture/selfdetermination/uluru-statement-from-the-heart>
- <https://www.humanrights.gov.au/our-work/chapter-4-beyond-apology-agenda-healing-social-justice-report-2008>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BaA0hZ406YY&t=1s>
- [United Nations International Year of Indigenous Languages](#)
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SUVnAp4IXfl>
- <https://www.naccho.org.au/about/aboriginal-health/definitions/>
- [http://library.bsl.org.au/jspui/bitstream/123456789/353/1/Ways forward_vol.1 %26 2_1995.pdf](http://library.bsl.org.au/jspui/bitstream/123456789/353/1/Ways%20forward_vol.1%26%201995.pdf)
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Didjurigura! Thank you for your contributions to this most important space

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**NSW Premier's Excellence Award, Leadership in Aboriginal Communities, Youth Action
Youth Work Awards 2018 - Outstanding Work with Aboriginal Young People, 2019 Zest
Awards Outstanding Voluntary Group, Gamarada Leadership Group, Western Sydney
2022: Zest Awards 'Outstanding Resilience' (Gamarada Community Healing and Cultural
Leadership Program) 2022: Zest Awards 'Outstanding Project Working with Aboriginal
Communities in Western Sydney**

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Controlled Health Organisation AGM 2017 & 18**

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