

Healing through voice, culture and Country: Short films

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples should be aware that this resource may contain images or names of people who have passed away.

These short films are intended to be used as 'lunchbox sessions', short learning opportunities that can be used for individual reflections or as team-meeting discussion activities. Each film is accompanied by a learning objective and reflection questions, and the sessions are aimed at practitioners and services who support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families experiencing family and domestic violence (FDV), helping them start conversations and promote reflective practices. Each session will take approximately 30 minutes for individuals to complete and one hour for teams, depending on the discussion generated.

Who is this resource for?

This resource will benefit practitioners in mainstream health, education and social and community services who work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families experiencing FDV.

Developed for community-based delivery, these lunchtime session packages can be supported through these additional resources for reference or clarification:



online course

[Healing through voice, culture and Country: Stories from Community addressing family violence](#)



Framework

[Honouring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices in healing family violence](#)



Practice profile

[Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander family violence practice profile](#)



Fact sheets

[Children's experiences of family violence](#)

Summary

There are many ways that organisations can help practitioners to work proactively and in culturally sensitive ways with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents. These include, but are not limited to:

- providing supervision and training on child-focused ways to identify and respond to presentations of family violence
- providing cultural supervision and mentoring from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to support meaningful and confident engagement; and
- working collaboratively with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to co-design appropriate and effective responses to families who are affected by violence.

This resource was co-designed by:



The National Workforce Centre for Child Mental Health (NWC) is funded by the Australian Government Department of Health under the National Support for Child and Youth Mental Health Program.

The Centre would like to acknowledge the valuable contribution Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander practitioners and organisations have provided in the development of this resource. A special thanks goes to the reference group organisations.

The Centre would also like to recognise the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander National Consultancy Group Members, and the dedicated professionals who inform our work for the wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families.

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Healing through voice, culture and Country: Short film 1

Healing on Country - Shirley Young

In this short film, you will hear Shirley talk about her personal and professional experiences when responding to family violence. She will discuss the challenges families encounter when seeking support from services, and provide practitioners with an insight into some strategies that support healing.



Learning objective

A key ingredient in this work is genuine belief and hope in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and families. Whilst there are many complex issues facing Community, including deep trauma, there is also great strength and strong culture.

▶ [Watch this short film: Healing on Country](#)

Consider the following questions individually, or in a group:

1. Families come with extended supports, like Shirley provides for her daughter. How would you hear about these supports and include them in your practice?
2. Why do you think it was important for Shirley to highlight, 'my daughter's experience wasn't by an Aboriginal man'?
3. Shirley spoke about her daughter not appearing to hear. What are the common assumptions about mothers who 'go back'? How can you ensure you are aware of these types of assumptions, and you are mindful about how they may influence your practice?
4. Shirley spoke about outcome-based interventions in the context of organisational requirements. How can you balance these requirements, whilst remaining focused on supporting the experiences of the person in front of you?

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Healing through voice, culture and Country: Short film 2

Daniel's stories – Justin Grant, Melodie Reynolds–Diarra

This short film describes the process of making Daniel's stories, a fictional storyline developed by Emerging Minds for our online courses about responding to family and domestic violence. The storyline follows Daniel, a young boy who has been put into his nanna's care due to family violence at home. You will hear how important storytelling can be for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. You will also see how this process utilised the lived experience of producers and script writers, to ensure the voice of children was central in this work.



Consider the following questions individually, or in a group:

1. How can you ensure the voice of children is present when you work with families?
2. Justin speaks of being in a world foreign to his own. How can you minimise this feeling for the families who are seeking support from your service?
3. Melody speaks of the shame that is present for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. What is the recipe she describes to heal trauma for families?
4. How could you ensure Melody's recipe for healing is included in your practice?

Learning objective

Working in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander family violence space can be some of the most difficult work practitioners can do. Practitioners need to walk alongside families and communities with complex dynamics, navigating the underlying trauma as they work with families to minimise the risk of harm and create safety.

▶ Watch this short film: [Daniel's stories](#)

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Healing through voice, culture and Country: Short film 3

Wound – Melanie Koolmatrie, Kenneth Johnson, Angel Neveah Rigney

In this short film you will hear Melanie and Kenneth talk about the impact that family violence and its aftermath has on families and children. You will hear their personal stories of healing, and how cultural practices such as ceremonies, connecting to Country and cultural knowledge have supported their journeys. They also speak about the gender stereotype Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men face, and how this discourse prevents opportunities to seek support.

Learning objective

Understanding the intersectional approach when working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. This involves recognising gender, colonisation, culture and racism as intersecting factors that result in experiences of entrenched gender inequality for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.



Consider the following questions individually, or in a group:

1. Melanie speaks of practices that have supported her healing, such as dancing and weaving. Consider how you could support a family by including these practices in your work: what would this look like?
2. There is a story of resilience described in this video. How do you hear these narratives in your practice?
3. Discuss some of the discourse you hear about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men and family violence.
 - How do you acknowledge the intersecting factors for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men, whilst maintaining women's and children's safety?
 - How do you seek out stories that challenge and/or expand this discourse?

▶ Watch this short film: [Wound](#)

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Healing through voice, culture and Country: Short film 4

Cut me - Karnage N Darknis

In this video you will hear from Karnage N Darknis, two Aboriginal singer/songwriters, who talk about highlighting their concerns around family violence in their song *Cut me*. You will hear their personal stories, and about their efforts to break the family violence cycle for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. You will also hear how the media contributes to the story of disadvantage and deficit, rather than hope and resistance.



Learning objective

Non-Indigenous practitioners have a responsibility to resist cultural biases and instant deficit judgements when listening to stories of family violence. The desire to end violence in communities is strong, as evidenced by the many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations, communities and people working tirelessly across Australia to rebuild and restore hope for children.

Consider the following questions individually, or in a group:

1. How can you better understand your own cultural biases when working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and children? How would Aboriginal people know that you are aware: what would this look like?
2. How can you see behind the dominant story of disadvantage portrayed in the media?
3. What is the story of resistance and breaking the cycle of violence in this video?

▶ Watch this short film: [Cut me](#)

This resource was co-designed by:



Ngaanyaljarra
Pijantjatjara
Yankunytjatjara
Women's Council



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