

Expert Advisory Group

An Expert Advisory Group (EAG) was established to provide strategic advice to the research team throughout the study. This included reviewing and providing advice and guidance pertaining to the study implementation, interpretation of findings and development of appropriate resources.

Expert Advisory Group members

The EAG were all senior respected Aboriginal people with strong understandings of the needs of older Aboriginal people.
Mr Graham Aitken - Aboriginal Community Services
Ms Mandy Ferber - Wami Kata Old Folks Home Inc.
Mr David Crompton - Moorundi Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Service Inc.
Ms Christine Franks - South Australian Health and Medical Research Institute

Chief Investigators

Prof Annette Braunack-Mayer - School of Health and Society, University of Wollongong
Dr Carol Davy - The Society of Saint Hilarion Inc. Aged Care
Dr Helen Barrie - School of Social Sciences, University of Adelaide

Project Team

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Resource Links

Williams, R., *Cultural safety - what does it mean for our work practice?* Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health, 1999. **23**(2): p. 213-214.

Ageing and Aged Care, Single Quality Framework. Available from agedcare.health.gov.au/quality/single-quality-framework-focus-on-consumers

For further information please email wardliparingga@sahmri.com or phone **8128 4274**.

All training materials can be accessed via SAHMRI's website at sahmriresearch.org/our-research/themes/aboriginal-health/research-list/cultural-safety-in-aged-care



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Culturally Safe Workforce Models for Rural and Remote Indigenous Organisations

Ensuring the Cultural Safety of Older Aboriginal People in Aged Care

This study was informed by the knowledge that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are living longer, therefore providing good quality aged care services that are acceptable and culturally appropriate is essential. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people face several barriers to accessing appropriate aged care services in their communities, particularly in rural and remote communities. A significant barrier is the lack of culturally responsive services.

One of the key challenges facing aged care organisations is the lack of suitably trained staff that can meet the needs of older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Funded by the Australian Government through the Dementia and Aged Care Services Fund, the aim of this project was to work collaboratively with rural and remote Aboriginal aged care organisations to develop, pilot and evaluate evidence-based models for culturally safe aged care.

To realise this aim, the study team spoke with older Aboriginal people to gain their perspectives on cultural safety relevant to their aged care needs. The views of older Aboriginal people from three South Australian rural and remote settings contributed to information which assisted in the development of a *Cultural Safety in Aged Care* training program. The training program introduced participants from aged care organisations to six principles of culturally safe aged care.



The Principles of Culturally Safe Aged Care

The following principles describe culturally safe aged care services that protect, support, help and care for Aboriginal Elders.

- 1. Respecting Aboriginal life, traditions and living culture**
Aged care services can demonstrate cultural safety by understanding and respecting the cultural beliefs, protocols and practice, and supporting an older person to maintain cultural connection.
- 2. Create and maintain Aboriginal friendly spaces**
Include public acknowledgment of traditional owners of Country. Consider how internal and external spaces are used to support the physical, social and emotional wellbeing of an older person.
- 3. Provide buildings that meet Aboriginal Elders' and their communities' needs**
Co-design facilities under the direction, views and opinions of Aboriginal Elders.
- 4. Employ Aboriginal staff**
Prioritise employment of Aboriginal people.
- 5. All aged care staff work toward cultural competence**
Ensure training to support the development of respectful relationships and ability to work in cross cultural settings.
- 6. Be an advocate for and with Aboriginal Elders and their communities**
Support Aboriginal Elders to access health and community services.

Ensuring organisations can apply these principles of culturally safe aged care will improve the acceptability and accessibility of community and residential aged care services for Aboriginal communities, and support the implementation of the new *Aged Care Quality Standards*, the *Single Quality Framework* (2019).



Wardliparingga Aboriginal Health Equity

The Wardliparingga Aboriginal Health Equity Research Theme within the South Australian Health and Medical Research Institute (SAHMRI) conducts research that is of direct relevance to Aboriginal people in South Australia. Our research is focused on the significant gap between the health status and life opportunities available to Aboriginal people when compared to other Australians.

Wardliparingga's goal is to generate positive, long-term change for Aboriginal families and communities in South Australia. We are forming partnerships with key stakeholders and community groups to achieve the best possible outcomes. We value the input and feedback from a wide range of stakeholders, particularly Aboriginal people, their communities and their organisations.

Wardliparingga is a Kurna term. Its meaning is 'house river place' and is also the name for the Milky Way reflected in the River Torrens, alongside of which SAHMRI is located.

The Aboriginal Research Team

An Aboriginal Senior Research Fellow was appointed to co-ordinate the study and was responsible for engaging with community leaders, groups and local organisations at the three field sites chosen for the project. Aboriginal researchers were responsible for interviewing participants during the data collection phase, as well as contributing to the analysis and interpretation of data, and the development of the *Cultural Safety in Aged Care* training materials.



Change Champions

A *Cultural Safety in Aged Care* training workshop was held in Adelaide over three days. The training workshop was attended by participants who were selected as 'Change Champions' by their managers, from both community and residential aged care service providers. The organisations' service sites were located in rural and remote South Australia, a remote community in Northern Territory and a regional centre in Queensland.

As Change Champions, their role was to introduce the six principles of culturally safe aged care to their organisations. Each Change Champion developed an action plan based on the six principles, and each organisation piloted the implementation of one or more of the principles at their aged care service over a three-month period. We were able to test how the training and resources could assist organisations to apply the cultural safety principles, with a view to strengthening or improving the acceptability and accessibility of community and residential aged care services for older Aboriginal people.



Training Materials

The six principles of culturally safe aged care provided the foundation to the training. The training presentations focused on:

- What did our participants tell us?
- What are the benefits to aged care organisations?
- What are the opportunities for aged care organisations?
- What can an aged care organisation do?

At the conclusion of the *Cultural Safety in Aged Care* training, participants provided an evaluation of the applicability of the program content to their work practice and their organisation. They reported high levels of satisfaction with the training, increased knowledge and understanding about cultural safety in aged care for older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.



Cultural Safety in Aged Care training participants and members of the research team.



Opportunities for Implementation

This project was conducted within the context of recent aged care reforms in Australia, including the introduction of the new *Aged Care Quality Standards*, the *Single Quality Framework* (2019). The findings from our interviews with older Aboriginal people and the six principles of culturally safe aged care are consistent with how organisations will be assessed and monitored against the *Single Quality Framework*. As part of the *Single Quality Framework*, all aged care services are now required to provide evidence which demonstrates their continuous improvement in tailoring services and delivering care that meets the diverse life experiences of all consumers. Each of the eight standards include an intended consumer outcome and explicit requirements that organisations must demonstrate in producing these outcomes. Culturally safe service delivery, environments and workforce are comprehensively interwoven throughout each standard.

Suggested strategies for implementing the principles of culturally safe aged care include

Respecting Aboriginal life, traditions and living culture

Support older Aboriginal people to stay connected to Country and to continue their cultural practices.

Create and maintain Aboriginal friendly spaces

Display Aboriginal artwork, posters and artefacts within aged care services.

Provide buildings that meet Aboriginal Elders' and their communities' needs

Design multi-generational facilities that provide ample space for family and community to visit, share stories and knowledge.

Employ Aboriginal staff

Allocate adequate resources over the long-term to support targeted employment strategies and initiatives.

All aged care staff work toward cultural competence

Provide ongoing cultural competence training for all staff.

Be an advocate for and with Aboriginal Elders and their communities

Build relationships and networks with both mainstream and Aboriginal-specific organisations, and support older Aboriginal people to access health and community services.

While this project focussed on Aboriginal organisations in rural and remote areas, the cultural safety training and resources developed will be relevant to Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal aged care services across Australia.