



Wardliparingga Aboriginal Health Equity

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Adelaide, South Australia

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1. Background to this resource

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population is ageing at a much faster rate than the non-Indigenous population. As of June-2018, it was estimated more than 123,000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were aged 50 years or over (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2018). The total Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population is projected to grow to approximately 1,060,000 (3.8 per cent of the total population) by 2031, a rise from 3.0 per cent in 2011 (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2014). While the total Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population is projected to grow by 59 per cent between 2011 and 2031, the population aged 65 and over is projected to grow by 200 per cent (Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research, 2013).

This change in age profile, coupled with the complex health and social needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, requires action by the aged care system, including government, mainstream providers and specialist providers, to respond to increased service demands in both residential and home care environments. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people experience health and support needs that differ from those of other older Australians. For example, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have a life expectancy that is approximately 10 years less than the general Australian population (Australian Health Ministers' Advisory Council, 2017) and experience dementia at rates between 3-5 times higher than the general population (Radford et al 2015, LoGiudice et al, 2016).

2. The need for culturally safe aged care

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are more likely to require aged care services at a younger age than non-Indigenous Australians because of the multiple complex health conditions they experience. Despite an increased need for aged care at an earlier age, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people face several barriers to accessing appropriate services in their communities, particularly in rural and remote communities. A significant barrier is the lack of culturally responsive services, (Australian Association of Gerontology Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Ageing Advisory Group, 2018). When Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people perceive that services are not culturally safe, they will avoid those services. Most Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people do not have access to culturally appropriate residential aged care services specifically tailored to their needs. Of those who access residential aged care, 78% obtain services from a mainstream provider due to the lack of tailored services (Australian National Audit Office, 2017).

3. About this resource

This resource "Cultural Safety in Aged Care" was prepared by the Wardliparingga Aboriginal Health Equity Theme within the South Australian Health and Medical Institute (SAHMRI), as part of the research study *"Culturally Safe Workforce Models for Rural and Remote Indigenous Organisations."*

In this study older Aboriginal peoples' were interviewed about their views and experiences of culturally safe and unsafe practices. Six principles, listed below were identified that organisations should work towards, endorsed by the older Aboriginal people interviewed. Connection to culture and maintaining cultural identity was paramount to how aged care organisations should design and deliver aged care services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Organisations that facilitate genuine connection to their clients' culture, Country and community through the type of services and activities offered and in how they worked with older people were seen as culturally safe.

This resource provides a guide and training opportunity for aged care organisations and practitioners to help improve the cultural safety of care for older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The content provided in this resource package is intended to be used by organisations that provide aged care services to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander persons. It aims to:

- enhance the level of knowledge and understanding of ways to effectively and appropriately care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- enhance organisations' capacity to provide a culturally responsive service that meet the needs of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander clients.

The resource package consists of presentations that explore key concepts, benefits and suggestions for working towards the six principles of culturally safe aged care for older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people into practice.

1. *Respecting Aboriginal life, traditions and living culture,*
2. *Create and maintain Aboriginal friendly spaces,*
3. *Provide buildings that meet Aboriginal Elders' and their communities' needs,*
4. *Employ Aboriginal staff,*
5. *All aged care staff work toward cultural competence; and*
6. *Be an advocate for and with Aboriginal Elders and their communities.*

Each presentation addresses the following questions.

1. What did we learn from Aboriginal Elders about their cultural safety needs in aged care?
2. What are the benefits to aged care organisations?
3. What are the opportunities for aged care organisations?
4. What can an aged care organisation do?

4. How to use this resource

The presentations are most suited to an interactive format where all participants have the opportunity to consider and discuss the content. For example, as part of staff training days or meetings, or when working with small groups. You may want to run the sessions over a number of days or weeks focusing on a different principle each session, for example, bite size tool box sessions. Alternatively, you could run the sessions as full day training programs, (for example, over two or three days).

The questions included throughout the presentations and accompanying workbook are intended to provide a starting point to generate the sharing of ideas, knowledge and experiences.

5. Further information

This project was funded by the Australian Government through the Dementia and Aged Care Services Fund with the aim of assisting rural and remote Aboriginal aged care organisations to develop and maintain a culturally safe workforce. Full details of the project are available on the SAHMRI website.

You are welcome to use this material at any time. However, we do ask that you reference Wardliparingga Aboriginal Health Equity whenever utilising within a public domain. The following is a suggested citation format:

Wardliparingga Aboriginal Health Equity (2019). Presenter Guide [name of guide]. Adelaide, SA, South Australian Health & Medical Research Unit.

A list of suggested readings and helpful resources is included within each presentation.

Note: The included URLs that link to reports and/or websites are correct and active at the time of publishing this resource (December 2019).

References

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- Australian Bureau of Statistics (2014) 3238.0 - Estimates and Projections, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, 2001 to 2026 <https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Latestproducts/C19A0C6E4794A3FACA257CC900143A3D?opendocument>
- Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2018) GEN Aged Care Data. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people using aged care.: <https://www.gen-agedcaredata.gov.au/Resources/Dashboards/Aboriginal-and-Torres-Strait-Islander-people-using>
- Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research (2013). CAEPR Indigenous Population Project 2011 Census Papers. Paper 14: Population Projections. No. 14/2013 (pg 7). <http://caepr.anu.edu.au/publications/censuspapers.php>
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- Lo Giudice D , Smith K, Fenner S, Hyde Z, Atkinson D, Skeaf L, Malay R, Flicker L (2016) Incidence and predictors of cognitive impairment and dementia in Aboriginal Australians: A follow-up study of 5 years Alzheimer's & Dementia 12 252-261
- Radford K, Mack H., Draper B, Chalkley S., Daylight G., Cumming R, Bennett H, Delbaere K, Broe G., 11 (2015) *Prevalence of dementia in urban and regional Aboriginal Australians* Alzheimer's & Dementia 271-279

