

Enhancing Cultural Inclusion and Cultural Safety in Mainstream AOD Residential Rehabilitation Programs– WHOS (We Help Ourselves) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Engagement Program Initiatives.

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Background: WHOS has seven residential rehabilitation services and five-day programs across NSW and QLD; five of these services in Lilyfield NSW. In 2018 WHOS Lilyfield received funding from the Central and Eastern Sydney Primary Health Network to enhance cultural activities across the site.

Recognising that each year Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples represent up to 20% of all admissions led to the recruitment of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander engagement worker.

Description of Model of Care: Supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients to access and remain in a mainstream treatment program means creating a culturally safe environment and the appropriate cultural support.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander worker's program has increased cultural inclusiveness within WHOS programs and educates staff to work in a cultural framework. Reconnecting clients to culture, providing cultural groups and assisting WHOS staff to navigate cultural issues around welfare and health has been invaluable.

Effectiveness: Cultural activities have expanded with a yearly stall at the Yabun Festival and celebration across all services of important Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander events.

Projects include development of a Reconciliation Action Plan; undertaking an extensive audit of cultural appropriateness of the organisation, mapping native flora and bush tucker across the Sydney site, providing educational walking tours; cultural awareness eLearning modules in development and the establishment of a "Yarning Circle" with fire pit.

Conclusion and Next Steps: Dedicated workers within mainstream services enhance cultural support, cultural inclusivity and cultural safety for those clients choosing to access mainstream programs.

Disclosure of Interest Statement: *The APSAD recognises the considerable contribution that industry partners make to professional and research activities. We also recognise the need for transparency of disclosure of potential conflicts of interest by acknowledging these relationships in all written publications. We the authors verify that we do not have any external contribution from industry partners in work being presented.*