

YARNING ABOUT ABORIGINAL SEXUAL HEALTH: HEALTH PROMOTION RESOURCES FOR PEOPLE OF INFLUENCE

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Background/Approach: In 2015, the Aboriginal to non-Aboriginal notification rate ratios among 10 to 14 year olds in Western Australia (WA) were 39:1 for chlamydia and 813:1 for gonorrhoea (CDCD Epidemiology and Surveillance 2016). Young people who receive sexuality and relationship education (SRE) tend to have their first sexual experience at an older age and are less likely to develop sexually transmitted infections (STIs) than those who are not exposed to such information; however, SRE is not mandatory in WA schools. The WA Department of Health commissioned research to understand the role of parents/carers in the provision of SRE to Aboriginal youth. Focus groups were conducted with 81 Aboriginal parents/carers in urban and rural WA.

Analysis/Argument: Analysis of focus group data revealed that parents/carers:

- were concerned about teen pregnancies and STIs in Aboriginal youth
- recognised the importance of SRE but often found it difficult to have conversations due to shame or lack of confidence/knowledge
- wanted both a hard copy and online resource to support them to deliver SRE.

Outcome/Results: The focus group discussions were used to develop a hard copy SRE resource for parents/carers of Aboriginal youth (*Yarning Quiet Ways*, hereafter YQW). Over 5,500 copies of YQW have been distributed to Aboriginal medical services, child and parent centres, community nurses, child protection workers and non-government organisations in WA. YQW is complemented by a website www.letsyarn.health.wa.gov.au (which provides parents/carers, teachers and health professionals with links to sexual health and relationships resources developed by government and non-government agencies. The website receives an average of 200 visits per month.

Conclusions/Applications: YQW appears to be the first Australian resource specifically designed to build the capacity of parents/carers to deliver SRE to Aboriginal youth. YQW has also been used in workshops to build parent/carer skills and confidence. Data are being collected to evaluate the resource.

Disclosure of Interest Statement: *The authors worked on the development of the resources as employees of WA Health.*