

## **Story of AHP (Aboriginal Health Practitioner) led sexual health workshops**

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### **Background/Purpose:**

The Northern Territory (NT) has the highest rates of sexually transmitted infections in Australia. Aboriginal-led programs are identified as best practice to improve the access to sexual health related care and clinical outcomes in young Aboriginal people. However, there has been a lack of sexual health Aboriginal-led workforce development opportunities for clinical and non-clinical roles across the NT.

### **Approach:**

The Aboriginal Sexual Health (ASH) workshop was designed by Aboriginal Health Practitioners, for clinical and non-clinical Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in youth, community, education and health sectors.

The workshops prioritised Aboriginal speakers to help normalise sexual health and to provide examples of how community leaders promote sexual health in their communities in urban and remote NT. The ASH workshop program builds on the existing knowledge of our Aboriginal workforce and includes men's and women's yarning circles, community stories, hands on health promotion activities, communication tips and resource sharing, while also providing a syphilis and STI update for that local region.

Through the AHP-led approach, these workshop prioritised peer to peer learning in a culturally safe environment to develop their skills, their knowledge, build confidence and highlight local community projects that support their young people's sexual health.

### **Outcomes/Impact:**

Initial evaluations from the five workshops in 2022-23 report increases in confidence to discuss safe sexual practices and talking to young people about sexual health as well as improvement in clinical sexual health knowledge.

We have initial ethics approval to evaluate future workshop and planning to measure Aboriginal workforce confidence in talking about sexual health and normalise STI testing for young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

### **Innovation and Significance:**

We recognise the value and importance of non-clinical roles outside the clinic (community workers, health promotion officers, alcohol and other drugs, and youth workers) to support the wider STI control activities.

The ASH workshop intentionally highlights Aboriginal community strengths and knowledge by providing a space for mob to learn from each other.

### **Disclosure of Interest Statement:**

Nil