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Learning Resource:

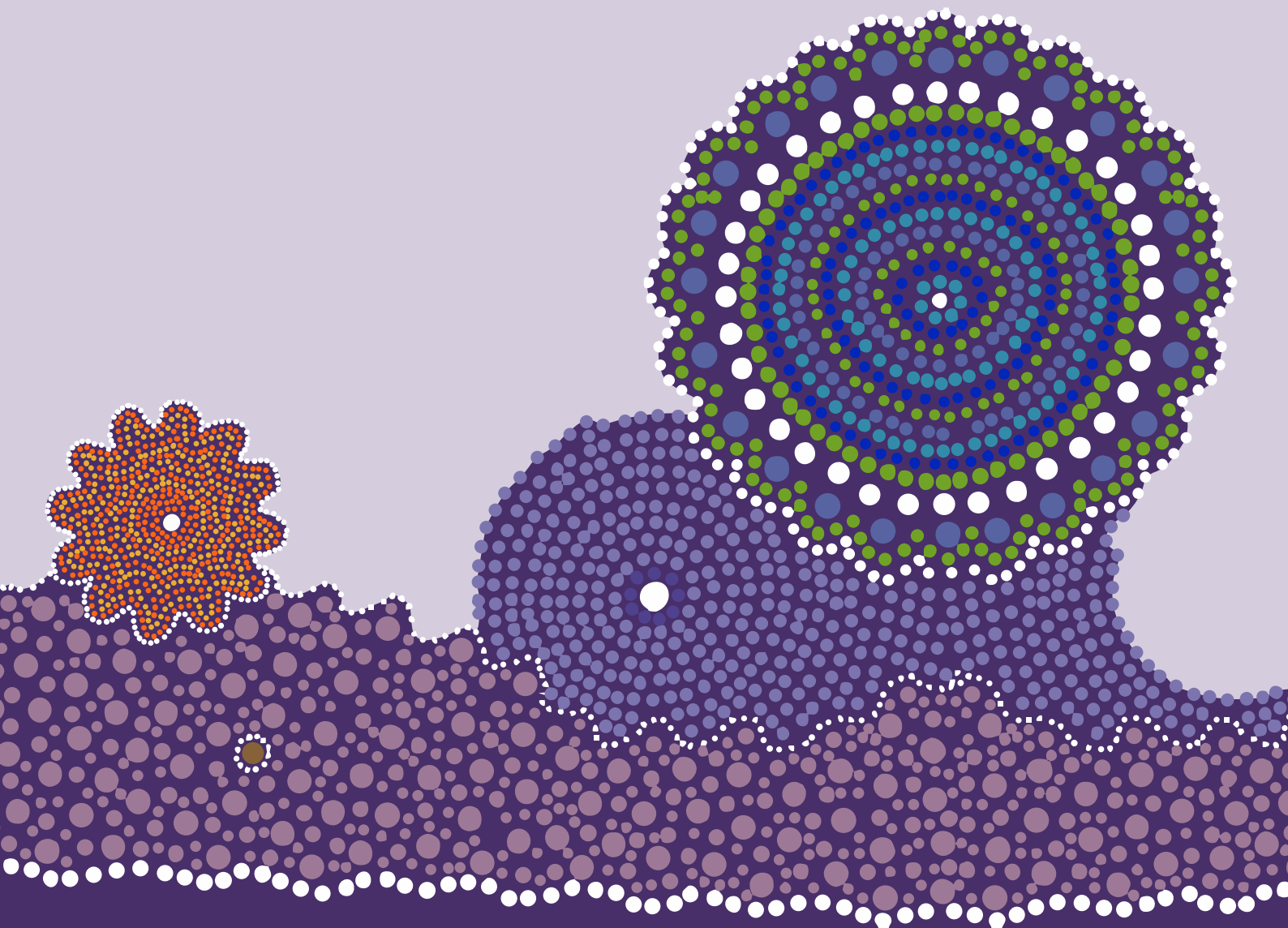
Working Together and the Psychology Board of Australia
Professional Competencies for Psychology - Competency 8

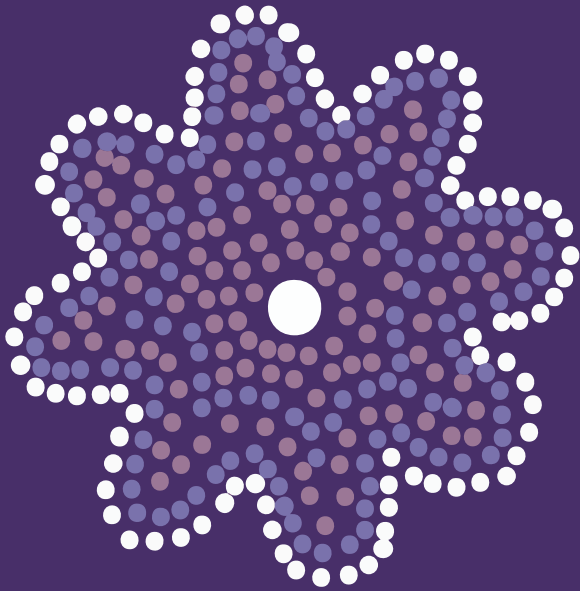


AIPEP
Australian Indigenous
Psychology Education Project
www.indigenoupsyched.org.au



Transforming Indigenous
Mental Health and Wellbeing
www.TIMHWB.org.au





We acknowledge and pay our respects to the sovereign custodians of the lands where we are situated today, and to Elders past and present. We also wish to acknowledge and respect the continuing culture, strength, and resilience of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities.

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About this resource

Psychology Board of Australia (PsyBA) has announced critical reforms in psychology professional practice standards to better meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, families and communities. These reforms align with the [Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency \(Ahpra\) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Safety Strategy \(2020-2025\)](#) which governs psychological training, accreditation, and practice in Australia. Central to the reform is a greater emphasis on cultural safety and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health equity and human rights. The changes will come into effect from December 1st 2025, including:

- New [Code of Conduct](#).
- Updated [professional competencies](#) for psychologists (the professional competencies)

To meet the minimum threshold for the new professional competencies by December 1st 2025 commencement date, PsyBA encourages readers to self-assess against the professional competencies using the [self-assessment template](#) to support continuing professional development learning plan and ensure they meet competencies relevant to scope of practice. PsyBA has provided a useful [Factsheet](#) on Competency 8 which includes a sampling of Indigenous-authored resources for learning at foundational, intermediate and advance training levels. The [Australian Indigenous Psychology Education Project \(AIPEP\)](#) has developed this resource to compliment the existing PsyBA Factsheet. To simplify development of learning plans these resources are mapped to the Competency 8 sub-competencies. Other relevant professional competencies and aspects of the Code of Conduct are provided to reflect the holistic and integrated nature of the enhanced professional standards.

The goal of this AIPEP learning resource is to support capacity building of the psychology workforce to align with the changes to [professional practice standards](#) from 1st December 2025. This AIPEP learning resource may be useful for anyone in their psychology journey, including:

- Students of psychology programs as well as lecturers and course convenors
- Provisional psychologists
- Registered psychologists (including with an area of practice endorsement)
- Board endorsed supervisors including those offering Masterclasses.

This document maps PsyBA Competency 8 with each chapter of *Working Together: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Mental Health and Wellbeing Principles and Practice*. The purpose of this document is to direct those in the psychology discipline to aspects of the *Working Together* book that are relevant to PsyBA Competency 8.

Dudgeon, P., Milroy, H., & Walker, R. (2014). *Working together: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Mental Health and Wellbeing Principles and Practice*. Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, The Kids Research Institute Australia/Kulunga Aboriginal Research Development Unit in collaboration with the University of Western Australia. <https://www.thekids.org.au/globalassets/media/documents/aboriginal-health/working-together-second-edition/working-together-aboriginal-and-wellbeing-2014.pdf>

An online version of the *Working Together* book, as well as the 10-year anniversary celebration webinars series, are available via the Transforming Indigenous Mental Health and Wellbeing website: <https://timhwb.org.au/working-together-book>

The *Working Together* book is a freely available resource that offers an Indigenous and interdisciplinary perspective to mental health and social and emotional wellbeing for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Celebrating a decade since its most recent edition, the relevance of this resource as a foundational text for psychologists remains today. Many of the chapters end with **reflective questions** which are excellent learning tools for developing skills in reflexivity. We also encourage readers to engage with this resource alongside current publications sourced from Indigenous-led repositories such as [AIPEP](#), [HealthInfoNet](#), and [Lowitja](#).

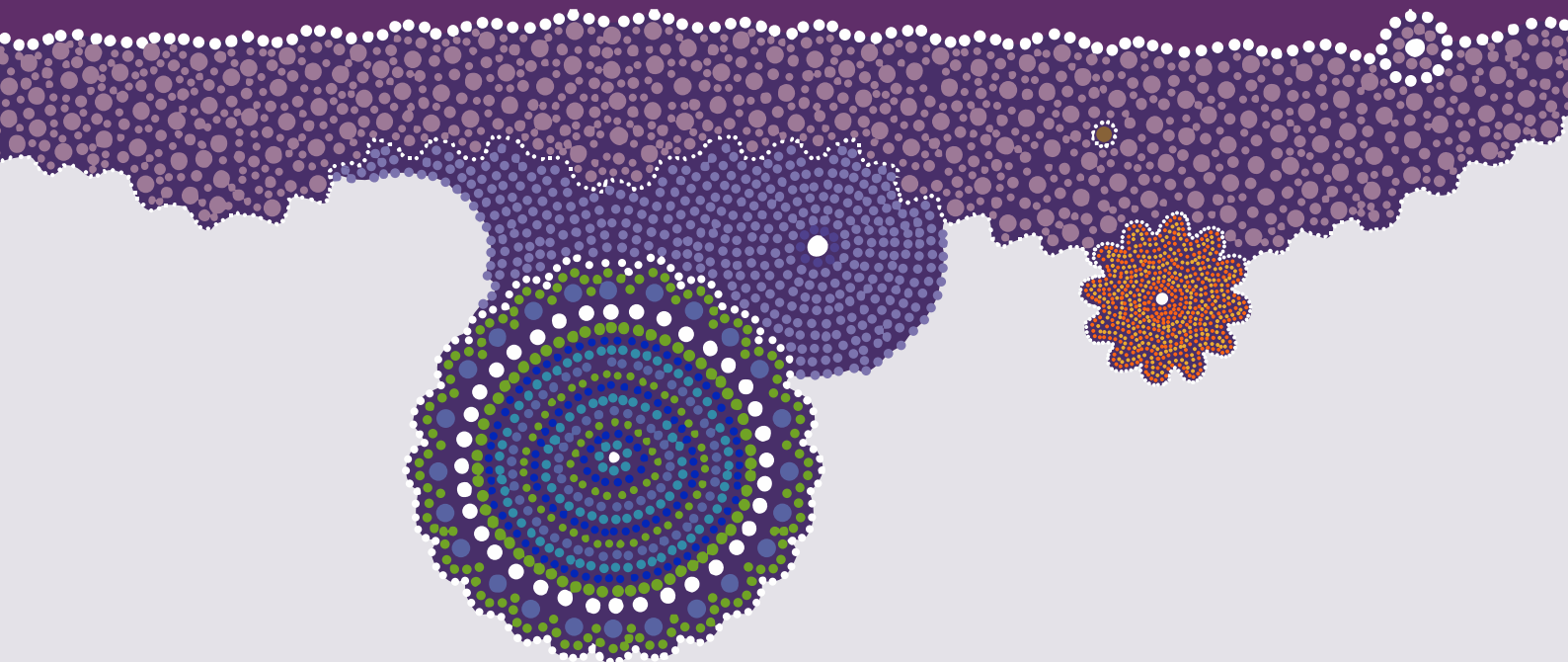
It is recommended that this AIPEP learning resource is read together with the following PsyBA documents:

- [PsyBA Code of Conduct](#)
- [PsyBA Professional Competencies](#)
- [PsyBA Fact sheet: Competency 8](#)
- [PsyBA Self Assessment Template](#)

PsyBA Competency 8:

Demonstrates a health equity and human rights approach when working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, families and communities

- 8.1 Works with knowledge and understanding of the historical, political, social and cultural context of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, families and communities, including the ongoing impacts of colonisation and racism.
- 8.2 Demonstrates culturally responsive healthcare that considers the diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, families and communities (e.g. there are different Nations, language groups, clans, culture) and that there are intersecting forms of diversity (e.g. See C7.1 for a list of diverse social identity groups).
- 8.3 Applies the principles of culturally safe care to psychological practice.
- 8.4 Applies the principles of trauma-aware and culturally informed care.
- 8.5 Demonstrates the ability to reflect on and learn from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and Aboriginal knowledges.
- 8.6 Understands the importance of self-determined decision-making for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, families, and communities, and works in partnership to achieve health outcomes within an Aboriginal health frame of reference.
- 8.7 Consults appropriately with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, families, communities and organisations to support collaboration in achieving health outcomes.



Working Together:

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Mental Health and Wellbeing Principles and Practice

Part 1: History and Contexts

Provides an overview from a historical, social, emotional and cultural context, within a mental health framework. Impacts of colonisation and cultural devastation in contrast to resistance, resilience, equality, empowerment and cultural recognition are discussed from a social and emotional wellbeing and psychological perspective. Progression of policies reflective of situation and time are outlined.

CHAPTER 1: Aboriginal Social, Cultural and Historical Contexts

Authors: Pat Dudgeon, Michael Wright, Yin Paradies, Darren Garvey and Iain Walker

To understand the contemporary life of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, a historical and cultural background is essential and forms the basis for further discussion relating to mental health. A brief discussion of Aboriginal culture and the history and culture of Torres Strait Islander people is offered. Overviews are given of pre-contact times, colonisation, resistance and adaptation, shifting government policies, and the struggle of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples for recognition. Indigenous identity and meanings of belonging in country, community and family are also briefly covered. Contemporary issues confronting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are included, with particular attention to the Stolen Generations, Health and Social and Emotional Wellbeing and racism. To appreciate the contemporary realities of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, their cultural ways of life need to be understood.

This section ends with **reflective questions** that invite the reader to consider our shared history and experiences with racism.

CHAPTER 2: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Mental Health: An Overview

Authors: Robert Parker and Helen Milroy

This chapter begins by examining the concepts of physical and mental health and wellbeing for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as they were understood and practiced over the majority of the last 40,000 years or more. The devastating consequences of the European colonisation of Australia for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, including poverty and racism, child safety, life stressors, trauma, Stolen Generations, substance use are described. Tracking global developments in human rights, the chapter concludes with ways the government relating to governmental policy from Australia and overseas that may assist Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to regain their 'health' that has been so significantly lost.

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Sub-
Competencies

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CHAPTER 3: A History of Indigenous Psychology

Authors: Pat Dudgeon, Debra Rickwood, Darren Garvey and Heather Gridley

This chapter discusses how the discipline and practice of psychology has been part of the colonising process influencing the mental health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. It outlines events where the discipline of psychology has been supportive of, and responsive to, the Aboriginal mental health movement, heralding the empowerment and inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples at all levels of mental health service provision. The chapter identifies key milestones in psychology, pointing to positive ways in which psychologists can work together with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to improve their social, emotional and spiritual wellbeing. The chapter examines the different ways that psychology has impacted upon Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples –through science, practice and reflective action—and how these three domains intersect and interrelate, influencing the discipline’s understanding of, and responses to, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mental health and wellbeing. Topics covered include mental functioning and intelligence testing, and there is specific consideration of the more recent Aboriginal Mental Health movement in professional psychology practice. A summary timeline of the history of psychology with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples is provided.

This chapter ends with **reflective exercises** relating to evolution of psychology as a profession in relation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and for individual practice.

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CHAPTER 4: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social and Emotional Wellbeing

Authors: Graham Gee, Pat Dudgeon, Clinton Schultz, Amanda Hart and Kerrie Kelly

This chapter examines understandings of social and emotional wellbeing (SEWB) with the aim of clarifying the relationship between SEWB, mental health and mental health disorders from an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders’ perspective. This is the seminal resource for conceptualising the SEWB framework. The chapter begins with a brief historical overview of how the term ‘social and emotional wellbeing’ emerged as a signifier of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander concepts of health. SEWB is conceptualised as multidimensional and includes mental health, but which also encompasses domains of health and wellbeing such as connection to land or ‘country’, culture, spirituality, ancestry, family, and community. The domains and guiding principles that typically characterise SEWB are outlined and situated within a framework that places Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander worldviews and culture as central. The importance of recognising social, cultural, historical and political determinants in shaping Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander SEWB is also discussed. Working within a SEWB framework involves developing an understanding of how these principles, domains and determinants manifest and operate at a local level and explore how to apply these in a practical setting.

This chapter concludes with **reflective questions** inviting the reader to consider the SEWB framework in relation to psychological thinking and professional practice.

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CHAPTER 5: The Evolving Policy Context in Mental Health and Wellbeing

Authors: Stephen R. Zubrick, Christopher Holland, Kerrie Kelly, Tom Calma and Roz Walker

This chapter outlines the role of policy in setting directions for, and achieving change in, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mental health and SEWB. Key national policies, frameworks and reports addressing mental health and social and emotional wellbeing up until mid-2013 are presented. Historical milestones surrounding key policies together with their effects on individual and community health and mental health outcomes and circumstances are described. These include the specific aims of key policies or reports; why they were developed and by whom; what they intended to achieve; and whether any programs, services, practices or processes were implemented and/or influenced. This chapter focuses on the policies intended to specifically address mental health and SEWB as well as the relevant reports and commissioned inquiries that influenced these policies. As policies and priorities are determined by Australian, state and territory governments of the day, those identified in this chapter may not necessarily reflect the policy direction of current governments but are nonetheless useful to know about within the psychology profession.

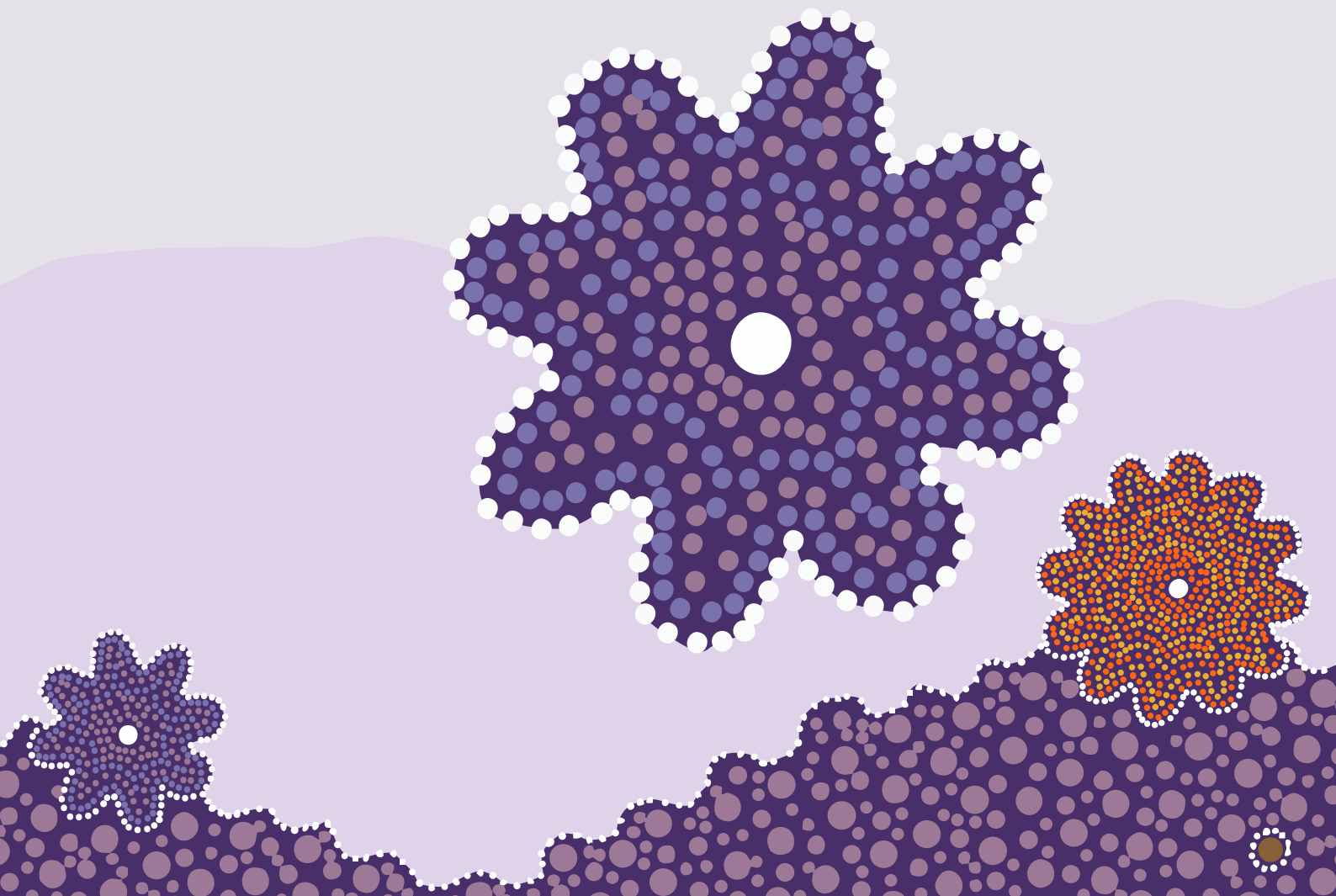
This chapter ends with **reflective questions** that invite the reader to consider how mental health policy has developed in relation to, and with, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

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Part 2: Issues and Influences

This section describes various issues and influences on people’s mental health and social and emotional wellbeing, including a clinical description and diagnosis of mental health. Substance misuse, suicide and the over-representation of people in the criminal justice system are viewed as most significantly impacting on individuals and communities.

CHAPTER 6:

Social Determinants of Social and Emotional Wellbeing

Authors: Stephen R. Zubrick, Carrington CJ Shepherd, Pat Dudgeon, Graham Gee, Yin Paradies, Clair Scrine and Roz Walker

Sub-Competencies

Other professional standards (PsyBA)

This chapter explores current understandings of the social determinants of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander SEWB and its development. It illustrates the ways determinants of SEWB are multiple, interconnected, and develop and act across the life-course from conception to late life. The theoretical frameworks linking social factors to health and their applicability in Aboriginal population contexts is first discussed, followed by how SEWB develops in individuals, with a specific focus on the broad mechanisms that prompt, facilitate or constrain SEWB in all individuals. The chapter then discusses the social determinants and processes that pose a risk to the development of poor outcomes among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as well as factors that promote or protect positive SEWB. A unique set of protective factors contained within Indigenous cultures and communities that serve as sources of strength and resilience are illustrated.

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This chapter concludes with **reflective exercises** that encourage the reader to consider the way social determinants, which are beyond the control of the individual, nonetheless can negatively impact the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients. The reader is invited to consider the role of social determinants when working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients including formulation.

CHAPTER 7:

Mental Illness in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples

Authors: Robert Parker and Helen Milroy

Sub-Competencies

Other professional standards (PsyBA)

This chapter specifically deals with mental illness, and the common types of mental disorders that affect people are discussed in terms of what Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples may have experienced in both traditional and current contexts. It is important this chapter is considered in the context of previous chapters, particularly the chapters on psychology, social determinants, and harmful substance use (see Chapters 3, 6, and 8). It is important to caution that any diagnosis of mental illness affecting an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person should be conducted by within a culturally safe context, that allows for a more accurate assessment of the person being reviewed, with recognition of culturally relevant issues, in addition to the recognised availability of adjunctive therapeutic supports, such as SEWB counsellors, to assist the person, if appropriate. The chapter does not recommend any specific treatments for the conditions discussed, however mentions a number of resources that may be used by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person suffering from mental illness and their family members to discuss available treatments with their clinician.

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This chapter concludes with **reflective questions** that invite the reader to consider, for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, how colonisation may have contributed to changes in patterns of mental health conditions; the approach to a mental health assessment; and considerations for how the family may be impacted.

CHAPTER 8: Harmful Substance Use and Mental Health

Authors: Edward Wilkes, Dennis Gray, Wendy Casey, Anna Stearne and Lawrence Dadd

In this chapter, harmful substance use and mental health among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples is reviewed. A range of issues including current substance use and related harms, SEWB and comorbidity, and the social determinants of mental health and harmful substance use are explored. The need for a multi-systemic strategy that includes cultural security/safety, evidence-based practice and enhancing the mental health workforce is suggested. An overview of services developed to address these issues is provided, as well as reporting on the usefulness of some evidence-based treatments. However, the importance of addressing social and structural determinants of good mental health are emphasised in relation to harmful substance use and mental health comorbidity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. This chapter considers four questions: What are the problems? What are the underlying issues? What is, and can be done, to address harmful substance use among Aboriginal people? What else needs to be done?

This chapter ends with **reflective questions** that invite the reader to consider the contributing reasons for rates of substance use amongst Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples; the approaches in place to address harmful substance use; and how workforce development may address key issues.

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CHAPTER 9: Preventing Suicide Among Aboriginal Australians

Authors: Sven Silburn, Gary Robinson, Bernard Leckning, Darrell Henry, Adele Cox and Darryl Kickett

This chapter begins with an overview of the recent epidemiological trends in suicide and attempted suicide for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous Australians and how this compares with the situation in other post-colonial English speaking nations such as Canada and New Zealand. It reviews studies exploring the historical and social aetiology of suicide and the nature of its occurrence and consequences within Aboriginal community contexts, offering insights into the group, community, situational and intergenerational factors associated with the increased likelihood of suicide and suicidal behaviour in some communities. The life-course study of individuals who develop suicidal behaviour or complete suicide is considered to understand why some individuals are more vulnerable to stresses which trigger or escalate suicidal behaviour. The phenomenon of suicide 'clustering' in which the idea of suicide, and suicidal behaviour appears to become socially 'contagious' is then discussed. A review of prevention, early intervention and postvention, including proactive bereavement support and containment of suicide clusters, as well as longer-term strategies for community healing following 'outbreaks of suicide' and other collectively experienced trauma is provided.

Reflective exercises are presented at the end of this chapter which invite the reader to consider their approach to working with a hypothetical client that includes family and community as well as cultural intervention.

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CHAPTER 10: Mental Disorder and Cognitive Disability in the Criminal Justice System

Authors: Ed Heffernan, Kimina Andersen, Elizabeth McEntyre and Stuart Kinner

This chapter examines what is known about the prevalence of mental disorder and cognitive disability amongst Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in contact with the criminal justice system and how these issues impact on individuals, families and communities. Even at this time of publication (a decade or more ago), there is a considerable body of evidence supporting the premise that mental disorders are a significant health challenge for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in contact with all aspects of the criminal justice system. This chapter also outlines the emerging evidence (at the time of publication) for the high rates of cognitive disability amongst Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in contact with the criminal justice system. (We encourage readers to seek out more recent evidence regarding cognitive disability in the criminal justice system for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.) The important and complex implications for mental health and disability services in meeting the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the criminal justice system is discussed.

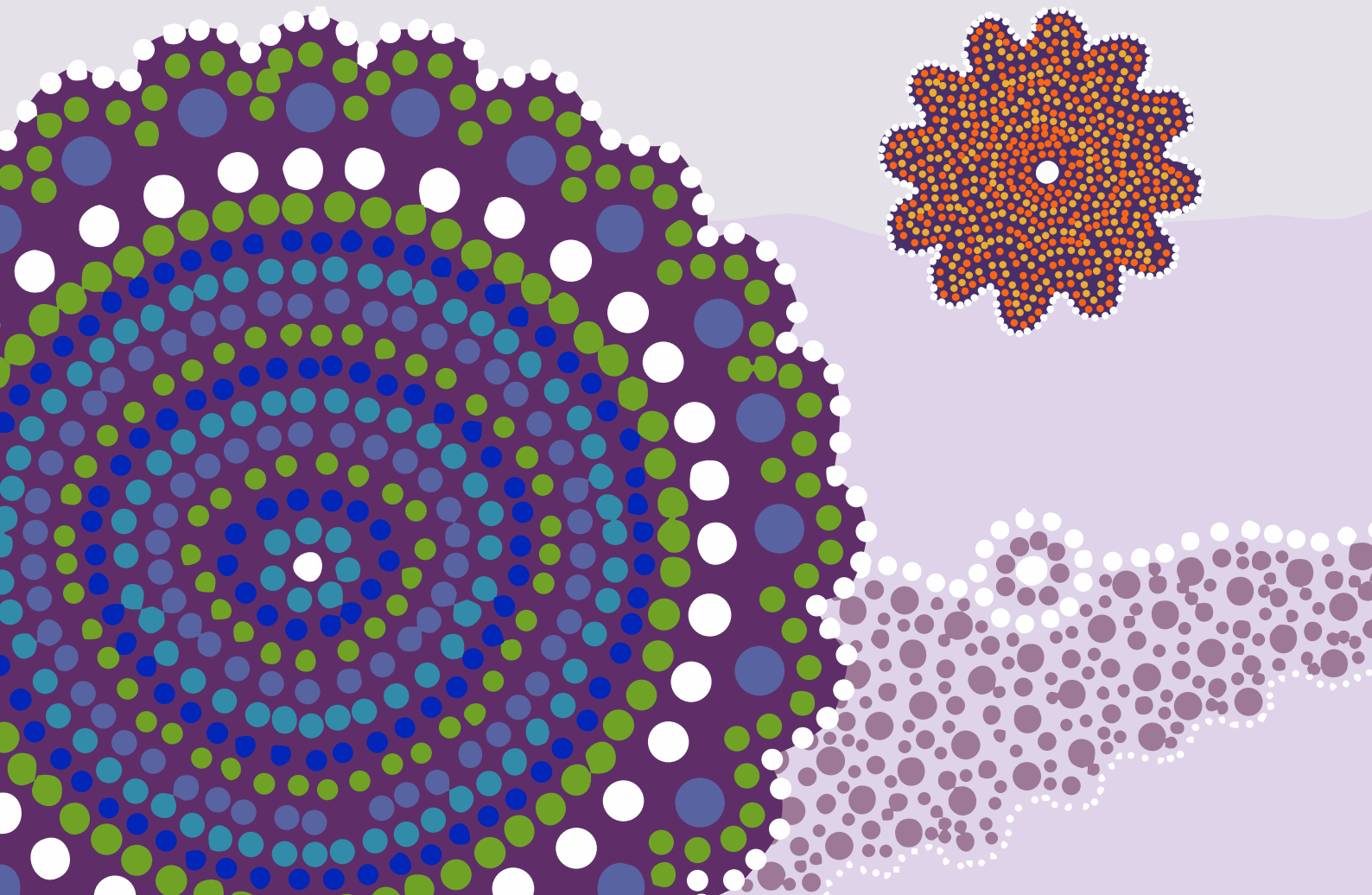
This chapter concludes with **reflective exercises** that encourage the reader to engage in the nexus of mental health and disability, social inequity and the criminal justice system for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

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Part 3: Standards, Principles, and Practice

Better health outcomes can be achieved by best work practice, which includes consideration of and working to the National Practice Standards and ensuring, where possible, support is offered within an interdisciplinary team in a culturally competent and culturally secure environment.

CHAPTER 11: Introduction to National Standards for the Mental Health Workforce

Author: Roz Walker

Sub-Competencies

Other professional standards (PsyBA)

This chapter describes what is required as a professional practitioner working in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mental health, with regard to the principles, standards and practice frameworks that contribute to the capacity and empowerment of practitioners and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients, families and communities. The National Practice Standards for the Mental Health Workforce 2013 (the practice standards) are intended for the five professions that contribute significantly to the mental health workforce, including psychology. This chapter briefly describes how each of the chapters in Part 3: Standards, Principles and Practice embody the key practice standards that are of particular relevance to mental health and other practitioners working in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mental health. Whilst this chapter reflects policies of the time, the key principles and take-home messages remain relevant for psychology students and workforce. This chapter should be read in the context of current [Psychology professional practice standards](#).

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CHAPTER 12: Cultural Competence – Transforming Policy, Services, Programs and Practice

Authors: Roz Walker, Clinton Schultz and Christopher Sonn

Sub-Competencies

Other professional standards (PsyBA)

This chapter discusses some of the complex issues surrounding the notion of cultural competence (and what is now referred to as cultural responsiveness), and the critical need for practitioners to develop knowledge, skills, understandings and attributes to be responsive in diverse cultural settings. The argument for culturally competent (and responsive) mental health practitioners and services is situated within a human rights framework which underpins the principles, standards and practice frameworks intended to facilitate the capacity and empowerment of mental health practitioners and clients, families and communities. The National Practice Standards for the Mental Health Workforce 2013 (the practice standards) outline core competencies (including cultural competence) regarded as essential for the mental health workforce including psychology. The documented impact of these this discipline/profession and others on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples requires new ways of working that are empowering, respectful and ethical. A case is made for the importance of practitioners providing more culturally inclusive and appropriate care to increase the likelihood that clients and their carers will experience a sense of cultural safety (as well as culturally appropriate services) for Aboriginal clients, their families and communities. The elements of cultural competence (knowledge, values, skills, attributes) and related concepts (cultural awareness, respects, and safety) are defined. The dynamic and continuous nature of cultural competency (and responsiveness), and the role of critical reflexive practice are discussed. This chapter presents tools and techniques the practitioner can engage in for critical reflection. It then considers navigating the cultural interface, including considering the multiple discourses and conceptual frameworks that exist within Indigenous mental health; as well as the differences in power, knowledge, and politics that exists within services in this space.

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This chapter concludes with **self-reflexive exercises** relating to positionality, self and organisational cultural competence, and reflection on key concepts.

CHAPTER 13: Interdisciplinary Care to Enhance Mental Health and Social and Emotional Wellbeing

Authors: Clinton Schultz*, Roz Walker*, Dawn Bessarab, Faye McMillan, Jane MacLeod and Rhonda Marriott
*first co-authors

This chapter outlines the difference between multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary/interprofessional care with a focus on interdisciplinary care as a model of practice which supports equality and interconnectedness of responsibility amongst team members when working in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander contexts. The chapter describes the various practitioners that comprise interdisciplinary teams working in mental health and wellbeing contexts and their roles, including psychologists. The focus is on an interdisciplinary team approach as a culturally appropriate model to providing health and wellbeing care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients. The authors argue that its ethos of power sharing, equal relationships and interdependent collaboration is more encompassing of social and emotional wellbeing (SEWB) values and therefore more aligned to working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients. Identification of the issues and limitations of interdisciplinary practice and the means to addressing them are explored within the context of how interdisciplinary care fits into mental health best practice and human rights.

This chapter ends with a **reflective exercise** that utilises the SEWB framework and mental health best practice guidelines to consider a client scenario.

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CHAPTER 14: Reframing Aboriginal Family Caregiving

Authors: Michael Wright

This chapter reframes family caregiving from an Aboriginal perspective, including for families living with a serious mental illness. It begins by situating it within the broader social and historical conceptualisation of mental disorders, and the past and ongoing harms of mental health service and governmental policies within Australia for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. This chapter highlights the disconnection with mental health providers and their lack of knowledge of Aboriginal concepts of caregiving. Indeed, there is limited knowledge of the complexity of caregiving across the mental health sector. This chapter explores Aboriginal caregiving through multiple lenses. Firstly, through the global context for mental health and Aboriginal families; secondly, through stories of Aboriginal people's experiences of mental health and caregiving; and, thirdly, through coalescing these experiences into considerations for an Aboriginal model of caregiving. It argues that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mental health needs to be understood within the context of colonisation. Most importantly the chapter draws on the stories of Aboriginal people and their experiences of caregiving for those living with a serious mental illness to assist mental health practitioners and those working in the social services to gain a greater understanding in order to enhance their practice.

This chapter ends with **reflective exercises** centred around the practitioner's organisational policies and practices that may marginalise or support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients, families, and communities.

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CHAPTER 15: Communicating and Engaging with Diverse Communities

Authors: Pat Dudgeon and Karen Ugle

This chapter focuses on the skills and understanding required for communicating and engaging effectively with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in diverse contexts, with particular attention to the urban setting. The authors briefly discuss concepts of community and culture, such as kinship affiliations, community obligations and values of Aboriginal people. The work of the late psychiatrist, Mark Sheldon, has been influential in establishing communication and engagement strategies for mental health practitioners working in remote communities, is briefly covered. In addition, protocols for communicating and engaging with Torres Strait Islander people are included. Importantly, the various strategies discussed here are in accord with the National Practice Standards for the Mental Health Workforce 2013 and highlight the need for recognition and respect of cultural difference for all Aboriginal people.

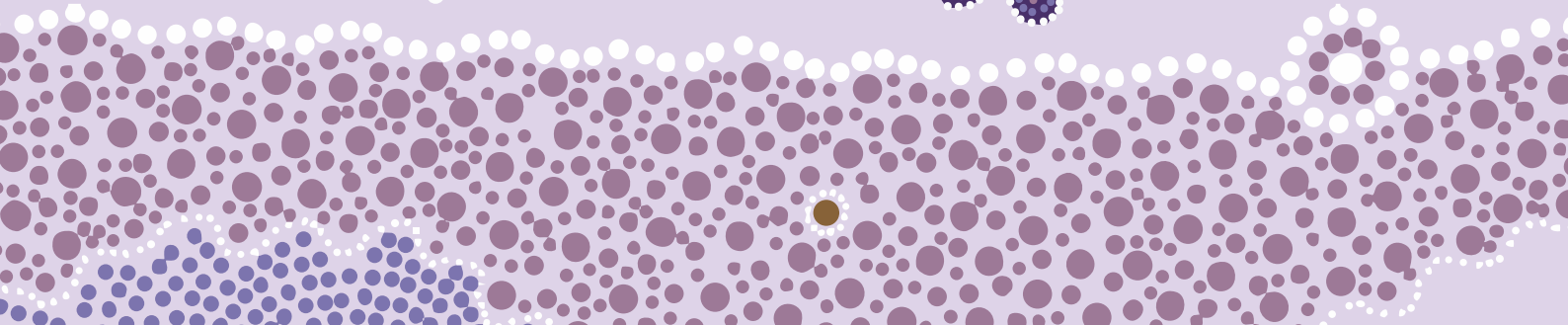
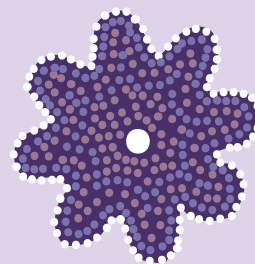
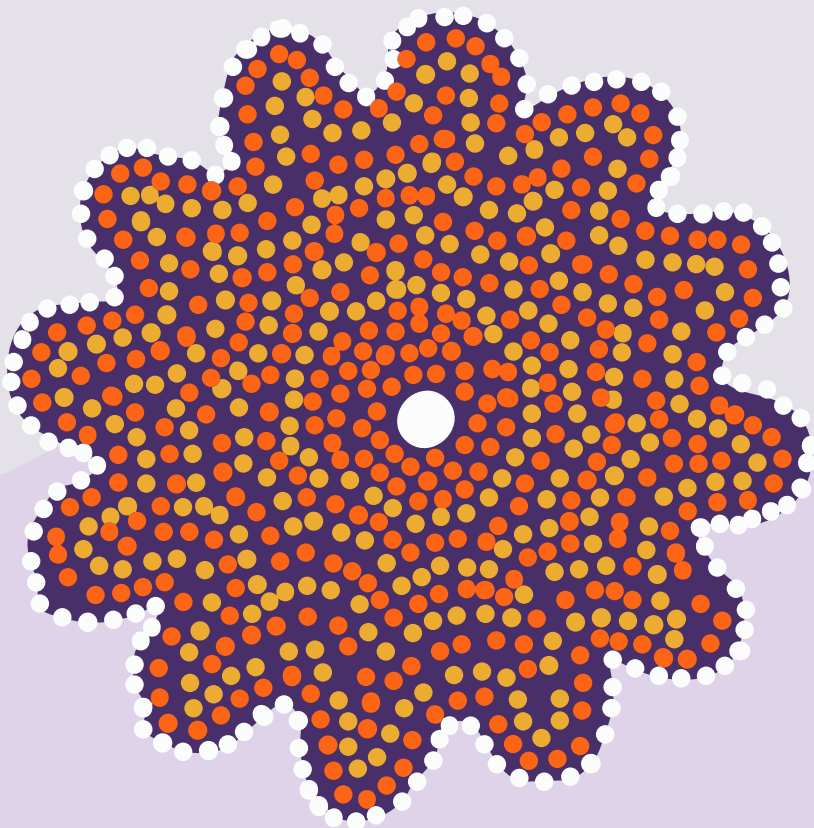
This chapter concludes with **reflective questions** relating to cultural considerations when working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

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Part 4: Assessment and Management

Assessing and managing an individual and ensuring cultural competency, cultural responsiveness, and a culturally safe environment are highlighted. Acknowledging and understanding the diversity of attributes impacting on an individual's assessment, such as trauma and transgenerational trauma and unrecognised or undiagnosed disability are considerations. A range of tools appropriate for assessment are provided.

CHAPTER 16: Principles of Practice in Mental Health Assessment with Aboriginal Australians

Authors: Yolonda Adams, Neil Drew and Roz Walker

In this chapter, concepts and history of assessment and testing in the context of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander social and emotional wellbeing and mental health are discussed. Diagnostic guidelines and the National Practice Standards for the Mental Health Workforce 2013 and their appropriateness for meeting the distinctive needs of Aboriginal people are reviewed. Various assessment tools and measures that have been validated or demonstrated utility with particular Aboriginal populations. The role of critically reflective practice when approaching assessment is highlighted, as is the potentially transformative position of the practitioner conducting assessment with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. This extends to acknowledging and enacting culturally responsive principles, procedures and practices to ensure that Aboriginal people have access to effective, culturally secure mental health care. A model of understanding mental health from an Indigenous perspective is presented, and the stages of culturally appropriate assessment are summarised.

This chapter ends with **reflective questions**.

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CHAPTER 17: Addressing Individual and Community Transgenerational Trauma

Authors: Judy Atkinson, Jeff Nelson, Robert Brooks, Caroline Atkinson and Kelleigh Ryan

This chapter provides a focus on trauma as cause and effect which, when untreated, can compound within and across generations. The result is physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, and social distress for individuals and broader social groups. While the experiences and transfer of trauma are not limited to members of specific racial or cultural groups, religions, or socio-economic levels, there is substantial evidence that trauma-related behaviours and attitudes are most prevalent in Australia's disadvantaged and disengaged communities. The chapter acknowledges that the combined effects of colonisation (and the actions it legitimised), and more recent government policies and practices (e.g. child removal), have contributed substantially to the circumstances of many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' lives today. The first section discusses conceptions of trauma; theories of its transgenerational transfer; its impact on the lives of Aboriginal families and communities, particularly the links between unresolved childhood trauma and participation in violence, sexually inappropriate behaviour, harmful substance use, and incarceration, as adolescents and adults. The second section explores the challenges associated with working in Aboriginal communities and highlights some community programs that are achieving positive results. These programs provide education and empowerment and embed trauma-recovery in all facets of their curriculum and engagement.

This chapter ends with **reflective questions**.

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CHAPTER 18: Intellectual Disability in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People

Authors: Robert Parker, Sivasankaran Balaratnasingam, Meera Roy, James Huntley and Annette Mageean

The aim of this chapter is to examine current and emerging themes in respect to intellectual disability and other forms of cognitive disability including acquired brain injury resulting in cognitive dysfunction (e.g., due to physical trauma or substance misuse), and dementia. This chapter outlines principles of culturally relevant assessment. It then addresses cooccurring psychiatric symptoms and conditions, their diagnosis, and impacts on family, for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Assessment tools (including neuropsychological tests), and limitations of their use with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples is discussed.

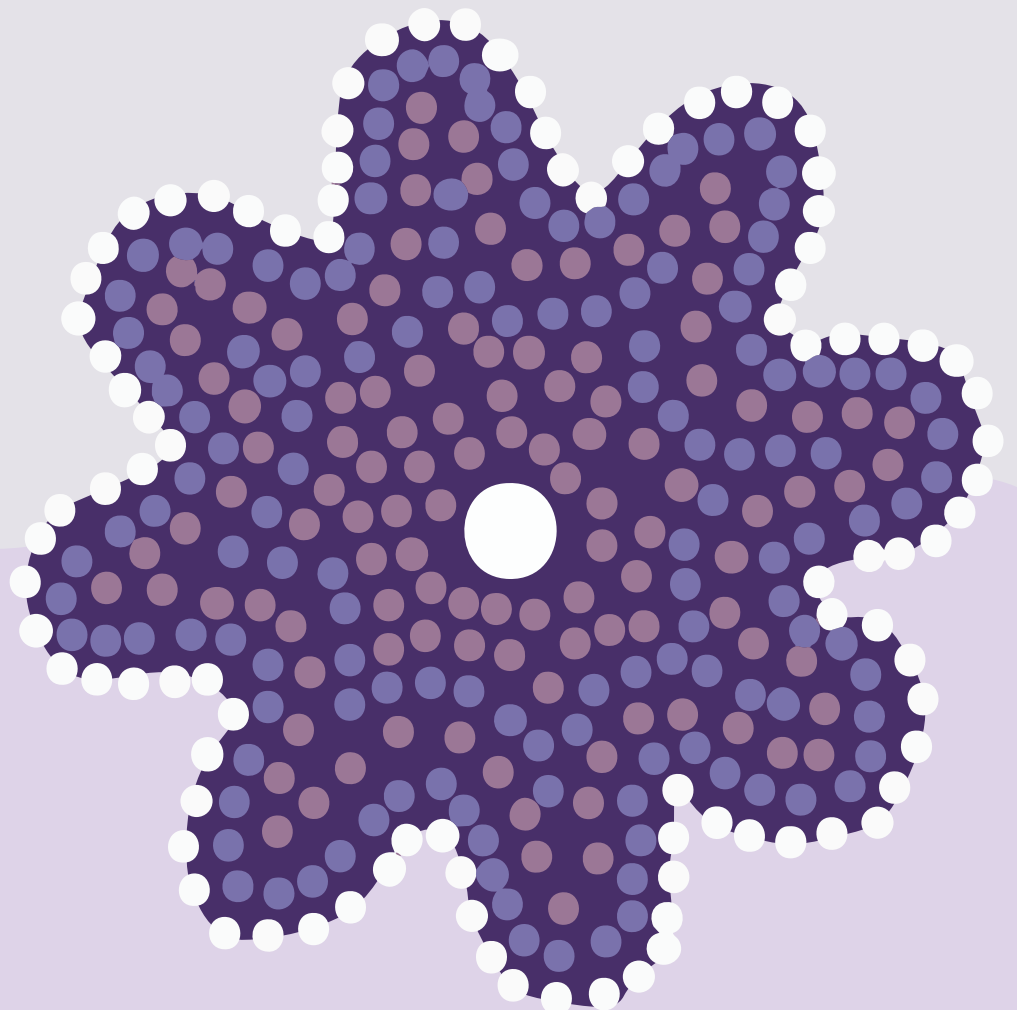
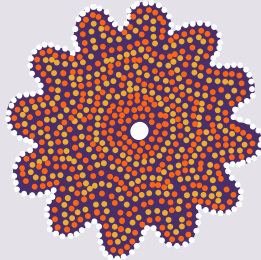
This chapter ends with **reflective questions** relating to intellectual disability and other cognitive disabilities and assessment with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

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Part 5: Working with Children, Families and Communities

This part focuses on the complex issues surrounding young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and explores ways for families and communities to deal with these issues. Issues discussed include factors influencing parental and infant mental health, addressing fetal alcohol spectrum disorder and understanding the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples children and families using case studies. Also discussed are ways of working with behavioural and emotional problems in young people and how to move forward when family violence occurs.

CHAPTER 19: Perinatal and Infant Mental Health and Wellbeing

Authors: Rhonda Marriott and Sue Ferguson-Hill

This chapter considers factors influencing parental and infant mental health and social and emotional wellbeing. Perinatal depression and anxiety is a significant health problem affecting not only mothers but also their infants, other children, partners, extended families and communities generally. The significance of infant attachment in the perinatal period (from conception to the end of the first year after the baby is born) and the importance of culture and ways of working with families in this sensitive life stage are described. Perinatal mental health is about the emotional wellbeing of pregnant women and their infants, partners and families during this time. This chapter discusses the risk and protective factors that impact on parental mental health and social and emotional wellbeing. It refers to processes of assessment and the issues related to culturally appropriate prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of perinatal depression and anxiety, and its potential impact on the infant, other children, parents, family and community. The key policies that impact on perinatal mental health and relevant preventative programs are briefly described.

This chapter concludes with a **scenario and reflective exercise** relating to a young family.

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CHAPTER 20: Addressing Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder in Aboriginal Communities

Authors: Lorian Hayes, Heather D'Antione and Maureen Carter

This chapter begins with a description of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) and examples of reported prevalence of FASD in the international context. It then draws on international and Australian studies to describe the burden of FASD, including studies relevant to the Aboriginal population. The section on the Australian context provides a description of some of the early action that has been taken in Australia to address FASD. A framework for conceptualising alcohol use and pregnancy from the perspective of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples (Life Cycle model) is presented. This model can help to address the complexities of FASD in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. A model outlining factors that influences community drinking is provided, which includes the broader social, historical, political and cultural context. The final section describes initiatives driven by local Aboriginal communities, and accepted as best practice, for addressing FASD in their communities.

The chapter concludes with questions for **reflective practice** in relation to FASD, alcohol use and consideration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives.

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CHAPTER 21: Understanding the Lives of Aboriginal Children and Families

Author: Helen Milroy

Two scenarios representing the lives of young people in an urban and rural context, respectively, are presented in this chapter with the intention of engaging the reader in the life course of young people in Aboriginal families affected by loss, grief and other traumatic life episodes. The resilience of these young people is highlighted, along with cultural and familial trajectories as a guide to consider the most appropriate pathways for action. This chapter aims to provide mental health practitioners, teachers, social workers and other community service providers with a deeper understanding of the clinical and cultural complexities that need to be taken into account when working with children and young people. These client examples also highlight the need for practitioners and policy-makers to address the many social determinants that influence Aboriginal children and young people's health, education and social and emotional wellbeing outcomes. The scenarios resonate with many of the chapters in the book, which often describe in statistical and theoretical terms the key issues impacting on young people's lives.

This chapter ends with **reflective questions** that encourage the reader to consider trauma and grief from a trauma-informed and cultural lens.

Sub-Competencies

Other professional standards (PsyBA)

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CHAPTER 22: Working with Behavioural and Emotional Problems in Young People

Authors: Roz Walker, Monique Robinson, Jenny Adermann and Marilyn A. Campbell

This chapter outlines specific issues relating to behavioural and emotional difficulties experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people. It describes the most common disorders and their impacts, and how young Indigenous people are at higher risk for developing such problems than non-Indigenous young Australians. The chapter also discusses the importance of psychosocial, cultural and environmental issues that need to be recognised in assessing and treating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people with behavioural and emotional problems. Issues concerning the delivery of both universal and culturally responsive prevention and intervention programs to address social and emotional wellbeing and mental health are discussed and possible interventions to enhance student engagement at school are provided.

This chapter ends with **reflective questions** that encourage the reader to apply knowledge shared to case studies and for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people more broadly.

Sub-Competencies

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CHAPTER 23: Family Violence: Pathways Forward

Authors: Kyllie Cripps and Michael Adams

This chapter examines the context in which various types of violence occur in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families. It explores how they define and contextualise the violence they or their family members are experiencing. This context is important in determining pathways forward for healing for the victim, the offender, their families and the broader kin network who inevitably feel the ripple effects of such violence. Drawing on the available evidence, several key considerations are presented for the development and implementation of interventions to address this violence in what is often a maze of complexities.

This chapter offers several examples and extensive **reflective questions** to assist the reader in deepening their understanding of the content.

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Part 6: Healing Models and Programs

This section presents number of culturally sensitive, culturally driven, culturally developed and culturally implemented programs and models provide pathways forward for individuals and communities. Involvement in and implementation of these culturally specific models and programs to assist individual and communities in the healing process and encouraging forward movement and positive participation in community and life are supported.

CHAPTER 24: Community Life and Development Programs – Pathways to Healing

Authors: Helen Milroy, Pat Dudgeon and Roz Walker

This chapter provides an overarching framework for understanding the components of healthy Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities through a healing and community life development approach. The chapter explores three major themes covering the nature of the colonial trauma that has occurred over many generations and continues to be experienced in the present. These are: 1) the extreme sense of powerlessness and loss of control; 2) the profound sense of loss, grief and disconnection; and 3) the overwhelming sense of trauma and helplessness. In turn, there are three pathways to recovery to address each of these areas of trauma that have occurred as a consequence of the history of colonisation and its impacts: 1) self-determination and community governance; 2) reconnection and community life; and 3) restoration and community resilience. This chapter illustrates Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander worldviews, developing a comprehensive, holistic approach that focuses on individual, family and community strengths whilst at the same time addressing the needs of the community, is both a more culturally acceptable and effective approach to address these issues.

This chapter ends with **reflective exercises** relating to these themes and pathways to recovery.

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CHAPTER 25: Enhancing Wellbeing, Empowerment, Healing and Leadership

Authors: Pat Dudgeon, Roz Walker, Clair Scrine, Kathleen Cox, Divina D'Anna, Cheryl Dunkley, Kerrie Kelly and Katherine Hams

This chapter explores the relevance of Aboriginal perspectives of empowerment, healing and leadership, as strategies to address the social inequality and disempowerment of Aboriginal people in contemporary society. These Aboriginal-led strategies are key social determinants that influence Aboriginal health, mental health and social and emotional wellbeing. Programs that facilitate Aboriginal understandings of healing, empowerment, and leadership can redress much of the grief, loss, and trauma experienced by Aboriginal families and communities. The chapter highlights the need for Aboriginal people to have ownership over the issues and the solutions to the devastation brought about from a history of social injustices and disadvantage. Based on the findings from Aboriginal community consultations in the Kimberley, this chapter outlines community-identified strategies to take charge of their lives, strengthen their families and address the unacceptable and devastating rates of suicide in their communities. Importantly, the community proposed solutions are confirmed by the extensive literature and program review undertaken as part of the Hear Our Voices project led by Professor Pat Dudgeon AM.

Sub-Competencies

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CHAPTER 26: Strong Spirit Strong Mind Model – Informing Policy and Practice

Author: Wendy Casey

This chapter explores the Strong Spirit Strong Mind model specifically in terms of its application for practitioners and policy makers, and those seeking to use a highly regarded, culturally appropriate and holistic way of working with Aboriginal clients to deal with emotional, spiritual and social problems. Strong Spirit Strong Mind articulates the importance of strengthening the Inner Spirit to enhance good decision making and support behavioural change, not only at an individual level, but also with family and community. This chapter is based on the Ngarlu model outlined in detail in Chapter 17 in the first edition of *Working Together*; the Strong Spirit Strong Mind Aboriginal Drug and Alcohol Framework for Western Australia 2011–2015; and the Strong Spirit Strong Future: Promoting Healthy Women and Pregnancies resources, which both advocate the Strong Spirit Strong Mind approach.

This chapter concludes with **reflective questions** that invite the reader to engage with the Strong Spirit Strong Mind model.

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CHAPTER 27: Red Dust Healing: Acknowledging the Past, Changing the Future

Authors: Tom Powell, Randal Ross, Darryl Kickett and James F. Donnelly

This chapter briefly describes a critical perspective on how a history of dispossession, rejection and powerlessness negatively affected Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander family structures and individual development and behaviour, and gave rise to the intergenerational transmission of trauma. The purpose of conveying the events of history and the impacts of colonisation is about giving an understanding about the impact it all has had on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families, especially men. All of this history has removed a key ingredient for a strong family—resulting in the taking away of the man as a source of love to family and the critical role and responsibility of that man. This chapter describes Red Dust Healing, an innovative and highly effective approach to assisting men and women in their efforts to heal and make better choices for themselves and in their relationships. A primary experience of those who have suffered trauma and grief, is rejection. Like an infectious disease, rejection has reached epidemic proportions in many communities, not just Aboriginal communities but wherever a person's capacity to lead a meaningful life has been crippled by the feeling of being unloved or unwanted. Red Dust Healing examines the nature of rejection, the causes of rejection, the results of rejection and most importantly the remedies for rejection. This chapter is concluded with outcome data and anecdotal reports on the life-changing and sometimes life-saving effects of this program.

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CHAPTER 28: Seven Phases to Integrating Loss and Grief

Author: Rosemary Wanganeen

This chapter describes an innovative and unique loss and grief model—the 'Seven Phases to Integrating Loss and Grief'—to 'work with' major challenges impacting on the social and emotional wellbeing and mental health in Aboriginal communities. Incorporating 25 years of personal and professional experiences, the Seven Phases model comprises a comprehensive process addressing many of the contemporary major social and emotional and health challenges being experienced within Aboriginal communities in the 21st century. As a process, the Seven Phases has two major applications: as a counselling model and a teaching tool, both of which have been evaluated as culturally appropriate and sensitive to the needs of Aboriginal people.

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CHAPTER 29: The Marumali Program: Healing for Stolen Generations

Authors: Lorraine Peeters, Shaan Hamann and Kerrie Kelly

This chapter addresses healing from trauma generated by forcible removal (Stolen Generations and their descendants). Two models developed by Aboriginal people have been evaluated and consistently identified as 'best practice' to assist those who have been forcibly removed—Link-Up family tracing and reunion services, and the Marumali Journey of Healing. Both seek to restore what the children lost when they were removed. This chapter provides insight into the Marumali Journey of Healing which works in harmony with Link-Up family tracing and reunion services to restore connections to Aboriginal identity and social, emotional and spiritual wellbeing. The Marumali Journey of Healing is grounded in Aboriginal knowledge systems, and restoring connections to spirit and spirituality is key to recovery. Counsellors are encouraged to work in collaboration with other agencies, and a number of workshops have been developed to support this. As well as training Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander counsellors, workshops have been developed to train other mental health practitioners to work in partnership with Aboriginal counsellors.

This chapter concludes with **reflective questions** that invite the reader to consider the perspective of experiencing forcible removal within their family.

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CHAPTER 30: Aboriginal Offender Rehabilitation Programs

Authors: Victoria Hovane, Tania Dalton (Jones) and Peter Smith

This chapter highlights the ongoing over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the criminal justice system and emphasises the urgent need for development of appropriate responses to this problem. A key response to this issue is through the provision of culturally secure, relevant and effective rehabilitation programs for Aboriginal people within the criminal justice system. This chapter proposes an Aboriginal psychological approach to the development, implementation and delivery of culture-specific rehabilitation programs to reduce re-offending and Aboriginal people's contact with the criminal justice system. It outlines how such an approach, that is grounded in Aboriginal Law and culture, can also accommodate standard therapeutic techniques and approaches based on the 'what works' literature and the key principles for effective intervention outlined in the Risk, Needs and Responsivity Model.

This chapter ends with **reflective questions**.

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CHAPTER 31: The Djirruwang Program: Cultural Affirmation for Effective Mental Health

Authors: Tom Brideson, Jane Havelka, Faye McMillan and Len Kanowski

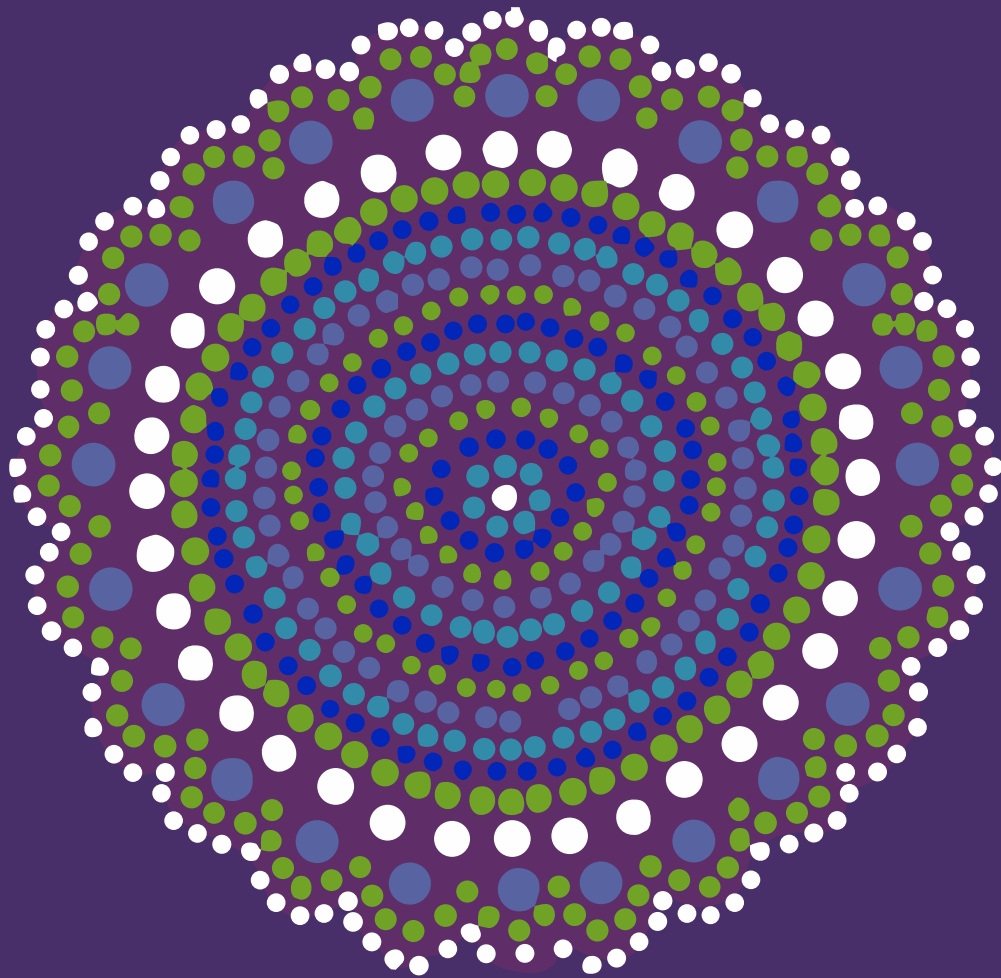
This chapter outlines the growth and development of the Djirruwang Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Mental Health Worker Education and Training Program (The Djirruwang Program) in Australia. The chapter describes what can be achieved when individuals, organisations, health disciplines and Aboriginal communities work in close partnership and learn from each other. The importance of recognising Aboriginal cultural experiences and knowledge within the mental health curriculum is emphasised, as well as providing a culturally safe environment to facilitate effective outcomes. Importantly, it stakes a claim for Aboriginal Mental Health Workers (AMHWs) as equally significant as the professions and disciplines of psychiatry, psychology, social work, nursing and occupational therapy in addressing the social and emotional wellbeing and mental health needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

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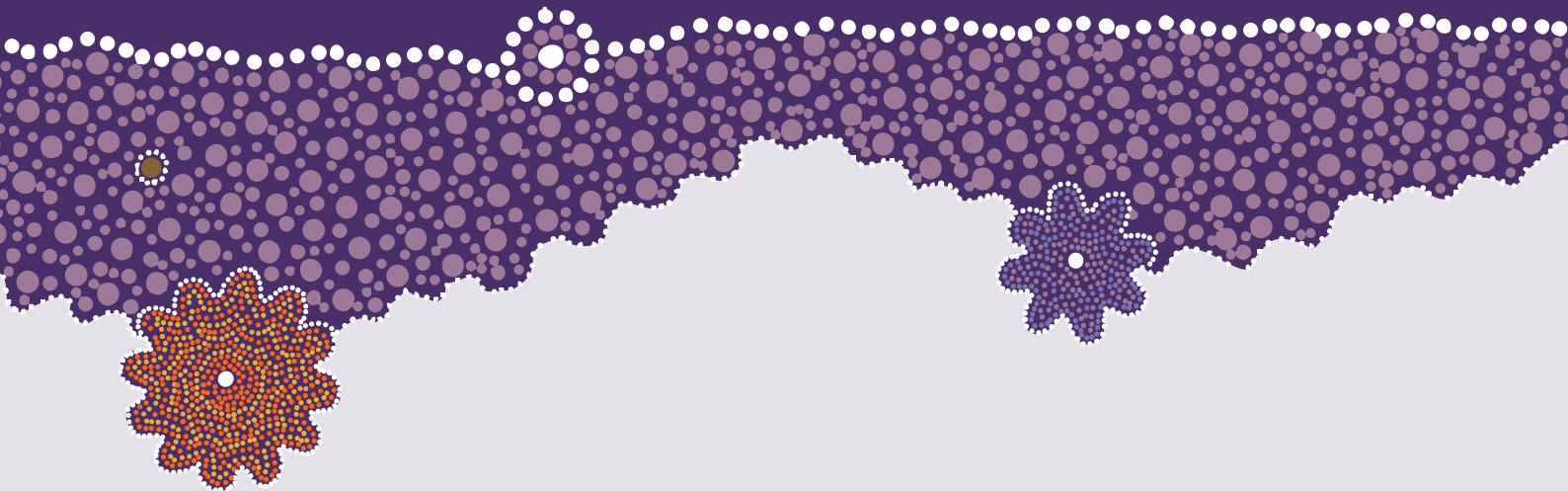
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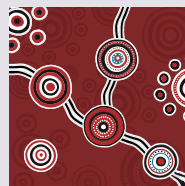


let's work together



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