

**Making It Safe:
Developing Culturally Appropriate
Child and Adolescent Mental Health
Services for the Aboriginal Community
Within a Mainstream Service**

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SA Health

A Quick Introduction to Principles of Cultural Safety

- 1. Recognition of power imbalances.**
- 2. No “cultural harm”.**
- 3. No assault, challenge or denial of identity.**
- 4. The people most able or best equipped to provide a culturally safe environment are people from the same culture.**

A Mainstream Service: Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services

- > Children and young people up to 18 years.**
 - Mostly emotional and behavioural problems.**
 - Early intervention.**
 - Assessment and therapy.**
 - Mental health professionals.**
 - Free and voluntary.**

Use of CAMHS by Aboriginal Children and Adolescents

- > High-risk group.
- > Early intervention is important.

But

- > Low rate of referrals.
- > High drop-out rate.

How To Develop a CAMHS Service that Aboriginal People Will Use

> Inspired Guess – we think we know what will work best.

or

> Consult – Aboriginal people are most likely to know what will work best.

Finding Out What Might Work

- > **Consultation with Aboriginal workers.**

- > **Literature review**
 - **SEWB policy.**
 - **Culturally sensitive practices.**

Barriers Were the Problem

- > **Mistrust of government services.**
- > **Service not known to community.**
- > **Therapists not known to community.**
- > **No Aboriginal staff.**
- > **Seen as not Aboriginal-friendly.**
- > **Seen as a “very clinical service”**
 - **Office-based.**
 - **Rigid.**
 - **Long waiting lists.**

Cultural Safety Was the Main Barrier

Recommendations for a Culturally Safe Service

- > **Designated Workers.**
- > **Aboriginal Staff.**
- > **Partnerships.**
- > **Ongoing Consultation.**
- > **Promotion.**
- > **Modified Model of Service Delivery.**

What Would Be Culturally Safe About a Service Like This?

Decreases power imbalance through

- **Increased community control.**
- **Increased client control.**
- **Cultural accountability of non-Aboriginal workers - no cultural harm.**

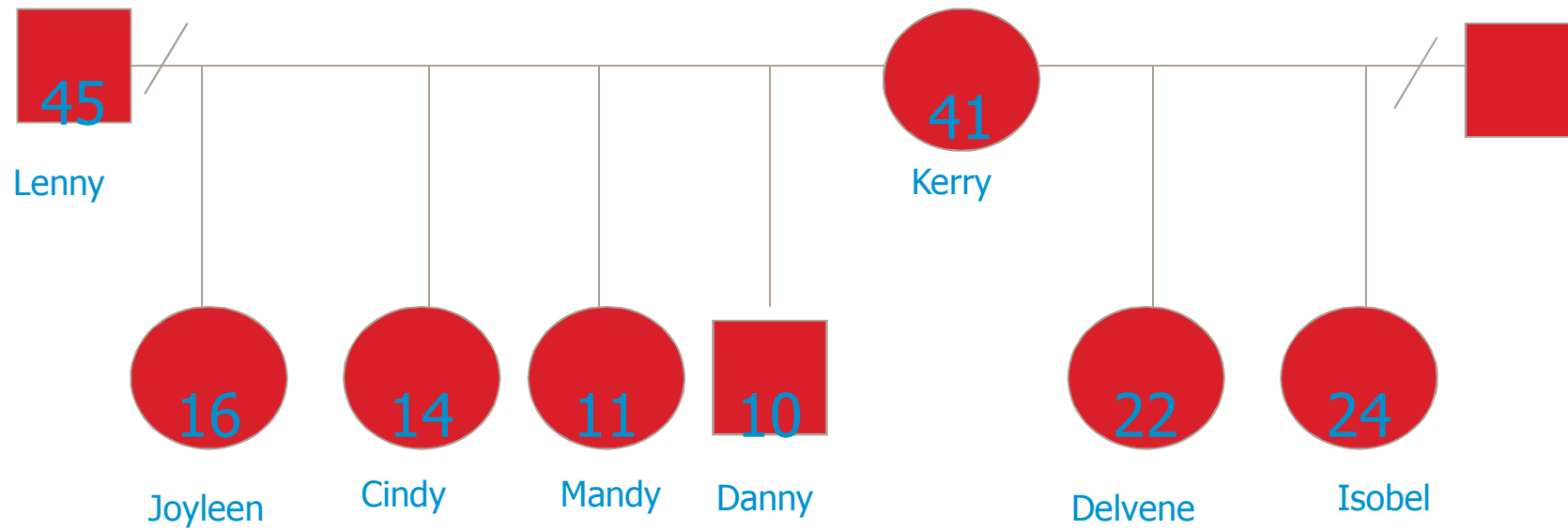
Creating a Culturally Safe CAMHS Service in Southern Metropolitan Adelaide

- > **Two full-time positions - a sustainable, dedicated service.**
- > **Aboriginal worker.**
- > **Steering Committee of Aboriginal Elders and workers.**
- > **Kurna name - Ngartunna Patpangga.**
- > **Modified, more flexible model of service delivery.**

Key Features of the Modified Model of Service Delivery

- > **Direct referral to designated therapist.**
- > **Cultural and clinical input to assessment and therapy.**
- > **Initial assessment within 2 weeks.**
- > **No waiting list for therapy.**
- > **Continuity of therapist.**
- > **Flexible appointment arrangements – time and place.**
- > **Assertive follow-up of missed appointments.**

Case Illustration: Ngartunna Patpangga Danny and His Family



What Would Have Happened for Danny and his Family in the Mainstream CAMHS Service?

- > Initial assessment.**
- > Waiting list.**
- > Letter after 3-12 months.**
- > No response; file closed.**

Or

- > Drop-out due to lack of cultural safety; file closed.**

How Did Danny and His Family Engage With Ngartunna Patpangga?

- > **Therapeutic intervention over 5 years.**
- > **With Danny, his three older sisters and three male cousins.**
- > **All are at high risk.**
- > **Services:**
 - **Teaching skills in anger management and conflict resolution.**
 - **Advocacy for alternative education programs.**
 - **Advocacy to stop eviction.**
- > **Still working with a younger cousin.**

Creating a Culturally Safe CAMHS Service in the Murraylands

- > Full-time position funded by CAMHS, Education and Families SA
- > Aboriginal worker.
- > Steering Committee of Aboriginal workers and community members.
- > Ngarrindjerri name – Nanko-walun Porlar Nomawi.
- > Focus - priorities of three funding agencies and community: case work, consultation, school groups, youth program.

Case Illustration: Nanko-walun Porlar Nomawi Nunga Boys' Group

- **12 boys, Years 8-11, disengaged from school.**
- **Gym program followed by Yarning Circles – narrative approach.**
- **Collaboration with Youth Worker.**
- **At Lower Murray Nungas Club.**
- **Once a week for school year 2009.**

Nunga Boys' Group

- **Issues-based discussions – racism, relationships, sexual health, future directions.**
- **Guest speakers –Gavin Wanganeen, Spirited Men's Group.**
- **Not “therapy”, but checking on social and emotional wellbeing.**
- **Outcomes**
 - **All remained engaged with school.**
 - **6 became CAMHS clients.**

Outcomes

- > **4 X referrals of Aboriginal clients.**
- > **4 X services to Aboriginal clients.**
- > **7% of all CAMHS clients.**
- > **Positive feedback about**
 - **Model of service delivery.**
 - **Relationships.**

Consultation is Critical to Cultural Safety in a Mainstream Service

Ensures the service

- > Meets the needs of the local community.**
- > Is seen as**
 - Engaged.**
 - Responsive.**
 - Worth using.**

Increases community and client control over service = culturally safe.

Important Ingredients of Consultation for Cultural Safety

- > **Ongoing.**
- > **Responsive.**
- > **Unique.**



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