

Learning on Country —what do ya know

*Did ya know
Country owns you?*



Copyright

© Commonwealth of Australia 2018, 2nd edition.

This work is copyright. Provided acknowledgment is made to the sources, Early learning services, primary and secondary schools are permitted to copy material freely for communication with teachers, staff, parents, carers or community members. You may reproduce the whole or part of this work in unaltered form for your own personal use or, if you are part of an organisation, for internal use within your organisation, but only if you or your organisation do not use the reproduction for any commercial purpose and retain this copyright notice and all disclaimer notices as part of that reproduction. Apart from rights to use as permitted by the Copyright Act 1968 or allowed by this copyright notice, all other rights are reserved and you are not allowed to reproduce the whole or any part of this work in any way (electronic or otherwise) without first being given the specific written permission from the Commonwealth to do so. Requests and inquiries concerning reproduction and rights are to be sent to the Communications Branch, Department of Health, GPO Box 9848, Canberra ACT 2601, or via e-mail to copyright@health.gov.au.

While the resources are available freely for these purposes, to realise the full potential of Be You, it is recommended that the resources be used with the appropriate training and support under the Be You Initiative.

Learning on Country—what do ya know?



Contents

<i>Did ya know...</i> the way we do things around here	02
<i>Did ya know...</i> rethink and redo	06
<i>Did ya know...</i> connecting for connectedness and relationships	08
<i>Did ya know...</i> about cultural safety	10
<i>Did ya know...</i> about cultural competence	12
<i>Did ya know...</i> identity—Know yourself	16
<i>Did ya know...</i> about Yarning up	18
<i>Did ya know...</i> Always Be You community mentoring	20
<i>Did ya know...</i> ways of knowing—8 ways	24
<i>Did ya know...</i> Always Be You	26
<i>Did ya know...</i> from where the wise words come	30

Learning on Country—what do ya know?

Did ya know... **the way we do things around here**

A Story

"I learnt from an Elder and traditional owner of the Country I am on that Welcome to and Acknowledgement of Country should reflect traditional ways—visitors explaining their business on this country, then being welcomed, then committing to leaving the land and its people the way you found it.

There are variations to these traditions and customs in different places and I need to learn these. Sometimes I feel discomfort if I don't know local custom but if I don't ask I'll never know.

My experience has been that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are very patient as I learn."

Customs, rituals, traditions, respect and predictability— for adults and children

- There are different ways of knowing, being and doing
- There is no one Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander way of knowing, being and doing in relation to mental health and wellbeing
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have different perspectives on relationship to land, mob and family that impact on mental health and wellbeing
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff members can help with links and understanding some aspects of community but they should not be expected to do and know everything related to community
- It takes connectedness not just a connection to make, develop and nurture relationships with community
- Acknowledgement and Welcome to Country should reflect the community and context (when confident enough to do so)

Learning on Country—what do ya know?

Check on protocols for working with, and in, particular Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Ask questions—starting with families and staff in your learning community.

In finding out about protocols, you also find out about: Country, Nation, Mobs, Community and Languages

Who are? Where are? What are? When are?

- Community leaders
- Elders
- Traditional owners
- Local Lands Council
- Community Working Party
- Language group
- Who are the contacts?
- When do they meet?

In your space

- Who do you invite?
- How do you invite Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members?
- Do you have community meetings?
- What are the expectations of community service providers informing community leaders about work in this community?

Learning on Country—what do ya know?



*'My experience has
been that Aboriginal
and Torres Strait Islander
people are very patient
as I learn.'*

Did ya know... **rethink and redo**

You learn more about understanding protocols and different ways every time you engage—it's not an exact science. *It's a commitment and it's relationships with people and places.*

About time

Identifying, understanding and applying ways of knowing, being and doing is a commitment that takes time.

Presenting professional learning, planning or staff meeting procedures needs preparation to make it accessible to everyone:

- Consider the audience—respect culture, skills, interests
- Consider the content:
 - make it engaging for others, not just you
 - more yarning, less talking at people
 - less print, more stories
 - connect to other work in the learning community so that the big plan is clear
 - make links to Country and community.

Presenting professional learning, planning or staff meeting procedures need preparation to make it accessible to everyone.

Learning on Country—what do ya know?



Wise words...

'If you watch, listen,
rethink and redo with different
lenses you find new ways.'

Did ya know... **connecting for connectedness and relationships**

To make connecting for connectedness and relationships effective:

- make time and take time
- apply 'giving, generosity and patience'
- introduce all educators, staff and families (even if it is repetitive)
- always use people's names
- consider what it feels like to be the other person/people
- shake off assumptions about others
- know that connecting is two-way
- learn about connectedness by connecting first
- start with those closest—children, families and staff
- invite people to have a yarn
- go out as well as expecting others to come in
- commit to regular contact to build connectedness
- recognise that communication is different for different people
- do what you say you will
- don't make promises you cannot keep
- If you are unsure of something ASK
- don't pretend to know
- understand that all relationships have ups and downs
- don't make promises you cant keep
- if you are unsure, ask... don't pretend to know.

*Communication
is different for
different people.*

Wise words...

'Take time. Make time.'

'Relationships, connectedness
and readiness at the front end
pay off at the other end.'



Learning on Country—what do ya know?

Did ya know... **about cultural safety**

Cultural safety

The term 'cultural safety' was first defined by the Maori nursing fraternity in New Zealand and is expressed as:

An environment that is safe for people: where there is no assault, challenge or denial of their identity, of who they are and what they need. It is about shared respect, shared meaning, shared knowledge and experience, of learning, living and working together with dignity and truly listening. (Williams, 2008).

Culturally safe places:

- hold culture in high esteem
- recognise Country and its people
- look like individuals belong
- provide spaces for Belonging, Being and Becoming together
- reflect everyone's culture
- involve people and things that are important to individuals
- are welcoming
- connect to supports—individuals and services.



It is about shared respect, shared meaning, shared knowledge and experience, of learning, living and working together with dignity and truly listening.

Wise words...

'All children are born equal.
Then, their surroundings and life
begin to influence them.'

'What kind of influence do you wish to be?'

'How will you influence the children
or young people in your place?'

Learning on Country—what do ya know?

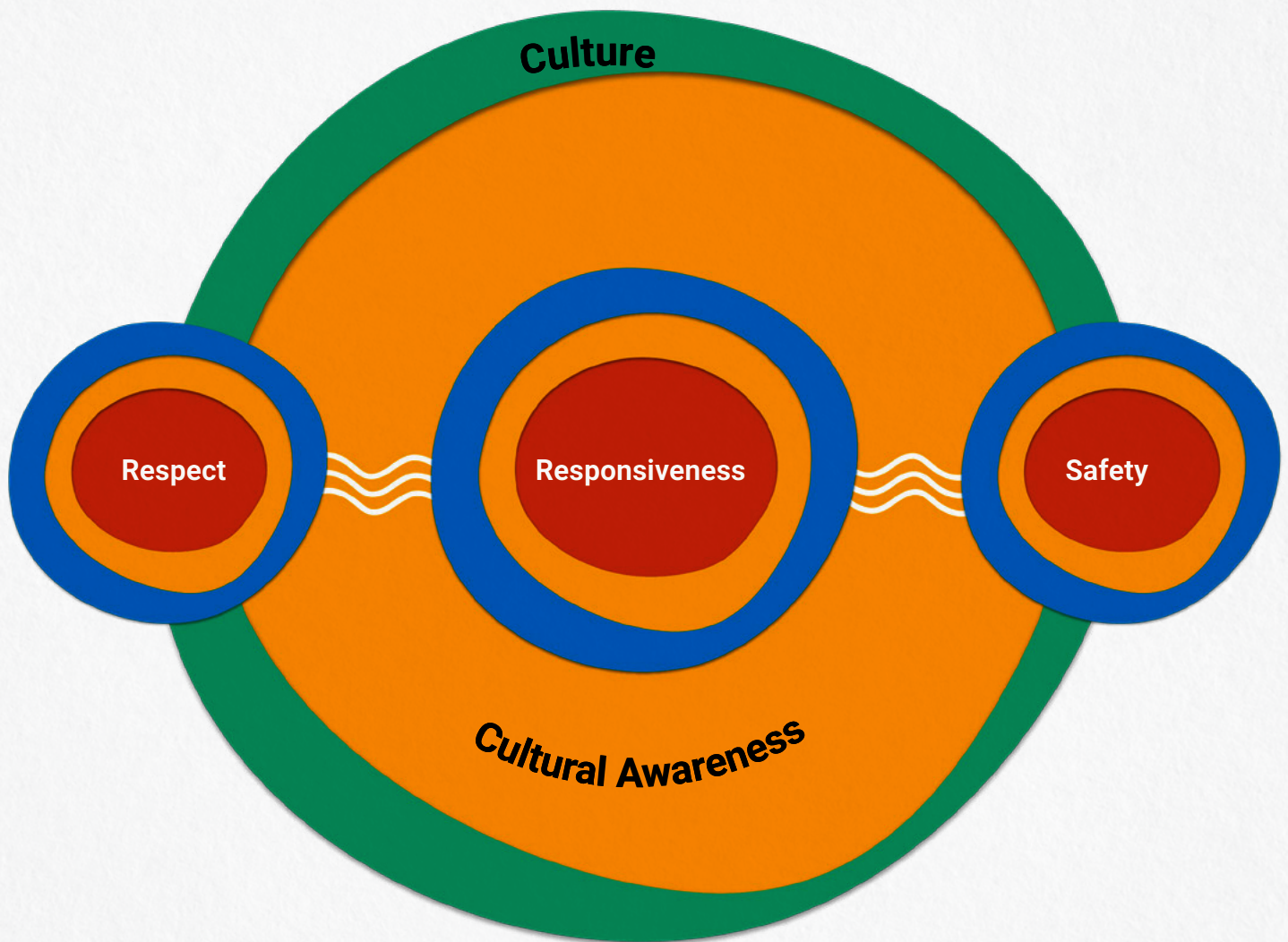
Did ya know... **about cultural competence**

Honest talk— the forever journey

As we consider culture and commit to respect, connection, knowledge and action, it is important to recognise that we can slip and slide on the continuum depending on time, space, place and people.

The journey and goals are forever.

Commitment to self determination and respectful partnerships



Source: This diagram draws from the work done by VACCA for the *Aboriginal Cultural Competency Framework* and Muriel Bamblett's Keynote Speech at SNAICC 2007 National Conference in Adelaide, which in turn drew from work by Terry Cross of the National Indian Child Welfare Association (US).

Learning on Country—what do ya know?

Cultural competence Continuum



Cultural Destructiveness

Characterised by:

International Attitudes, policies and practices that are destructive to cultures and consequently to individuals within the culture.

Cultural Incapacity

Characterised by:

Lack of capacity to help minority clients or communities due to extremely biased beliefs and a paternal attitude toward those not of a mainstream culture.

Cultural Blindness

Characterised by:

The belief that service or helping approaches traditionally used by the dominant culture are universally applicable regardless of race or culture. These services ignore cultural strengths and encourage assimilation.

Learning on Country—what do ya know?



Cultural Pre-competence

Characterised by:

The desire to deliver quality services and a commitment to diversity indicated by hiring minority staff, initiating training and recruiting minority members for agency leadership, but lacking information on how to maximise these capacities. This level of competence can lead to tokenism.

Cultural competence

Characterised by:

Acceptance and respect for difference, continuing self assessment, careful attention to the dynamics of difference, continuous expansion of knowledge and resources, and adaptation of services to better meet the needs of diverse populations.

Cultural Proefficiency

Characterised by:

Holding culture in high esteem; seeking to add to the knowledge base of culturally competent practice by conducting research, influencing approaches to care, and improving relations between cultures. Promotes self determination.

Did ya know... **identity— know yourself**

Know yourself

- Who are you?
- What are your multiple identities? (the gender/groups/ family/community that you belong to and identify with)
- What are the foundations for your identity?
- What are your beliefs?
- Where do your beliefs come from?
- It is important to get to know yourself before acknowledging and engaging with other people's cultural identities.
- There are links between having a strong sense of your identity and having a strong sense of wellbeing.
- Make time to yarn with others about your individual identity then yarn about your group identity.
- Expect that it will be hard to answer questions about identity.

*'Make time to yarn
with others about your
individual identity and then
yarn about your
group identity.'*



Wise words...

'If we were all the same
it would be a little dull.'

'Celebrate difference, ability, diversity and
everything that makes children individuals.'

'By valuing and experiencing the richness
of diversity and difference, they will have
a lifetime that is anything, but dull.'

Learning on Country—what do ya know?

Did ya know... **about yarning up**

Yarning

Conversations about family, kinship, culture and Country are all part of a solid foundation of mental health and wellbeing.

Yarning is a way of introducing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's story and description of how they see and experience something.

It can also explore aspects of mental health and wellbeing in community.

Wise words...

'Get in and have a go—
the worst thing you can
do is to do nothing!'

Learning on Country—what do ya know?



Always Be You—Yarn-Up

Bringing another lens to Always Be You

Preparation

Document all you can about your place including:

What's your community?

Are there local protocols and procedures for working with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community?

Who can tell you more about your community through Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander eyes, knowledge and wisdom?

What questions do you need to find answers to about your Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community?

And...

Draw a map of connections with community, educators, staff, children, young people and families in the learning community.

Find a way to document every educators personal and professional learning experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, knowledge and learning.

Reflect on how you listen and respond as individuals and as a group. How good are you at listening?

How good are you at considering other perspectives?

'Conversations about family, kinship, culture and country are all part of a solid foundation of mental health and wellbeing.'

Learning on Country—what do ya know?

Did ya know...

Always Be You community mentoring

Come from a place of respect

Being respectful:

- start the dialogue and work in collaboration, adapting your own views as you progress
- identify and engage with community protocols
- listen, really listen
- engage with different perspectives
- include different families and mobs
- commit to recognition for mentors' time
- acknowledge your own ways of knowing, being and doing
- engage with self-awareness activities
- enhance community connectedness.



Learning on Country—what do ya know?



A community focus on mental health and wellbeing

*It's real,
it's inclusive!*

It's embedded in, not bolted on.

*It's an ongoing cycle
of being, doing and
understanding.*

Why?

Good mental health and wellbeing comes from:

- respect for and learning about this place on this Country
- respect for all mobs and their history
- bringing multiple perspectives to all the work we do.

What?

- Authentic relationships.
- Two-way conversations and actions—dialogue and collaboration.
- Enriched environment, experience and programs.
- Different and multiple outcomes in each place and space.

How?

- Many ways—start with families, then community, then make it your own.
- Make relationships—grow them.
- Listen to different voices and respond.
- Keep mentoring going, even as relationships and people change.

Learning on Country—what do ya know?

Always Be You

Community Mentor

Programs purposes

<i>Ways and Possibilities</i>	To respect and connect with community knowledge and community ways
The mentor brings a perspective	Establish knowledge of this community and their mob—people and history.
The mentor's role	Provide a community perspective to Always Be You concepts. Encourage connection to local knowledge and culture.
Inviting a mentor	Connect with families and community to find mentor/s. Consider the wisdom and experience of people.
The role of those in the learning community	Commit to acknowledging children's cultural identity and that of the traditional owners of the land.
The relationship	Respect the community and family responsibilities of a mentor. Respect the responsibilities and commitments of the learning community staff.
Recognition of the mentor	Let people know that the mentor is working with the learning community.

Learning on Country—what do ya know?

*'It's real, it's inclusive!
It's embedded in, not
bolted on. It's an ongoing
cycle of being, doing and
understanding.'*

To develop understanding of different perspectives

Represent a voice for different ways
of knowing, being and doing.

Engage in Always Be You professional
learning. Provide advice about how Always
Be You applies to this community and in
particular their mob.

Acknowledge wisdom of different generations.
Consider all possibilities.

Listen and consider how the different
perspectives might influence new ways of
doing so that children, young people and
families' mental health and wellbeing is
as strong as possible.

Invite others in at appropriate times and
understand that relationships will change over
time. The cycle of relationship is accepted—
no matter the length of time.

Recognise that the mentor's time is valuable
as is their knowledge and commitment.

To enrich the culture of the learning community environment

Share stories of place and people
from the past and the present.

Maintain and develop connectedness with
the learning community. Provide advice about
practice and planning while understanding
the limits within the service.

Develop a relationship through inviting people
in and going out into community. Invite a
mentor into other aspects of the service as well.

Work together to develop a strong foundation
for Always Be You culture which reflects this
place, space and Country.

The relationship will continue to grow over
time and is recognised as part of the service
community and Always Be You team.

Include funds in the budget to recompense
mentor's time and commitment. Gift giving
in the form of something they value, a voucher
or a one-off payment.

Did ya know... **ways of knowing— 8 ways**



Story sharing

**'We connect
through the stories
we share'**

What is it?
Tell a story.

Implementing it:
Share personal stories
and experiences.

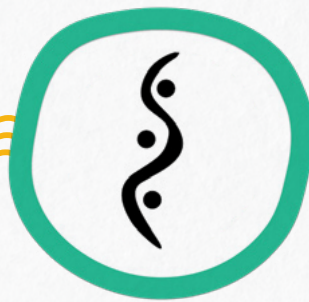


Community links

**'We bring new
knowledge home
to help our mob'**

What is it?
Share with others.

Implementing it:
Make the new
knowledge benefit
the community.

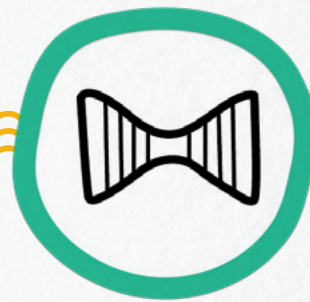


Maps

**'We picture our
pathways of
knowledge'**

What is it?
Make a plan.

Implementing it:
Map out experiences,
the environment
and relationships.



Deconstruct/ reconstruct

**'We work from
biggest to smallest,
watch then do'**

What is it?
Watch first, then do.

Implementing it:
Model step by step.

Always Be You acknowledges the influence of 8 Ways and the work of Early Childhood Australia in developing different ways of being, thinking and doing.



Non Verbal

**We see, think, act,
make and share
without words'**

What is it?

Think and do.

Implementing it:

Show what you mean
without words.



Non Linear

**'We put different
ideas together for
new knowledge'**

What is it?

Two different paths
meeting at a point.

Implementing it:

Discuss and act on
different viewpoints.



Symbols and images

**'We keep and
share knowledge
with art and objects'**

What is it?

Draw it.

Create visual texts.

Implementing it:

Communicate
without words.



Land Links

**'We work with
lessons from land
and nature'**

What is it?

Take it outside.

Implementing it:

Talk about local
community features
regularly.

Did ya know... **Always Be You**

Many ways... different ways

Always Be You uses symbols to check in on all the ways we do things.

It means we unpack our ways of doing and consider if we are including different perspectives.

You can use the 8 Ways and Always Be You symbols to reflect on your practice too.



Grow

For mental health and wellbeing

Use the symbols and see if you are using all of them in Planning + Doing + Reviewing.

Use symbols with children and young people to start a conversation about the way that they are doing something. This adds depth to everyone's understandings of processes. It shows you and them just how clever they are!

Key Words: Intentional, transformation, change, continuum.

Learning on Country—what do ya know?

Plan.
Do.
Review.



Connect

Key Words: Inclusivity, whole of population, whole person, relationships, others.



Make safe

Key Words: Self care, cultural safety, supports, strength-based.



Conversation

Key Words: Listen, hear, talk, share stories, yarn up, learn.



Learn many ways

Key Words: Plan, explore, problem solve, experiment, take risks.



Be, feel, think, do

Key Words: Head, heart, hands, feet.

Respect, commitment, emotional balance,
spiritual wellbeing, mindfulness, reflection.



Acknowledge, consider, celebrate

Key Words: Self-awareness, identity,
community, history, people, culture, place
and space, others, knowledge and the
unknown, progress.

Did ya know... **from where the wise words came**

Our wise words have come from various discussions and yarn ups between Early Childhood Australia and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and are reflective of the voice and thoughts of many who have contributed to the development of this resource.

References, resources and contributors

8 Ways. (2014). Retrieved 31 May, 2014, from researchonline.jcu.edu.com/10974.

Bowes, J., Kitson, R., Simpson, T., Reid, J., Smith, M., Downey, B. and Pearce, S. (2011). Child Care Choices of Indigenous Families. Report to the NSW Department of Human Services (Community Services). Retrieved 31 May, 2014, from www.iec.mq.edu.au/research/cfrc/research_approaches/education_giftedness_disadvantage/child_care_choices_of_indigenous_families/.

Farmer, R. and Fasoli, L. (n.d.). You're in new Country. Teach-ec resource: Commonwealth of Australia.

Pearce, S. (2013). Kanyitas Way: A reflection on yarnning. (Unpublished thesis) Charles Sturt University.

Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care (SNAICC). (2012). Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Cultural Needs. North Fitzroy: SNAICC Resource Service.

Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care (SNAICC). (2011). Growing up our way: Practices matrix. North Fitzroy: SNAICC Resource Service.

Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care (SNAICC). (2007). Cultural Competence Continuum. North Fitzroy: SNAICC Resource Service.

Always Be You

*A commitment to bringing
Aboriginal and Torres Strait
Islander perspectives and
ways of doing to the
Be You initiative.*

Williams, R. (2008). Cultural safety; what does it mean for our work practice? Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health, 23(2), 213–214.

Be You Always also acknowledges the materials and other works used by SNAICC to develop the Cultural Competence Continuum.

Australian Government, Mercy Health Service, Mungabareena Aboriginal Corporation and Wodonga Institute of TAFE. (2004). Providing culturally appropriate palliative care to Indigenous Australians: resource kit. Canberra: Department of Health and Ageing.

Bamblett, M. (2007). Protecting culture and protecting the future of our children. Keynote speech at Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care (SNAICC) National Conference September 2007, Adelaide.

Tong, C. and Cross, T. (1991). Cross cultural partnerships for child abuse prevention with Native American communities, Portland, Oregon, Northwest India Child Welfare Institute,

p. 12, quoted in Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA). (2008). Aboriginal Cultural Competence Framework. Melbourne: Victorian Government Department of Human Services, p. 23.

Martin, G. (2008). On social and emotional wellbeing and Indigenous Australians. Australian e-Journal for the Advancement of Mental Health (AeJAMH), 7(3), p. 3.

Reconciliation Australia. (2009). What is a RAP?, Reconciliation Action Plans. Retrieved 6 April, 2009, from www.reconciliation.org.au

Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care (SNAICC). (2007). Principles for justice in child wellbeing and protection. North Fitzroy: SNAICC Resource Service.

Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care (SNAICC). (2008). SNAICC service development, cultural respect and service access policy. North Fitzroy: SNAICC Resource Service.

Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA). (2008). Aboriginal Cultural Competence Framework. Melbourne: Victorian Government Department of Human Services.



With delivery partners



Funded by



Australian Government
Department of Health