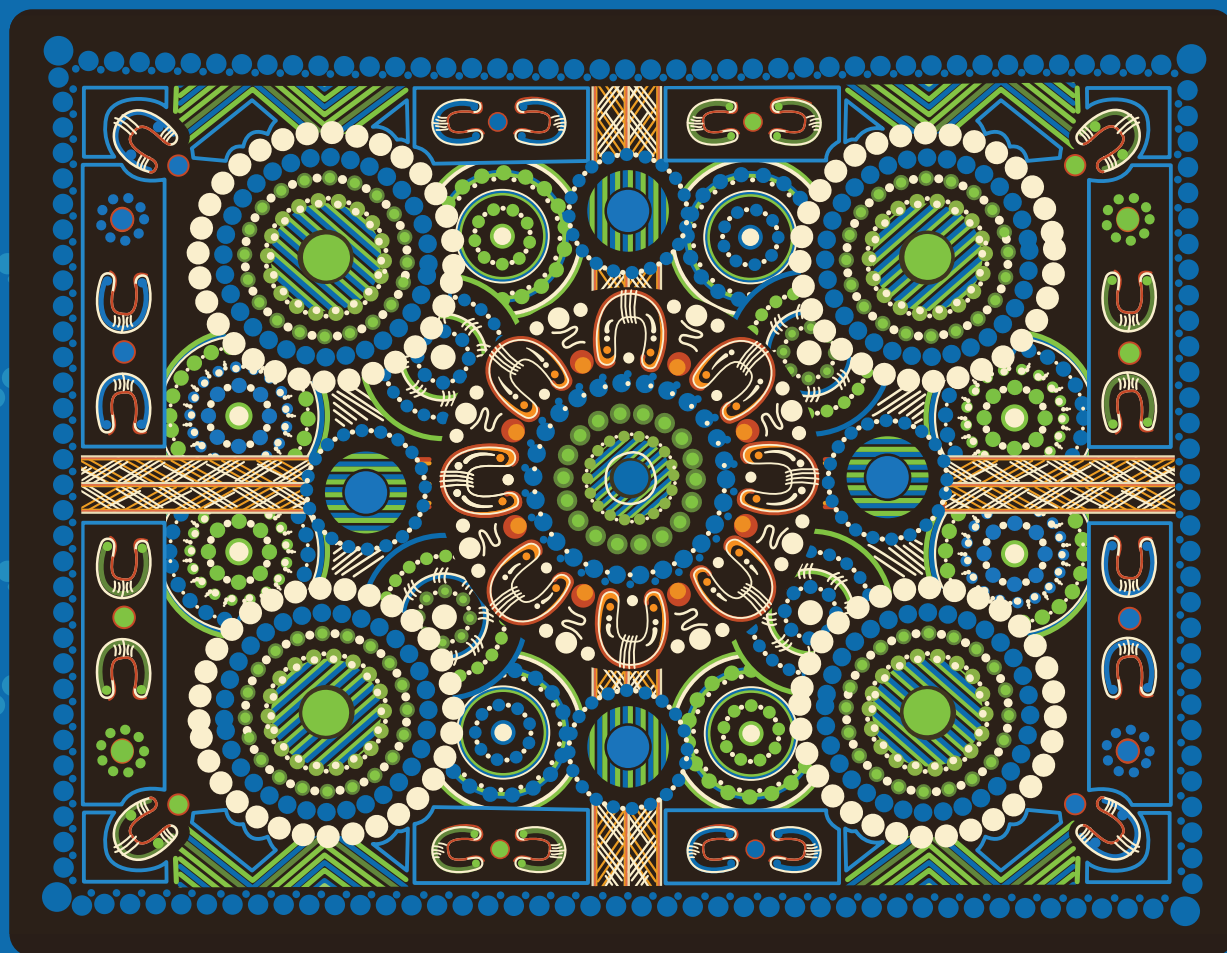


Intergenerational trauma initiative: North Australian Aboriginal Justice Agency Healing Program review

Understanding the impact





Acknowledgement

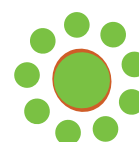
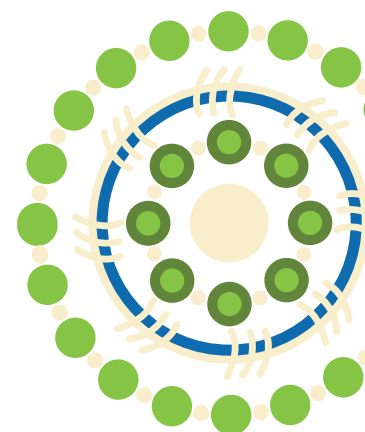
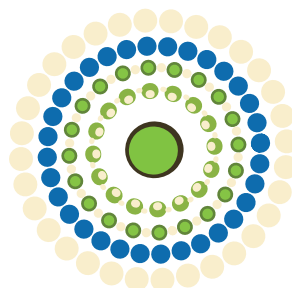
We would like to acknowledge the young people in the Northern Territory living with the impacts of intergenerational trauma, who generously shared their stories, thoughts, insights, and concerns to ensure the report is an honest reflection of their lived experience.

We would also like to thank the NAAJA Youth Support Workers who were key drivers of the project and ensured culturally sound, trauma-aware and healing-informed approaches were used throughout the project.

Thank you to Dr John Prince, who wrote this paper, for your commitment to supporting intergenerational healing. Thank you also to Benny Hodges, who facilitated the initial youth intergenerational trauma program co-design workshop, with input from key NAAJA staff at that time.

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Background

As part of a healing program delivered through a partnership model between the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Healing Foundation (The Healing Foundation) and the North Australian Aboriginal Justice Agency (NAAJA), young people in the Northern Territory (NT) criminal justice system were supported to strengthen their cultural identity, build skills and re-establish positive relationships.

The NAAJA Healing Program was part of a national funding round provided by The Healing Foundation that specifically aimed to address intergenerational trauma. Accordingly, the NAAJA Healing Program provided a trauma-aware and healing-informed program for children and young people who have, or have had, contact with the NT criminal justice system. The healing program commenced in early 2017 and ran for the following two years, to December 2018.

NAAJA Youth Support Worker(s) were key drivers of the project and activities. They provided intensive support to focus on future goals and engagement in employment and training. Participants took part in weekly activities to strengthen cultural identity, with many voicing concerns about their lives and actively seeking support from mentors. Young fathers were given the opportunity to take part in a parenting program. The parents of young people in detention were supported to care for their children's trauma and to re-establish positive relationships following their release.

The project was delivered within a culturally sound, trauma-aware and healing-informed framework, with The Healing Foundation providing high-level training and clinical support for NAAJA team members undertaking the difficult and complex work. Critical to the success of the project was the establishment of Complex Case Clinic training. There were five sessions held over the life of the project

[Thomas Quayle speaks about the Naaja Program \[video\]](#)

and each was co-facilitated by Dr Paul Gibney (psychotherapist and family therapist) and The Healing Foundation, combining a therapeutic model with an Aboriginal cultural knowledge framework.

At the completion of the project there was some discussion about the potential of an evaluation to determine key learnings, outcomes, and impacts. As part of the evaluation, a series of yarning/knowledge circles were scheduled to take place. As the planning for the evaluation took place in early 2020, restrictions associated with the COVID-19 pandemic meant planning and implementation were delayed. Towards the end of 2020 it was determined that a document review, with content analysis as the methodology, might provide key learnings and insights for future reference.

Key themes were identified through analysis of the six-monthly Performance Reports provided by NAAJA over the two years, as well as the corresponding assessment reports completed by The Healing Foundation. It is clear from the reporting against the four national outcomes, as well as the case studies in the Performance Reports, that the project has met all parts of the Service Delivery Plan and made a substantive change to many young peoples' lives. These changes are often seen to have reached positively into the young person's family as well.

The key findings of the review are reported in the sections that follow.

Activities and achievements summary

This section summarises the information provided in the progress reports at six-monthly intervals. It provides the context for the findings sections that follow.

A good start (January – June 2017)

Having settled upon the Service Delivery Plan with The Healing Foundation at the end of 2016, NAAJA and Danila Dilba Health Service commenced recruitment processes in early 2017, for a Youth Support Worker based at NAAJA Throughcare, and a Youth Engagement Counsellor based at Danila Dilba's Social and Emotional Wellbeing Branch. Both were appointed and in position by early April 2017.

Through to the end of June 2017, the NAAJA Youth Support Worker began the process of establishing strong working relationships with key stakeholders and soon became recognised within Darwin's youth court, often being sought out for advice and assistance. Further relationships were being established with staff at the Don Dale Youth Detention Centre (DDYDC), which ensured there was access to the centre to meet with clients and participate in sport and recreational activities.

The NAAJA Youth Support Worker quickly built up a case load of young people and began securing positive outcomes. By June 2017 there were six clients, with four clients being in detention and two having been released to the community on bail orders. The Youth Support Worker's ability to engage effectively with young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and their families led to the development of strong post-release/case plans, with reported evidence that the case plans gained the confidence of the court. By way of example, a bail application based on the Youth Support Worker's plan was endorsed by a Judge despite Community Corrections advocating for an alternative that was not supported by the young person. The plan was prepared after goal-orientated conversations with the client, liaison with his family, and collaboration with his lawyer.

The two post-release clients were, as at June 2017, well on the way to gaining employment, something both had identified as a goal and which led to improved self-belief, self-esteem, and a sense of achievement.

As the post-release case load was growing, the Youth Support Worker sought to develop activities to help young people to gain skills and confidence, and they partnered with staff from Danila Dilba already working in the DDYDC to jointly facilitate yarning groups both in the DDYDC and the community.

At the same time, the Danila Dilba Youth Engagement Counsellor commenced work at the DDYDC to negotiate access to the centre and arrange to deliver group and one-on-one therapeutic sessions. Following several meetings, the DRUMBEAT group commenced on 13 June 2017 with eight participants, and it finished on 6 July 2017. A second trained facilitator from Relationships Australia co-facilitated the group sessions, and with Relationships Australia and Danila Dilba's Youth Engagement Team, ongoing therapeutic yarning groups at DDYDC were designed. Furthermore, the Youth Engagement Counsellor worked with staff from Danila Dilba's Youth Engagement Team to ensure clients were able to participate in outreach activities. As a result, clients released from the DDYDC commenced attending group activities that provided opportunities to talk with young people in an informal and comfortable setting.

At the end of the first six months the Youth Engagement Counsellor had a case load of six clients, where one-on-one therapeutic support was provided, mostly once a week. However, a key challenge was being able to effectively engage clients at the DDYDC in therapeutic conversations, due to the lack of appropriate space. Clients released from the DDYDC were engaged in natural spaces – for example beaches and parks – which were reported to have a profound effect on feelings, behaviours, general health, and productivity.



Program refinement (July – December 2017)

In the second part of the year, the NAAJA Youth Support Worker case managed 13 young people. There was a reported increase in the interest from young people who wanted to work with him, due to his growing reputation.

Strong working relationships with key stakeholders were maintained, including NAAJA's youth lawyers and Community Corrections. The project also began developing relationships with the Youth Outreach and Engagement Teams (YORET) that were introduced by Territories Families. Within the YORETs, Youth Outreach and Engagement Officers (YOREOs) were appointed, with whom the NAAJA Youth Support Worker needed to build relationships to ensure the YOREOs understood their role and could build constructive relationships with the best interests of the young person and their families in mind.

Through his relationship with clients and their families, the NAAJA Youth Support Worker was able to assist young people during youth justice's transition from Correctional Services to Territory Families. Relationships were maintained with DDYDC staff, ensuring access to the centre to meet with clients and participate in sport and recreational activities.

Caseloads continued to be built, as was the reputation of the NAAJA Youth Support Worker, leading to a consistent flow of referrals. Insights and ability to engage effectively with young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their families led to the development of strong post-release/case plans, which in turn saw bail applications and non-custodial sentencing options accepted.

Key results included clients securing training and employment, reconnection, and improved relationships with family, and remaining out of detention. While some clients did re-enter the DDYDC, opportunities were created to continue working with the young person to develop an understanding of the factors getting them into trouble, to talk about their dreams, and come up with a plan to help them achieve their goals.

Social inclusion activities were emerging as a good platform to expand from in 2018. They were developed in collaboration with staff from Relationships Australia and Danila Dilba. NAAJA reported that the sense of group synergy, achievement and connection to culture generated by the activities was the project's main highlight in 2017.

The Danila Dilba Youth Engagement Counsellor continued facilitating DRUMBEAT sessions at the DDYDC during the second half of 2017, and they also commenced yarning groups in collaboration with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff from Danila Dilba and Relationships Australia. This was seen as a significant achievement, given how difficult it had been for external service providers to gain access to the DDYDC. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people from Danila Dilba, Relationships Australia, and Headspace were regular contributors to DRUMBEAT and Yarning Circle sessions. The Youth Engagement Counsellor's case load increased to seven clients, with one-on-one therapeutic support provided weekly.

Importantly, in November 2017, the first Complex Case Clinic training session took place. This was part of a key focus area of the project, that aimed to build workforce development and capacity. Training was facilitated by Dr Paul Gibney (an experienced psychotherapist and family therapist), who provided therapeutic expertise. The training took place over the course of two days. By establishing a safe and respectful space, and by working through complex case studies, participants experienced 'live' learning that they were able to apply back in the project, combining the therapeutic model they were receiving training in with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of working. Increased success was reported as a result.



Moving towards maturity (January – June 2018)

Moving into 2018, young people continued to receive support/mentoring from the NAAJA Youth Support Worker. While there had been some success on the ground with the Danila Dilba Youth Engagement Counsellor, a successful program is defined by the relationships formed. Accordingly, NAAJA maintained the lead presence in the project as Danila Dilba concluded their involvement. It was the NAAJA Youth Support Worker who provided consistency as the program continued, maintaining support to case managed participants, and assisting young people to develop bail plans and sentencing options as an alternative to detention.

In the early part of 2018, there was also a continued strengthening of cultural activities, and in March a second Complex Case Clinic training workshop was held, with Dr Paul Gibney once more providing expertise and training. The training sessions were increasingly being valued, as cultural and Western ways of working were coming together, and with training building the groundwork for conversations with clients. Participants suggested that training improved their confidence and position as carers, and it enabled a sense that they were able to hold something – the relationship with their client – that other people could not hold at that moment in time. The workshops also operated as a self-care mechanism for workers and facilitated them to better manage their own internal influences.

By mid-year, NAAJA appointed an additional Youth Support Worker into the project to increase capacity. NAAJA continued to see young people vouching for the service, and new participants coming into the relationship with less resistance and greater levels of trust. Despite some challenges at the DDYDC, the Youth Support Worker continued to be able to access young people in detention without any difficulties. This ensured relationships were built while participants were incarcerated, and with continuity being a key element of the project, the Youth Support Worker continued to provide

support to participants once they were released from the DDYDC.

NAAJA noted at the time that the pre-release relationship building provided the project with an excellent, safe, and trusting platform to continue working with the young person and their family once they returned to the community.

Cultural activities were strengthened at the beginning of 2018 and had greater structure, with a six-session cultural activity service for young men. Consistent attendance from a number of young people demonstrated they were engaged with the content and the facilitator. The introduction of greater structure resulted in more regular and consistent delivery of what was deemed an important component of the healing program. A key finding was that positive, consistent relationships for those with trauma backgrounds are stabilising and contribute to an environment in which healing can occur.

As working relationships with key stakeholders – including NAAJA's youth lawyers and NT Legal Aid Commission's social worker – strengthened, more streamlined responses were developed for issues encountered when clients presented at court for bail applications, or during planning for a participant's release.

By the end of June 2018, a Youth Team Coordinator had been appointed into the wider Throughcare Program, ensuring the Youth Support Workers would receive dedicated support and supervision from a Youth Worker with extensive experience in the field. This aimed to enhance case management practices and, through reflective processes, ensure continued improvement.



Towards the end (July – December 2018)

A critical change occurred in the project in September 2018, when the NAAJA Youth Support Worker who had been there from the start of the project left. The gap and difficult transition for a program that is relational in focus was managed by the appointment of a person who had existing relationships with clients and families through work with the Royal Commission.

In these final six months, the project continued to cement a strong reputation in the Youth Justice Service provision community, and it was acknowledged as an important provider of mentoring and cultural activity once a client was released from detention. This was highlighted when a Supreme Court Judge thanked the NAAJA Youth Support Worker for the work being undertaken and identified the project as of significant importance, before encouraging the client to remain engaged with the project.

Acknowledging the success of the Hip Hop Project, the healing program supported an application by Palmerston City Council to facilitate a similar workshop in 2019, for young men who had left youth detention. The application was successful, and the project ran for six weeks in collaboration with Skinnyfish Music.

It was important during this phase of the project's development to continue building innovation and rigor in cultural activity, while strengthening the design of activities based on case reflection and the experience of previous participants.

With healing from trauma being based in relationships that are safe and consistent, and acknowledging this cannot occur quickly, NAAJA was encouraged by the fact that four clients had been engaged with the service for more than nine months, and that relationships with key stakeholders (Government and non-Government sector) continued to grow. This leads to benefits for young people, including improved service coordination and post-release planning, as well as improved post-release case coordination.

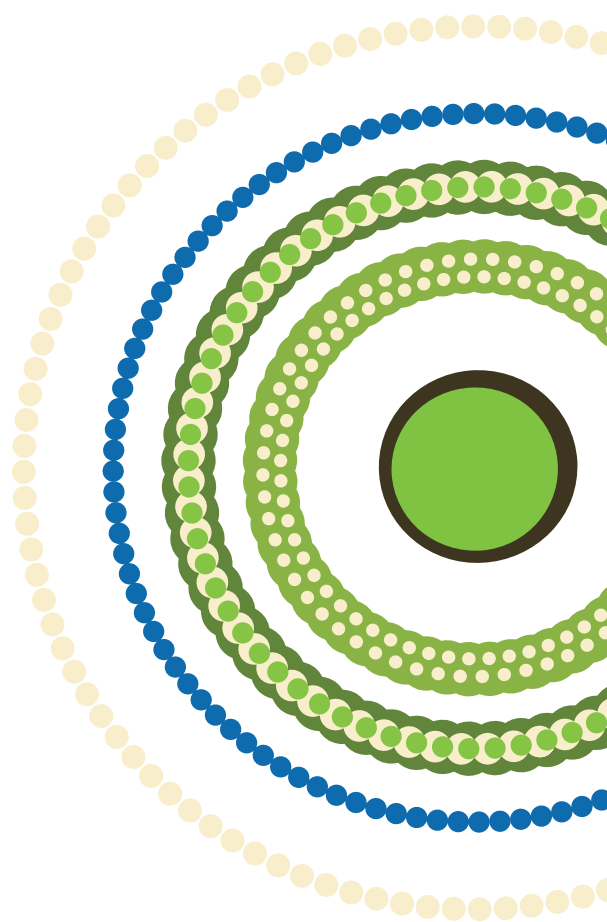
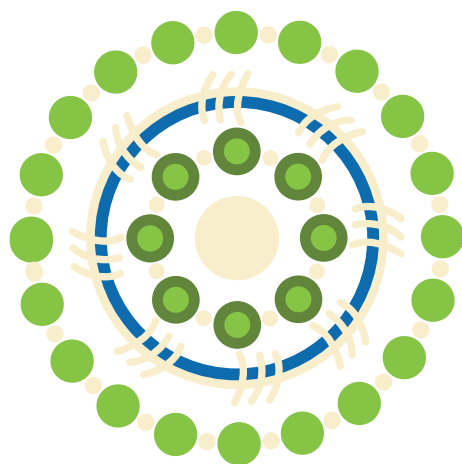
Importantly, the workforce development and capacity building aspects of the project continued, and in the second half of 2018 additional Complex Case Clinics were held. Again, these workshops validated the work the Youth Support Officers were doing and acted as a holding space, ensuring there was no loss of confidence that what they were doing was right. Those participating, and NAAJA themselves, reported that without the Complex Case Clinics, the outcomes and success of the program would have been compromised. In terms of a key learning from the project, the Complex Case Clinics were a key success factor. In combining a Western therapeutic model with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural knowledge frameworks, the program met a key elements of best practice healing programs.



Challenges along the way

Over the two years the program took place there were some key challenges that needed to be faced. These included:

- The physical structure of the DDYDC made work challenging. It was at times difficult to access the centre due to operational imperatives, meaning that plans and arrangements can fall through.
- There was no appropriate space in the DDYDC to undertake individual counselling sessions with clients in detention. The space allocated for one-on-one interventions was open and not ideal for therapeutic work.
- Collaboration with some key stakeholders was challenging, as some were not working in partnership with clients, their families, and services.
- There were a few personnel changes at a senior level of DDYDC and relationships at times were difficult in transition periods when meetings with new staff were postponed or cancelled.
- The introduction of the Territory Families based Youth Outreach and Engagement Officers (YOREOs) in late 2017/early 2018 was worrying for NAAJA, since their roles were unclear at the start, and officers had a wide remit, which appeared to include the provision of post-release support. This concerned NAAJA, who believed that post-release support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients needed to come from an Indigenous trauma-aware and healing-informed service.
- Developing a project across two services proved challenging, and a more consistent model of engagement based on the strength of relationships rather than partnership structure proved to be more effective in achieving program outcomes.



Key findings

The Healing Foundation’s funding round for intergenerational trauma initiatives developed a generic reporting template that included four National Outcome indicators:

1. Improved social and emotional wellbeing of our children and young people.
2. Improved resiliency of our children and young people (including skills in managing conflict and enhanced help-seeking behaviours).
3. Improved relationships/stronger connections between young people and their families.
4. Improved service coordination for children and young people, and families.

Each organisation and project funded under the initiative was required to report against these indicators.

Across the life of the NAAJA Healing Program, from January 2017 to December 2018, and from the data provided across four progress reports, more than 70 young people participated in the project, with participants reporting a 90 per cent satisfaction rating with the project. Figure 1 below reports the findings against the National Outcome Indicators.

Figure 1: NAAJA Project National Outcomes

As a result of the project, there was the following level of improvements	Not at all		Somewhat improved					Considerably improved		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Social and emotional wellbeing	[Blue bar covering 1-7]							[White bar covering 8-10]		
Skills in managing difficult situations	[Blue bar covering 1-6]						[White bar covering 7-10]			
Help-seeking behaviour	[Blue bar covering 1-6]						[White bar covering 7-10]			
Stronger connections to families	[Blue bar covering 1-7]							[White bar covering 8-10]		
Coordination between services	[Blue bar covering 1-8]								[White bar covering 9-10]	

While the above data provides the broad outcomes across the whole project, these positive results are given more context through the case studies provided in Appendix 1. The following sections highlight some key themes that emerged from the content analysis of the Performance Reports.

Sense of belonging and connection to culture

It is clear from the reports that for those participants engaged in the program there was an increased sense of belonging and increasing connection to culture. There is evidence of the significant efforts made to ensure strong cultural safety frameworks were employed by the project team and that this was foundational in the engagement and relationships that were built over the life of the project.

The cultural activities led to positive growth and development among participants in strengthening their awareness and skills in being able to better manage their emotions in healthy ways. The activities delivered within the framework of engagement enabled positive support structures that provided a sense of belonging. Indeed, strong practical and cultural measures were established that supported strong and positive healing outcomes.

The reports provide significant evidence of the importance of the skills and knowledge of the NAAJA Youth Support Workers and project team members, who were focussed on young people achieving their goals on release from DDYDC, and accordingly generating an increased sense of positive self-belief and strengthening of cultural identity. The importance of the Complex Case Clinics in enhancing this cultural expertise and knowledge with a therapeutic model cannot be underestimated. The format of the workshops, alongside the skills and expertise of Dr Paul Gibney, ensured that workers were cared for, improved capacity build and were able to re-enter into their case work with strengthened confidence and belief in their ability to deliver.

Another clear factor in the success of the project is the NAAJA Youth Support Workers' strong groundings in cultural process and practices as mentors and young leaders in their own right, which demonstrated their passion to engage and support the strengthening of cultural identity.

A further success factor in ensuring sustainable change and healing outcomes for young people going through DDYDC was culturally sound frameworks and care plans being considered by NAAJA Healing Program team

members and then implemented by the Youth Support Workers.

Resilience and decision-making

There is substantial evidence that over the life of the project participants were – in some cases slowly – developing capacity to manage difficult situations. Given the complexity of backgrounds, levels of stress and anxiety, and often a lack of confidence and self-belief, this is a critical outcome.

While strong cultural safety, and therapeutic and practical frameworks employed by the project team clearly enhance the potential for this as an outcome, it appears in the reports that the relationship built between the participant and the Youth Support Worker – being meaningful, trusting and respectful – has most salience.

There are numerous examples of young people participating in the program having a stronger sense of personal achievement or success and being more engaged with the processes to make meaningful and sustained change in their lives.

While relationships matter, participants were also resourced to better understand and create meaning for their actions, and to utilise personal processes to lead and manage their affairs, to achieve their goals. At the same time, the Youth Support Worker and the team had a realistic expectation in regard to change and healing, with small changes equating to large success for clients and their families.

The combination of positive social inclusion activities and practical strengths-based approaches with significant mentoring by the Youth Engagement Officer allowed participants to act in a self-directed manner.

Reconnection to self and family

As noted, the NAAJA Healing Program clearly allows participants to reconnect to the part of themselves that embeds self-belief and positive aspects of their lives. The reports provide evidence that, as participants continue in the program, there is improvement in help-seeking behaviours and building stronger connections to their parents,

caregivers, or significant family members. Role modelling towards siblings is a strong theme across the reports and case studies.

The levels of participation by family members included in a holistic care and therapeutic framework have added value and created sustainable platforms for young people to feel cared for. They have allowed young people to integrate back into their kinship structures with a greater understanding of the value that these relationship structures hold for them in their healing journey.

It is worth noting that family members had insights about why their family member was getting into trouble. Significantly, they also had solutions, and involving them in discussions about what life will look like post-release created opportunities for the participant to better appreciate that they are loved and supported. This begins a new narrative for identify and allows for a narration out of the old.

Accordingly, NAAJA Throughcare's practice of involving families in the development and preparation of bail applications and post-release plans increased family's awareness about the factors that contributed to a young person getting into trouble. It is the family that is empowered to take the lead, determining solutions, and playing a significant role in their implementation. These processes allow opportunities to talk through situations, help families to learn about the needs of their young people, and build their capacity to respond constructively.

Collaboration and coordination

Throughout the reports and case studies, a very strong theme is the willingness and ability of the NAAJA Youth Support Workers to create opportunities to connect and engage, and to work across a range of stakeholders, including government and non-government.

Coordination between services working with children and families within community certainly improved. There was an ongoing focus on co-case management with other relevant services; engagement with the YORETs to ensure that young people on statutory orders, in particular,

are receiving clear advice and support in relation to the conditions of their release; and working collaboratively with the Danila Dilba Health Service, Relationships Australia and the Royal Commission Support Service.

The collaborative approach to case management included referring participants and their families to appropriate services where a need arises, liaising with support and other services already involved, and ensuring regular case conferences are held that include clients and their families – to ensure everyone is on the same page and that plans are progressing. Additional services included Anglicare, Amity, and Youthworx, where liaising with staff to discuss a 'getting ready for work' plan that is flexible and targeted was a key outcome.

Of course, collaborations and partnerships are not easy and sometimes do not run smoothly. Skills are needed to sometimes gently but persistently challenge services to ensure that plans are relevant, achievable, and inclusive of young people in their design. Sometimes there can be a shared vision but a different view about how to achieve it, and sometimes roles and responsibilities do not meet partner expectations.

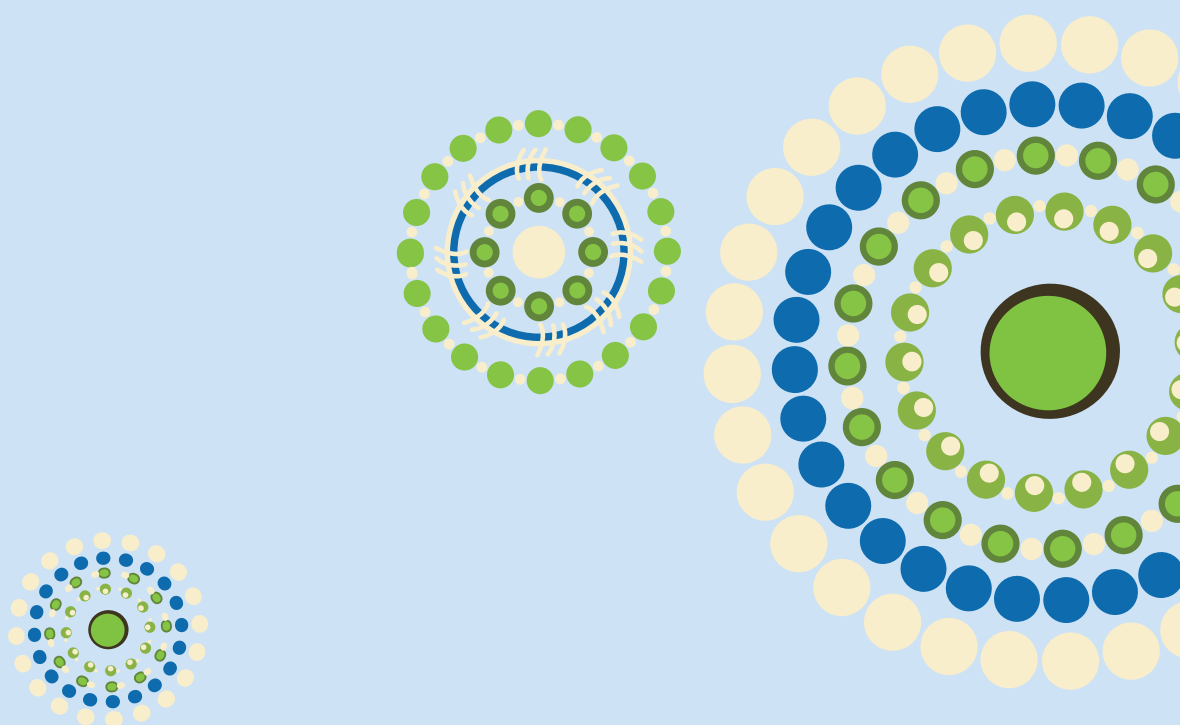
In the complex world of trauma-aware, healing-informed approaches, collaboration, coordination, and partnership seems necessary to achieve the best outcomes. Importantly, for The Healing Foundation the project provided a good example of learning to support the process, and a case study in collaboration, partnerships, and how to best work with stakeholders as enabler and facilitator, to achieve the best outcomes.

Summary

This report is more a summary than review or evaluation, being based on a review of the documentation. The documentation provides evidence that the NAAJA Healing Program made a significant and positive change to many participants' lives.

This occurred through trauma-aware, healing-informed approaches that included culturally safe, therapeutic, and practical frameworks. The ability of the project team, and the Youth Support Worker in particular, to build meaningful and trusting relationships with clients – and a willingness to connect, collaborate, and coordinate care with families and services – seem to be the critical factors in the success of the program.

While the reports and case studies point to meaningful, positive outcomes for participants, the degree to which participants have been able to sustain their healing and continue the long-term project of building their lives still needs to be determined.





Appendix 1: Case studies

In the following case studies, the names used are pseudonyms for the clients engaged in the NAAJA intergenerational trauma and healing program.

Case Study 1: Daniel

Daniel was 17 years old when he joined the program. He is an Indigenous male from Darwin who has a long history of youth justice involvement, including significant periods in the DDYDC and Maryborough Adult Correctional Facility in Queensland. He was under the care of Territory Families due to his being subject to abuse and neglect by his mother. Unfortunately, she suffered from a longstanding addiction to drugs and did not provide Daniel with adequate supervision and support. This set of circumstances likely contributed to his extensive time in detention and his struggle with drug addiction, which contributed to his offending and incarceration. He also suffered from anxiety, paranoia, and self-doubt.

Numerous attempts had been made by service providers throughout Daniel's life to provide him and his family with support. However, those involved struggled to engage in positive interactions and their efforts failed to produce stability. After his latest breach of bail, in June 2017 for cutting off an electronic monitoring bracelet provided by Community Corrections as part of a bail order, Daniel engaged with the NAAJA Healing Project.

With the project's assistance, Daniel reapplied for and obtained bail and was under the care of his Aunty. Through its case-management approach, the Healing Project was able to support Daniel and his Aunty by offering transport from their rural property to attend meetings with Community Corrections, visit the Police Station to sign in, participate in Job Network Agency activities, and engage with Territory Families.

The project helped Daniel to identify his goals and, in particular, break them down into achievable steps. Through case management, practical assistance, and encouragement when he experienced self-doubt, Daniel was supported to take steps. With a coaching approach, Daniel was guided through his challenges, reminded of his motivations, and equipped with problem-solving skills. In the short time NAAJA was working with Daniel, he obtained his Driver's License and White Card, and he maintained contact with Community Corrections. These are all things Daniel expressed doubts about and at various stages suggested he was ready to give up.

As the program progressed, Daniel committed to living a good life and being a good role model for his siblings. He discovered that he is capable of achieving the things he sets out to do, as his sense of confidence and self-belief was restored. The key to Daniel's success was his willingness to engage with and trust the NAAJA Youth Support Worker. Following his release from the DDYDC, together they devised a plan that built confidence and a sense of achievement, which helped him to resist his fear of failure.

Case Study 2: Darren

Darren was an 18-year-old Aboriginal man with an extensive history of criminal acts and incarceration, and a history of Child Protection involvement. He was emerging from care at the time of his referral. He also had a history of trauma and a profound lack of male role models in his family in Darwin. At the time that he self-referred, Darren was detained at the DDYDC and learnt that his partner was pregnant. He spoke of perpetrating domestic violence in the context of heavy drug use in recent times.

The NAAJA Youth Support Worker slowly worked with Darren to build a strong relationship and to identify steps that Darren could take to achieve his goal of being a good dad. Darren seemed able to identify where he wanted to go, but he did not know how he could get there. Through multiple conversations it was identified that Darren had not been exposed to male role models that he could aspire to, and it was recognised that the relationship with a strong Aboriginal man was as important as the case management work that was undertaken alongside it.

Concerns about becoming a parent, managing the uncertainty of his incarceration, and previous patterns of responding to anxiety and stress were all discussed regularly while Darren was in DDYDC. He was able to take responsibility for his past actions and became determined to do things differently in the future. The Youth Support Worker was able to refer and connect Darren to services that were identified as being important to his improved mental health. At the time of release, Darren was well prepared and well supported by a young parent's service, as well as the NAAJA Healing Program. These connections placed him at a significantly decreased risk of reoffending or breaching any of his conditions of release. Because of the potential for Child Protection involvement with the new baby, he sought out services that gave him the skills and support required for him to provide a safe and nurturing environment for the baby. He was beginning to think about the future in a way that he had not in the past.

The long-term impact of the changes Darren made are for his baby and partner as well as for himself. A baby that is strongly attached to a parent has a stronger physical and mental health trajectory in the long term. Darren will require less intervention from other services due to an increased sense of agency in his life and in relation to his future. With decreased drug use, it is more likely that the family home will be free of incidents of domestic violence and disharmony. This will also impact on the mental health of his partner and, in turn, lead to a decreased need for her to utilise DV-specific support services.

Darren gained an awareness of his emotions and thought processes, exhibited strength and self-awareness by reaching out for help, and engaged in service provision to help him develop resilience and management strategies. Given that Darren self-referred, he brought a strength and insight with him. That strength is now coupled with greater maturity and emotional know-how.

Case Study 3: Braden

Braden was 18 years old when released from the DDYDC on a suspended sentence with an operational period of two years. When he left detention there was concern about the potential for recidivism, given his strong connection to his identity as a 'gangster' and his idealisation of his father, who had been incarcerated for a lengthy period.

He became a participant in the NAAJA Healing Program and stayed with service for 11 months, by which time significant changes were observed. He matured significantly, shifted his identity to one of a young man who values family and responsibility – particularly to his mum and younger siblings. He trusted the Youth Support Worker sufficiently to let down his previous facade and explore other cultural and empathic elements of his identity. He soon had aspirations for the future.

After disengaging from case management and cultural activity for a period, he re-engaged and participated in the smoking ceremony, taking on a leadership role within the ceremony. He also engaged in employment, which was supported by his Youth Support Worker. He became more connected to family, his Youth Support Worker, cultural identity, and the community (through employment).

Connecting with family, gaining employment, and decreasing drug use are all factors in minimising recidivist behaviour. Accordingly, Braden increased his chances of moving through the suspended sentence without being incarcerated again. His levels of satisfaction with his own life improved.

Maintaining work ensured that he had financial stability, which resulted in improved physical and mental health for him and his family. Braden described the benefits of working and enjoyed the pride his mum displayed when she spoke of what he had achieved.

His younger siblings benefited from the increased levels of harmony in the household, and witnessed their older brother acting as a role model who is achieving employment. Decreased financial pressure on his family will lead to less emotional strain on mum, increased financial security, and a better standard of living for the entire family.

The example he was setting as a brother, peer, and son reached all of those he has contact with and served as a source of inspiration/aspiration for those around him. He has developed a picture of the future, which is positive, exciting, and most importantly, one that feels attainable.





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