

What does healing look like for you?

Look good/Feel good healing camps - Wide Bay Women's Health Centre



Look good/Feel good healing camps have been developed and delivered in partnership with Central Queensland Indigenous Development (CQID) and Hervey Bay Neighbourhood Centre. Wide Bay Women's Health Centre Inc. is the only funded women's specific service in the region. We offer counselling services for women as well and part of my role is ensuring that we provide culturally safe practices.

The Look good/Feel good camps would go from Friday afternoon – Sunday afternoon. It aligned with Queensland women's week and International women's day. Each service brought along five women to the camp, plus support workers. In total we had 13 participants plus 6 support workers = 19 women.

The camp location was at Susan River, 15kms out of Hervey Bay. The group stayed in homestead units in a beautiful setting with horses and home cooked meals. They have hopes that one day they can raise the funds to buy the homestead and turn it into a healing centre for families.

Activities at the camp included:

Facilitators from Intensive Family Support at Hervey Bay Community Centre led a shark cage workshop. Two women from the Queensland Police Service Vulnerable Persons Unit presented as speakers to talk about their works and shared dinner with the women.

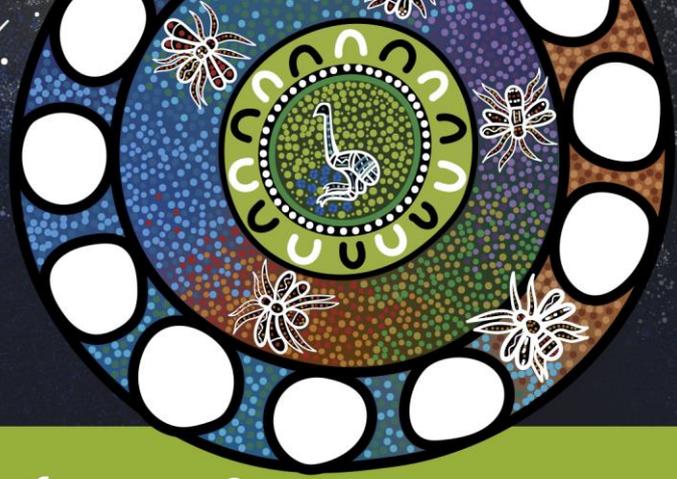
Aunty Jan Williams led a weaving workshop. ***"When we do a weaving workshop, people sit down and they weave and they yarn. It's about connecting people, because that's when people talk, while weaving."***

We do a lot of visual things in the workshops that we do, including a hopes and dreams activity that we led. It was about a tree of healing. What they might have discovered about themselves, or poetry. One of the ladies wrote ***"My life has been a cloud of smoke. Now I have two babies my life has purpose."***

Women really get a lot out of listening to other women's stories and they wanted to learn from each other. We also had counsellors there that people could connect with them if they needed to.



Queensland Healing Strategy



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We also gave women the opportunity to indulge in pampering activities, where women had the chance to be waited on, because most women are always looking after other people. We also had hairdressers and mini massages to offer pampering. All of the women are given Dignity bags, pamper packs to take home.

We also had Karaoke sessions as a great confidence building activity for women to express themselves.

There are a lot of drug and alcohol problems in the region and there are no identified positions within those specialist services. There are problems for accessing services, like DV or sexual assault because they don't have indigenous workers to provide culturally safe support. We would love to see more indigenous workers in mainstream services as there are limited choice for culturally sensitive services.

We would love to have a healing centre for families. We would love to win money, buy Susan River and have it as a family healing centre.

Education is another issue. There are a lot of our younger ones that don't finish school and a lot of our little ones might have FASD, autism, trauma. We need an alternative learning program as a pathway for these young indigenous people.

The Look Good/Feel Good camps have helped women build connections and support networks. The camps help facilitate and foster relationships and women were able to share meaningfully in a way that was comfortable for them.

The informal nature of the camps helped women to make connections and friendships that were sustained after the camp. Some of the women from the camp later connected with community walking group.

"We found we were connecting women in various ways, not just about coming in for counselling."

The camps gave women information about choices, particularly the shark cage. For some women, they didn't even know they were living in an unhealthy relationship. They got to learn about what services are out there, they learned more about themselves, they built connections with each other and with the police.

We are keeping connected to the people that came on the camp and the workers.

The camps helped people to connect to different cultures (as there were women from different cultural backgrounds) and it helped them all ***"to connect and learn things, and build confidence together."***

Marj Speedy
Indigenous Family Support Worker
Wide Bay Women's Health Centre Inc.

