



**STOLEN GENERATIONS
RESOURCE KIT
FOR TEACHERS AND STUDENTS**

EDUCATOR'S GUIDE

Tips and tools to support the
implementation of the Stolen Generations
Resource Kit for Teachers and Students.



HealingFoundation
Strong Spirit • Strong Culture • Strong People

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Introduction

Thank you for teaching your students more about the Stolen Generations.

By doing so, you are ensuring their experiences, their history, their voices, and the ongoing impact is known by young Australians.

Thank you for choosing to work through this guide.

As an educator it can be very difficult to incorporate new and unfamiliar learning into your classroom, but your willingness to learn and work through this guide will make this process easier.

Thank you for sharing this knowledge.

As well as your students learning about this, their parents will hear about it, other teachers in the school will learn about it and the administrators at your school will learn about it too! Please share these resources within your networks, and share any of your outcomes with us. We'd love to see what your students make, hear about what worked well, and hear about what didn't. You can email us at resources@healingfoundation.org.au or tag us on Instagram @healingourway and on Facebook as 'Healing Foundation'.

We hope you learn some more about the Kit and how to apply your teaching expertise to Stolen Generations knowledge.

Thank you!



To access the links to resources and videos, or to check you have the most up to date version, visit www.healingfoundation.org.au/schools or scan the QR code.



Embedding the kit in your curriculum

We know it's hard to fit in all the learning that students need to undertake. The activities are designed in a way that means they can be a one off – maybe in the last week of term or after assessments – or taught as a unit. We have included a list of important dates that you could use to guide when to implement these activities but teaching about the Stolen Generations isn't restricted to certain dates.

Speak to your Head of Department or Head of Curriculum to get them to incorporate it into the curriculum for your class. These lessons can become part of a range of subjects, each activity already has curriculum links, and can easily fit into pre-organised units.

Share these resources with the administrators at your school to get them to incorporate it into the learning at every year level. The Kit is complete from foundation through to Year 12, and students will benefit most if they are completing the activities every year.

Have a chat with your school librarian to find out what resources your school already has, and what books may be able to be added to your library. Share the Stolen Generations Resource Kit for Teachers and Students with the librarian and work together to implement activities outside the classroom.

About the guide

This guide is an aid to support educators when implementing the Stolen Generations Resource Kit for Teachers and Students.

It is to help build confidence in the skills educators already have, to feel prepared to teach content you may otherwise find challenging. You will find information to help contextualise the knowledge in the Kit, and questions to get you reflecting so you can place this knowledge within your experience, classroom, and school.

First, you'll find an array of resources to help build your knowledge base and learn more about the lens through which you view the world and the classroom. In section two, we have shared resources to guide you with preparation for your class to teach the Kit with cultural safety as a priority. Finally, you'll find tips for how the whole school community can embrace this learning.

NARRAGUNNAWALI: RECONCILIATION IN EDUCATION

Some of the content in this guide has been developed based on resources from Reconciliation Australia's [Narragunnawali: Reconciliation in Education](#) program, as linked and cited throughout.

The Narragunnawali program comprises an online platform with a range of tools and resources to drive reconciliation in your education context. The program's purpose is to support reconciliation in education across Australia. It offers [professional learning](#) for teachers and educators in early learning, primary and secondary settings, and curriculum resources across learning stages and [subject areas](#), all which link to a wider Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) [framework](#) and [development process](#).

The Stolen Generations Resource Kit is available within the comprehensive suite of Narragunnawali [curriculum resources](#).

Learn more:
reconciliation.org.au/narragunnawali

Approach this Guide with an open mind, remembering this is about strengthening your confidence to teach topics that can be quite difficult in some Australian classrooms. Some of the content may be cognitively or emotionally difficult and may challenge some ideas you have about teaching and learning.

“No Excuses” by Cara Shipp

We understand that it can be hard to introduce unfamiliar, and sometimes challenging topics into the classroom. And you want to do the content justice and not say the wrong thing. But as educators, it is our role to have these conversations, and we are all more than capable of leading them in our classrooms. Use this table below to challenge some of the fears that may be holding you back from teaching First Nations history.

EXCUSE

“It’s not my place to teach about Aboriginal culture.”

COUNTER

The fact that what you’re teaching is in the public domain means there is a good chance Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are happy for it to be shared. Can you teach a poem about the Holocaust if you’re not German/Jewish?

EXCUSE

“What if I expose something sacred?”

COUNTER

Minimal risk. Systems have protected secret/sacred knowledge for over 60,000 years; it’s highly unlikely you’ll stumble upon such information.

EXCUSE

“What if an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person comes in angry and questions me?”

COUNTER

Listen, learn, provide your explanation/rationale, show your sources, apologise if necessary. Schools deal with complaints and questions all the time – there are always challenging conversations to be had – you can handle it!

EXCUSE

“I can’t teach Aboriginal perspectives because I don’t understand anything about Aboriginal culture. I’ve never met an Aboriginal person.”

COUNTER

We’re teachers, we’re lifelong learners, active citizens and we know how to conduct research. We also know how to socialise.

EXCUSE

“What if I give misinformation?”

COUNTER

This could apply to any topic we teach. Cross-check your sources, ask local Aboriginal people, reference your sources on class materials.

Checklist for teachers

Below is a quick way to identify the knowledge that will help you bring the Kit into the classroom. If you aren't ready to tick any of the boxes below, don't worry! All the information you need is in this guide and in the classroom activity sheets.

- ☐ I can identify whose land I teach on
- ☐ I am familiar with students who may find this content upsetting
- ☐ I am familiar with students who may find this content challenging
- ☐ I have created plans with students who may need extra support
- ☐ I have read and worked through this guide
- ☐ I have read and watched all relevant sources in the activities
- ☐ My classroom is culturally safe
- ☐ I am aware of how to maintain cultural safety in my classroom
- ☐ I have developed a method for students to provide feedback anonymously
- ☐ I have reflected on my own cultural background and knowledge
- ☐ I am aware that I may hold biases that could be challenged in these lessons

Checklist for administrators

Below is a quick way to identify the knowledge that will help you bring the Kit into your school or department. If you aren't ready to tick any of the boxes below, don't worry! All the information you need is in this guide and in the classroom activity sheets.

- ☐ I can identify whose land I work on
- ☐ I have organised professional development for staff teaching the Kit
- ☐ I have clearly outlined support for staff and students
- ☐ I have organised remuneration for any First Nations guests
- ☐ I am working towards a culturally safe school
- ☐ I am aware of local Traditional Owners
- ☐ I am building strong relationships with Traditional Owners
- ☐ I am familiar with local First Nations organisations who we can call upon
- ☐ We have developed a plan for contacting First Nations people and have a clear point of contact



Knowing yourself

The following activity has been adapted from the Narragunnawali [Reflecting on Our Cultural Identities](#) professional learning resource.

When we teach students about topics that have important cultural weight and significance, we need to be operating from a place where we can also understand what culture means to us and how our culture has influenced our understanding of the world. What do you understand about your own cultural identity?

1. What makes you 'you'?

2. What is an event in your life that helped you to better understand cultural difference?

Your learning journey

The way we educate about First Nations histories and cultures has developed significantly since many of us attended school. Reflect on your own experience learning about First Nations histories and cultures, whether that be as a First Nations person, or as someone who didn't learn until University, or as a migrant who wasn't taught Australian history.

1. What was your experience of learning about or engaging with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and culture?

2. What was your experience of learning about or engaging with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and languages?

3. What was your experience of learning about or engaging with the Stolen Generations?

4. Thinking about your answer to the last question, how old were you when you had this experience? Reflect on the significance of this.

5. Can you recall an experience in your life that sparked a deeper level of thinking about the Stolen Generations?

6. Think about an experience that sparked a deeper level of thinking about racism and colonisation in Australia. Summarise this experience in a few sentences.

7. How did this change or affect your teaching?

8. Write a few lines about an experience that sparked a deeper level of thinking about your own history and cultural identity.

9. How did this change or affect your teaching?

Self-Reflection for a culturally inclusive classroom

When you integrate First Nations' knowledge and stories in your classroom, you may be worried about how to share these stories in an inclusive and culturally safe way. Griffith University has shared a [guideline](#) on how you can reflect on your culturally inclusive classroom. These will help you feel more confident in what you already know and help develop a stronger understanding of these concepts.

10 QUESTIONS TO GUIDE SELF-REFLECTION: CREATING A CULTURALLY INCLUSIVE CLASSROOM

1. What is my definition of "diversity"?

2. What national, cultural, linguistic, or religious group(s) do I belong to? How do my teaching practices reflect this?

3. What do I know about the cultural, linguistic, religious, and educational backgrounds of my students and other staff?

4. How could I learn more about the diversity of my students and staff colleagues?

5. What are my perceptions/assumptions of students and staff colleagues from diverse cultural groups? Or with language or dialects different from mine? Or with special needs or requirements?

6. What are the sources of these perceptions (e.g., friends/relatives, media, stereotypes, past experiences)?

7. How do I respond to my students (emotionally, cognitively, and behaviourally), based on these perceptions?

8. What experiences do I have as a result of living, studying, or working in culturally and linguistically diverse cultures? How can I capitalise on this experience?

9. How can I adapt my teaching practices to be more responsive to the unique needs of diverse student groups?

10. What other knowledge, skills, and resources would help me to teach from a more culturally inclusive perspective?

From the questions above, you have hopefully started to paint a picture of your own cultural background, understanding of cultural difference and cultural safety. Within these conversations, it's incredibly important to also become aware of your own [privilege](#). Privilege is not something to feel guilt about and it does not mean you've had it easy in every aspect of your life. The Stolen Generations were oppressed as First Nations people and suffered the injustice of being separated from family and Country, many things they have faced would never have impacted on the life of someone born the same year to a non-First Nations family. These privileges impact every area of life and are very important to keep in mind while teaching about injustice.

How to learn more

We are all aware that learning doesn't end in the classroom. Think about how you can embed First Nations voices in your life outside of work to help build your familiarity with relevant topics. You could:

Look through the book list as well as the activities for each year level to find books, movies, YouTube videos, articles, and more that you can engage with.

View the huge range of books that First Nations publishers have, such as [Magabala books](#).

Use online guides to find books, tv shows, and movies written by and about First Nations people.

Organise – or ask the appropriate staff member to organise – a professional learning session about reconciliation. The [Narragunnawali platform](#) includes a range of [professional learning resources](#) that can support teacher led activities, run by your own staff.

Listen to First Nations musicians and podcasts.

If you have First Nations people in your life who are willing to share, listen to them with an open mind and remember there is a wide range of First Nations experiences.

Add more First Nations voices to your social media feed.



Knowing your class

You would already be very familiar with your class and the needs of your students. For this unit, there is some key information about your students you should be able to identify:

1. Who in my class is First Nations?

2. Who in my class has been fostered, adopted, or removed from family?

3. How will I work with these students to ensure they feel safe in this classroom?

4. Is there anyone who I am aware may have trouble genuinely engaging with this content? How will I manage this?

It is important to remember that First Nations students in your class may not want to contribute to learning about First Nations experiences, histories and cultures. Don't make assumptions about their own background and experiences, many First Nations people are living off country, are not connected to their people, or don't have access to their language. By giving all students a space to contribute, First Nations students may choose to share their knowledge, but they also may not! Ensure that they feel supported in your classroom either way.

Establishing your classroom as culturally safe

The classroom activities are based on an inquiry approach to learning to allow students and teachers to learn side by side, questioning, exploring, and consolidating their own thinking by considering all perspectives. Part of that includes ensuring a culturally safe classroom. The next few sections will run through what cultural safety is and how to apply it to your classroom.

We will start by answering a few questions to get an idea of what cultural safety means to you:

1. What is a safe classroom to you?

2. Can you reflect on a time that your classroom felt unsafe and how this impacted on students?

3. Could you have done anything differently?

3. Can you reflect on a time that a student felt safe enough in your classroom to engage in a surprising way?

4. Can you remember a time that you felt unsafe in a space because of your identity? (this could be your race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, disability, appearance, etc.)

5. What do you think cultural safety means?

Now that you've reflected on it yourself, let's look at what cultural safety is.



What is cultural safety?

(adapted from the [Australian Human Rights Commission](#)).


Cultural safety is a term often used in healthcare and first introduced by [Māori nurses in New Zealand](#). It encompasses:

"[A]n 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."


The Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency conducted research into what cultural safety means for Victorians (mostly First Nations), and some of their findings include:




"Feeling safe in the knowledge that you're listened to, that your contribution to the community is important, just as much as anyone else's."



"Feeling safe to be able to express yourself and being embraced by the rest of society."



"Feeling safe in who you are... in your identity. Knowing that you're a proud Indigenous person... taking strength in your culture through adversities."



A culturally safe space would create "increased understanding, increased empathy, decreased apathy, decreased racism in the mainstream community."

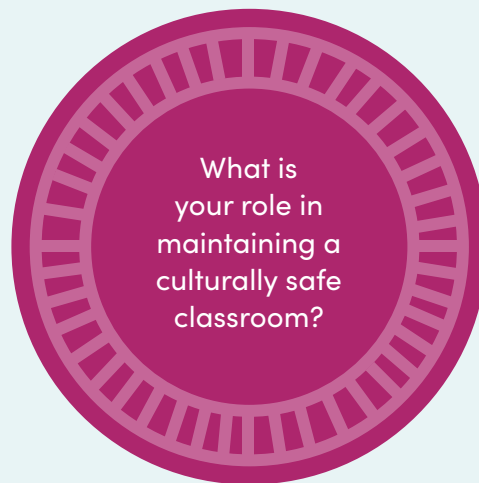
An integral component of cultural safety is the freedom to process within community. Part of this process is truth telling that will allow First Nations people to move through victimhood, to survivors of oppression, to seeing themselves as achievers and contributors.

Classroom activity

BEFORE YOU UNDERTAKE THESE ACTIVITIES, OR AT THE START OF THE YEAR, TAKE SOME TIME TO ASK YOUR STUDENTS TO CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:



SHARE THE DEFINITIONS ABOVE WITH STUDENTS AND GIVE THEM A CHANCE TO REFLECT BEFORE ASKING:



Co-design

By beginning the learning with a clear co-design of classroom rules, you are ensuring that students have agency in their learning. We also encourage you to promote this further, by having one-on-one discussions with the students you identified earlier [on page 10] to figure out how to ensure this learning will be safe for them. Some things to consider include:

- Exit strategies for students who may be affected by the content.
 - Discuss these with students who are more vulnerable to these topics, but allow all students an exit strategy – we can't know every detail of a student's home life and for some year levels these topics can be quite emotional and difficult
 - This may be as simple as allowing students to put in headphones, rest their head on their desk, or having a corner of the room for them to move to when they're overwhelmed. You may have more freedom in your school and allow them to leave the classroom for a breather, or to go to another unit in the school where they can receive support
 - While there is a fear that students will take advantage of this policy, having a culturally safe classroom must include wellbeing as a priority.
- As a class, develop words, phrases, or actions to use to identify if someone is saying something that is culturally unsafe.
 - This might mean having a poster you can tap on to remind students, or using a phrase like "is that culturally safe?" Or encouraging students to come to you if a conversation is getting out of hand
 - Allow students the room to ask questions and challenge their beliefs but remind them that this can always be done in a safe and respectful manner
 - If something is unsafe, where possible, explain to the students why, e.g. "I understand you're learning, so I want to let you know that is not a word we use anymore, and a lot of people can find it upsetting."
 - In situations like this, try not to repeat the word, especially if it's a slur. If for the sake of education, the students need to be made aware of the word, try to spell or find another method rather than outright saying the word.
- Take the time to learn what your students know about the Stolen Generations and First Nations history.
 - Design this so it suits your class, you may do a KWL activity, or get students to write what they hope to learn about and submit it to you anonymously, or use a few of the videos in the resource guide as discussion points.
 - Encourage students to share their knowledge – an important aspect of culturally safety is ensuring students feel valued for their cultural knowledge and background.

Yarning Circles – respectful, reflective conversations

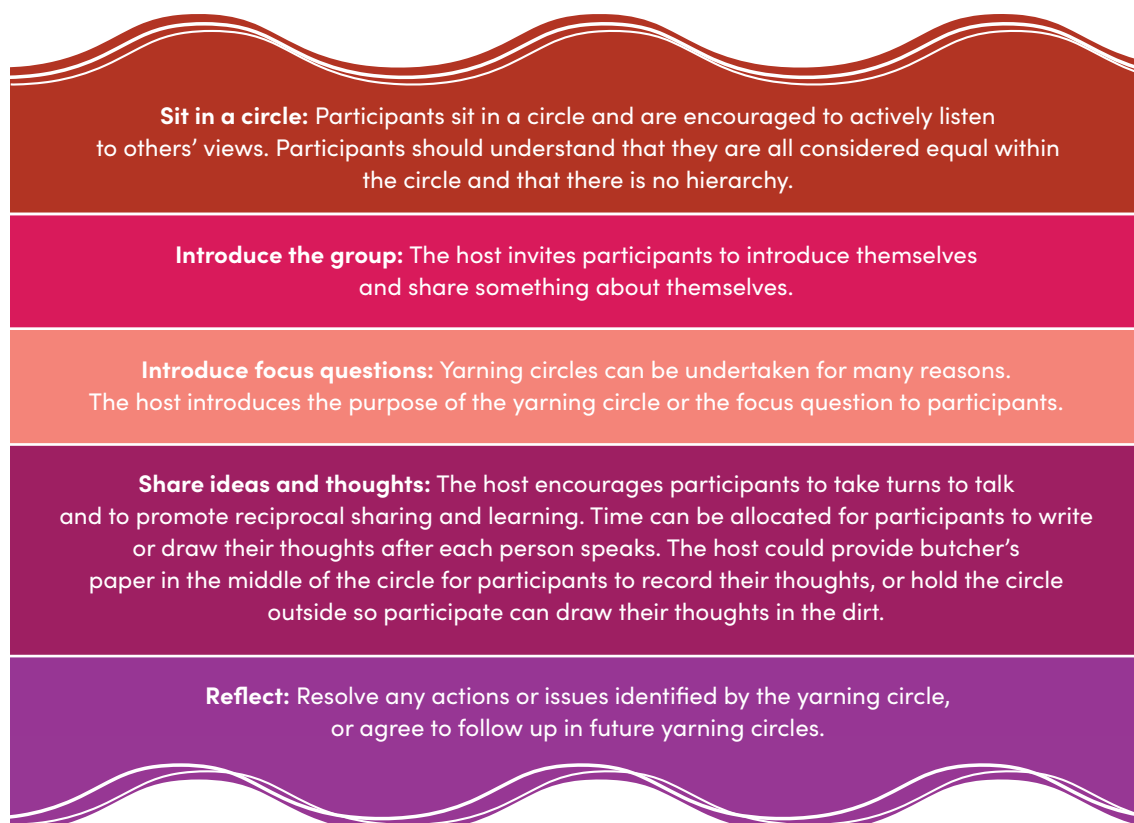
Timing is a huge challenge in the classroom, and it's all too common to have to skip a final activity as time slips away in an excitable room. For this learning, it's incredibly important to have a way to introduce and to conclude the lessons. The activities encourage openness that needs to be established as the lessons begin. Before your students leave the room or move on to a new topic, they need to have the space to process and reflect on their learning. One method of bookending your lessons can be utilising a yarning circle.

The following information from the [Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority](#), outlines how a yarning circle can be used in a classroom.

The use of a yarning circle (or dialogue circle) is an important process within Aboriginal culture and Torres Strait Islander culture. It has been used by Indigenous peoples from around the world for centuries to learn from a collective group, build respectful relationships, and to preserve and pass on cultural knowledge. By using yarning circles as a teaching and learning strategy, students' understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge and ways of working are enhanced. This strategy is suitable for students across all phases of schooling.

Implementing yarning circles in your classroom

A yarning circle is usually initiated or hosted by an individual – a teacher, a student, or a visitor. Yarning circles can take a number of formats, but the following guidelines generally apply when initiating a yarning circle.



- Sit in a circle:** Participants sit in a circle and are encouraged to actively listen to others' views. Participants should understand that they are all considered equal within the circle and that there is no hierarchy.
- Introduce the group:** The host invites participants to introduce themselves and share something about themselves.
- Introduce focus questions:** Yarning circles can be undertaken for many reasons. The host introduces the purpose of the yarning circle or the focus question to participants.
- Share ideas and thoughts:** The host encourages participants to take turns to talk and to promote reciprocal sharing and learning. Time can be allocated for participants to write or draw their thoughts after each person speaks. The host could provide butcher's paper in the middle of the circle for participants to record their thoughts, or hold the circle outside so participants can draw their thoughts in the dirt.
- Reflect:** Resolve any actions or issues identified by the yarning circle, or agree to follow up in future yarning circles.

YARNING CIRCLE QUESTIONS

1. How would a yarning circle look in your classroom?

2. What steps could you take to familiarise students with the concept?

3. What kind of activities do you think would benefit from a yarning circle?

Knowing your school

The Narragunnawali [Reflecting on Our Cultural Identities](#) professional learning resource can be run as a professional development activity. View this resource on the Narragunnawali platform to learn more about its links to professional standards and how to run the activity for a group in your school.

This activity is linked back to the *Knowing Yourself* section of this guide and encourages us to expand our thinking from individual cultural identity reflections, to reflecting on the school as a whole. Ideally you should complete these questions as a group, answering individually and reflecting together on your responses.

1. How can we increase cultural competence in our school or early learning service?

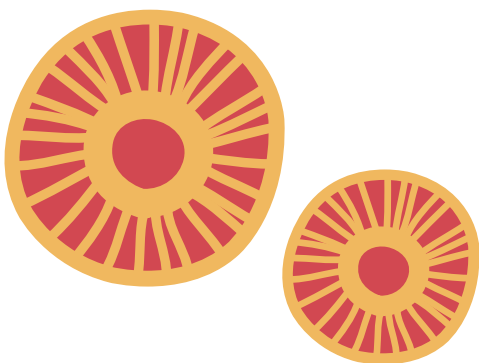
2. Share an experience that has happened in this school or early learning service that furthered your understanding of cultural difference.

3. Comment on how you perceive the cultural competency level of the school or early learning service currently.

4. Comment on how you perceive the cultural competency of the students and children in the school or early learning service.

5. What should cultural responsiveness look like in this school or early learning service? How can we work towards that?

If we think back to the cultural safety section on page [x], creating a culturally safe school can help us address many issues related to cultural competency, responsiveness, and inclusion. If you haven't yet completed the earlier section on cultural safety, we highly recommend it as it has knowledge that will help with your understanding of the following activities.



Cultural safety in schools

(adapted from the [Victorian Department of Health](#)).

Ideally you should complete these reflections in a staff meeting, whether that be departmental or as a whole school. These should also be addressed by administrators and leaders within the school community.

Each of the following points were identified by the Victorian Department of Health as integral to culturally safe spaces. Reflect on how well you think you and your school perform in each item.

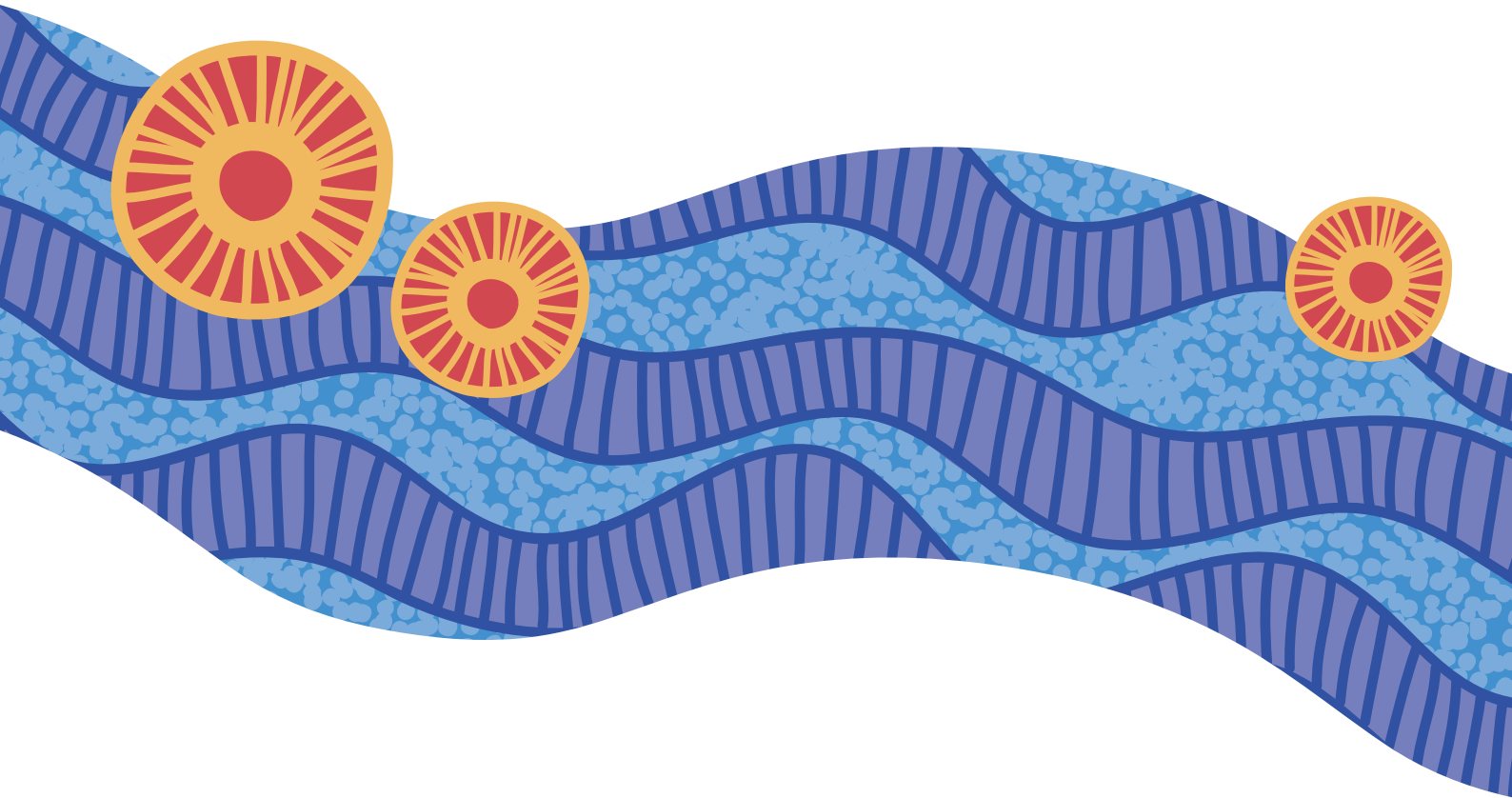
1. Shared respect, shared meaning, and shared knowledge.

2. The experience of learning together with dignity and truly listening.

3. Strategic and institutional reform to remove barriers to learning for First Nations people. This includes addressing unconscious bias, racism, and discrimination, and supporting self-determination.

4. Teachers, departments, administrators, and the school ensuring their cultural values do not negatively impact on First Nations peoples, especially Stolen Generations survivors and descendants, including addressing the potential for unconscious bias, racism, and discrimination.

5. Teachers, departments, administrators, and the school ensuring self-determination for First Nations people. This includes sharing power (decision-making and governance) and resources with Stolen Generations survivors and descendants.



Creating connections with First Nations Communities

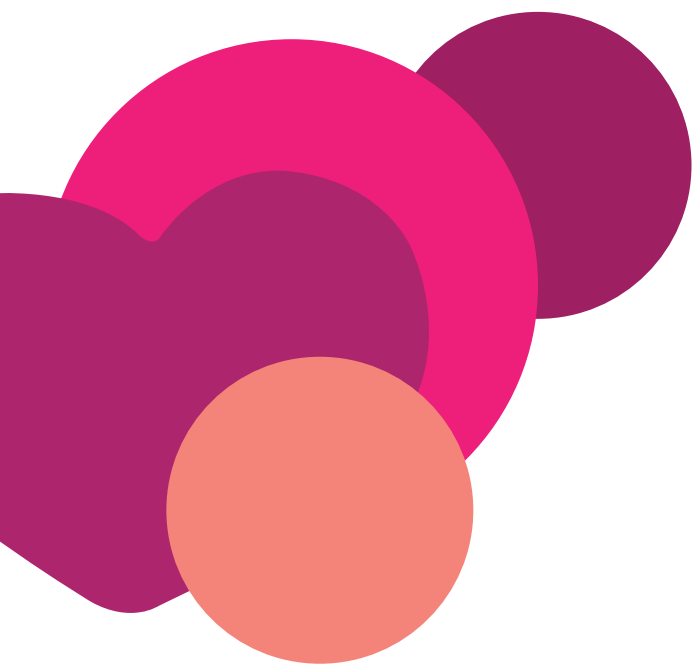
The following activity includes information from the Narragunnawali [Cultural Safety and Respect in the Classroom](#) professional learning resource, with questions designed to support critical reflection.

The most benefit from this activity would come from completing it as a group. While this activity is beneficial for all educators, it is especially relevant for administrators who will be making decisions around how and when to invite First Nations people into the school.

Reading and reflecting on Nayuka Gorrie's 2017 article, '[Things that are not my job](#)', may help to prepare staff to recognise some of the socio-emotional complexities of inter-personal or inter-cultural sharing. It is not always culturally safe, fair, reasonable, or appropriate to expect people's personal or cultural knowledges to be shared.

CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING

- There may be distinct cultural protocols around which stories and knowledges can and can't be shared by particular community members, students, and children, and around when, where, how and with whom they can be shared.
- Personal narratives about traumatic issues and events, especially around the Stolen Generations, can be very sensitive and even (re)traumatising to listen to, or talk about.
- Histories of forced separation from Country, culture and community may mean it is important not to place expectations on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members, students, or children to share details of the histories and cultures of your local area.
- Histories of colonial exploitation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and cultural knowledges may mean that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members could be sceptical or concerned about the potential consequences of sharing. The history of educational institutions being a tool for the Stolen Generations could compound this concern.
- The diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and identities can make individuals feel uncomfortable about any expectation that they can or should speak on behalf of 'all' Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
- There are certain times when it may not be appropriate to contact or visit Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals and community organisations. Keep in mind that supporting schools and early learning services may not be the immediate or core business of individuals from your community and they may have more urgent personal or cultural obligations or priorities such as [Sorry Business](#).



AFTER REFLECTING ON YOUR READING IN THE CONTEXT OF THE ABOVE SCENARIOS, REFLECT ON, AND DISCUSS, THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS

1. What is the value of engaging with, and learning from, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, students, Elders, and wider community members in the classroom?

2. Why is it important for teachers and educators to be careful not to assume what stories or knowledges can be shared by particular community members, and when, where and with whom they can be shared?

3. Can you identify any situations specific to your local area or distinct school/early learning environment during which it may not be fair, reasonable, or appropriate to expect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to share personal or cultural knowledges?

4. Why is it important to actively recognise, and be sensitive to, such situations?

5. Which aspects of your personal or cultural background are/aren't you comfortable sharing and why?

6. Do you feel ready to share, and be responsible for sharing, every detail of your own community's histories and cultures?

7. Have you ever been 'singled out', or felt an expectation or obligation to share something about yourself or your culture that you preferred not to, and how did you respond?

8. What is cultural safety and why is it important to promote it in educational and wider environments?

9. What does a culturally safe and respectful learning environment 'look' like? What are some important things to think about in fostering culturally safe and respectful listening, questioning and/or sharing?

10. What improvements could be made to your school or early learning service's policies or principles around promoting cultural safety and respect in the classroom?

FOLLOWING YOUR DISCUSSION, CONSIDER STRATEGIES FOR APPROPRIATELY STRENGTHENING CULTURAL SAFETY AND RESPECT WITHIN YOUR CLASSROOM, AROUND THE SCHOOL OR EARLY LEARNING SERVICE, AND WITH THE COMMUNITY. CONSIDER THESE EXAMPLES

1. Before inviting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, children, or wider community member to speak in front of the class, have you had a careful conversation about what kinds of stories or knowledges they are and aren't prepared to share?

2. Have you given all other staff and students in the classroom information about the context of the sharing session, and examples of which kinds of inquiry questions are and aren't appropriate?

How to reach out – inviting First Nations Elders and Guests

We highly recommend bringing a First Nations person into your school or classroom to share perspectives, histories, and cultures. However, it's important to avoid assumptions about what can and should be shared, and to create a space that is safe for your visitors.

We suggest having one point of contact in your school for local community groups, Elders and survivors to have as a touch point. Whether this be your identified Indigenous support officer, a vice-principal, an administration officer or a head of department, having one person manage the relationships will avoid miscommunications, inundations, and help ensure respectful conversations.

Here are some questions (adapted from the Narragunnawali [Cultural Safety and Respect in the Classroom](#) professional learning resource) to help ensure you are creating a culturally safe relationship with First Nations guests.

1. Can we offer remuneration to First Nations guests attending our school? Will they need remuneration for travel?

2. Who will be responsible for organising food, breaks and any other needs of First Nations Guests?

3. What is the value of engaging with, and learning from, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, students, Elders, and wider community members in the classroom?

4. What is the value of engaging with, and learning from, Stolen Generations survivors and descendants in the classroom?

5. What is cultural safety and why is it important to promote in educational and wider environments?

6. What does a culturally safe and respectful learning environment 'look' like?

7. What are some important things to think about in fostering culturally safe and respectful listening, questioning and/or sharing?

8. What are some important considerations to cultural safety in the context of Stolen Generations?

Sometimes you may reach out and attempt to build a relationship only for it to not work out. Remember, First Nations people are under no obligation to be involved, and many may not be comfortable to talk about the Stolen Generations. As outlined above, there are a myriad of reasons someone may not be comfortable or available to talk about certain topics. Don't be discouraged and don't let this stop you from reaching out somewhere else! Use your own networks in education to find out if there is someone in your area who might be interested in coming in. Otherwise, use our list below to get some ideas on where to go.

Contact list

NEW SOUTH WALES			
	WEBSITE	EMAIL	PHONE NUMBER
Link-Up NSW Aboriginal Corp	www.linkupnsw.org.au	Linkup@nsw.link-up.org.au	1800 624 332
Kinchela Boys Home Aboriginal Corp	https://kinchelaboyshome.org.au	office@kbhac.org.au kempseyoffice@kbhac.org.au	(02) 9051 1690 (Sydney Office) (02) 6533 1840 (Kempsey Office)
Coota Girls Home Aboriginal Corporation	https://www.cootagirls.org.au	admin@cootagirls.org.au	(02) 8004 6162
The Children of the Bomaderry Aboriginal Children's Home Inc.		kathleenb@cbach.org.au	(02) 9868 9200
NSW/ACT Stolen Generations Council	https://www.gandangara.org.au/stolen-generation	Reception@glalc.org.au	(02) 9602 5280
NORTHERN TERRITORY			
NT Stolen Generations Aboriginal Corporation - Darwin Link-Up Service	http://www.ntsgac.org.au		(08) 8947 9171
Central Australi Aboriginal Corporation - Alice Springs Link-Up Service	www.caac.org.au	congress.linkup@caac.org.au	(08) 8959 4750
QUEENSLAND			
Link Up (Qld) Aboriginal Corp	www.link-upqld.org.au	contact@link-upqld.org.au	1800 200 855
Cherbourg Boys and Girls Dormitory Ltd	https://cherbourgmemory.org	hello@cherbourgmemory.org	(07) 4169 5753
SOUTH AUSTRALIA			
Nunkuwarrin Yunti of SA - Link-Up SA	www.nunku.org.au	nunku@nunku.org.au	(08) 8406 1600
SASGAC - South Australia Stolen Generation Aboriginal Corporation	http://www.sasgac.com.au	contact@sasgac.com.au	
TASMANIA			
Tasmania Aboriginal Centre (TAC)	https://tacinc.com.au	hobart@tacinc.com.au	1800 132 260
TORRES STRAIT			
Mura Kosker			(07) 4069 1663
VICTORIA			
Connecting Home Ltd	https://linkupvictoria.org.au	linkup@vacca.org	1800 OUR MOB (1800 687 662)
SASGAC - South Australia Stolen Generation Aboriginal Corporation	https://connectinghome.org.au	sgr@connectinghome.org.au	(03) 8679 0700
WESTERN AUSTRALIA			
Yorgum Healing Services	https://yorgum.org.au	admin@yorgum.org.au	1800 469 371
Kimberley Stolen Generations Aboriginal Corporation - Link-Up Service	https://www.kimberleystolengeneration.com.au	reception@ksgac.com.au	1800 830 338
Sister Kate's Home Kids Aboriginal Corp	https://www.skhkac.org.au	hello@cherbourgmemory.org	(07) 4169 5753
Woolkabunning Kiaka Incorporated (Roelands Village)	https://www.roelandsvillage.com.au	admin@roelandsvillage.com.au	(08) 97263 606
WASGAC - Western Australia Stolen Generation Aboriginal Corporation - Yokai	https://yokai.com.au	keith@yokai.com.au	
Bringing Them Home WA	https://bringingthemhomewa.com	admin@bringingthemhomewa.com	

Additional resources

Classroom conversations have the potential to continue long after the lesson has finished – in our playgrounds, in homes, and across social media.

It may be that these conversations bring on a variety of feelings and emotions for educators, First Nations and non-First Nations students, and have an effect on individual wellbeing, and the wellbeing of families and communities.

Below are some additional resources and places online, by phone and in-person where you can find more information, support and tips that may help you or your students, especially First Nations students and their families.

The Gayaa Dhuwi network

gayaadhuwi.org.au

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership in Social and Emotional Wellbeing, Mental Health and Suicide Prevention. Access resources and find help for support services.

Wellmob

wellmob.org.au

Social, emotional and cultural wellbeing online resources for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

R U OK?

ruok.org.au

R U OK? is a public health promotion campaign with resources to assist students as they learn how to support their peers and talk about how they feel.

Kids Helpline

kidshelpline.com.au

A free, private and confidential, telephone and online counselling service specifically for young people aged between 5 and 25.

BlaQ

blaq.org.au

BlaQ Aboriginal Corporation is committed to empowering the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander LGBTQ+SB community through innovation, inclusion, understanding and advocacy.

The Healing Portal

healthinfonet.ecu.edu.au

An online hub for people working in healing, health, justice, education, employment, child protection, community services and family violence sectors. The Healing portal is designed to encourage information sharing across sectors. It brings together best practice healing initiatives and information about why healing is needed, and what is working in Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander communities. The portal includes the latest research, reports, case studies, videos and tools from around Australia to enable people to bring trauma aware, healing informed practices into their organisations and communities.

13 Yarn

13yarn.org.au

13YARN is an Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander crisis support line funded by the Australian Government with the support of Lifeline and developed in collaboration with Gayaa Dhuwi (Proud Spirit) Australia. It is run by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

eSafety Commissioner

esafety.gov.au

Online safety resources and training for teachers, schools and communities.

Building knowledge, building community

Once you have found communities to build relationships with, it is important to continue to maintain the culturally safe environment in your school. The following recommendations adapted from the [Victorian Government](#) provide examples of actions to support cultural safety.

BUILD A STRONG SCHOOL CULTURE TO SUPPORT CULTURAL INCLUSION

- Begin events and meetings with a Welcome to Country or an Acknowledgement of Country as a standing agenda item. Use this as an opportunity to pause and reflect or open a discussion.
- Fly the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags on school grounds.
- Display plaques and signs to Acknowledge Country and Traditional Owners.
- Make First Nations' voice part of decision making in matters that affect First Nations students. Be open to different ways of doing and expressing things.
- Develop and implement a [Reconciliation Action Plan \(RAP\)](#) to strengthen relationships, respect and opportunities in the classroom, around the school, and with the community and deepen your educational community's appreciation for First Nations histories, cultures and contributions.
- Celebrate the local Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander community in communications with students, staff, volunteers and families. Share information through school newsletters, school assemblies, parent information nights.
- Lead on safety and inclusion for all First Nations students and their families. Learn more about First Nations histories and cultures, both locally and across Australia. Speak with respect and confidence about First Nations culture, knowledge systems and people.
- Build schoolwide knowledge of First Nations histories, cultures, perspectives, values, skills and attitudes.
- Acknowledge and draw on the existing knowledge of First Nations students and their families.
- Welcome feedback from First Nations students and their families about what the school does well, and what can be improved.

BUILD KNOWLEDGE OF FIRST NATIONS CULTURE IN SCHOOL PLANNING AND CURRICULUM

- Find out about the Traditional Owners of the land/s where the school is situated at the [Map of Indigenous Australia](#) and learn about the importance of [acknowledging Traditional Owners](#).
- Include First Nations history and culture in professional learning for staff and volunteers and in curriculum planning for students.
- Develop a resource bank of digital, hardcopy print and other artefacts that support the inclusion of First Nations content across the curriculum.

PARTNER WITH FIRST NATIONS COMMUNITIES

- Support local First Nations businesses through school procurement – such as through [Supply Nation](#).
- Engage with local First Nations Communities to review cultural safety in school environment, systems and processes.

If you are considering bringing a First Nations person into your school or classroom, first ensure you have addressed the following questions:

1. Whose land is the school on? (Check out the [map from AIATSIS](#) if you aren't sure).

2. Is there a representative at your school who you can consult about an incursion or excursion involving First Nations people or culture?

3. Is there a local First Nations community or language centre with online resources? If so, can you identify any that will help you plan and organise a culturally safe experience?

4. Have you budgeted to pay the First Nations guest?

Other resources

Language

Coming across a word in a First Nations language...

- Be brave! Don't be afraid to show students that you are learning too.
- Have a go at pronouncing words you come across in First Nations languages. Try not to make it a joke, have a genuine attempt at correctly saying the words. If you'd like to learn more about the linguistic differences of pronunciation between many First Nations languages and English, [watch this video series](#) from the University of Melbourne.
- If you are working with a text from a certain area, do a quick Google to see if there's a pronunciation guide online, such as for [Noongar words](#) (South-Western WA), [Mawng](#) (a language from the NT), [Yolngu](#) (North-Eastern Arnhem Land), or general guides for regions like [Queensland and the Torres Strait](#).

Respectful language use starts with the basics

(amended from the [Australian Government's Style Guide](#)).

Basic respectful language means using:

- Specific terms, like the name of a community, before using broader terms.
- Plurals when speaking about collectives (peoples, nations, cultures, languages).
- Present tense, unless speaking about a past event.
- Empowering, strengths-based language.

Language that can be discriminatory or offensive includes:

- Shorthand terms like 'Aborigines', 'Natives', 'Islanders' or acronyms like 'ATSI'.
- Using terms like 'myth', 'legend' or 'folklore' when referring to the beliefs of First Nations people.
- Blood quantum (for example, 'half-caste' or percentage measures).
- 'Us versus them' or deficit language.
- Possessive terms such as 'our', as in 'our Aboriginal peoples'.
- 'Australian Indigenous peoples', as it also implies ownership, much like 'our'.

Many texts have referred to First Nations people in the past tense, for example:

- 'The Aboriginal language existed for hundreds of years.'
- 'Torres Strait Islanders once congregated at this place.'

This use of past tense continues the historical erasure of First Australians. The 2 statements also show a lack of understanding about diversity within either group.

Statements to redress the historical erasure and inaccuracy would read:

- 'There is no such thing as "the Aboriginal language", it would be like saying "the European language". There are literally hundreds of First Nations languages that exist today and have been spoken for millennia.'
- 'The people of Iama (Yam Island) in the Torres Strait have been living there for thousands of years.'
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have always been here. They are still undertaking cultural activities. Be conscious of this and work to change the habit.

Indigenous, First Nations, or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander?

The information below comes from a [media diversity handbook](#), developed by [Media Diversity Australia](#), which provides a range of guidelines for language usage describing First Nations people.

Your first rule of thumb is to listen to a person's or community's preference/s when it comes to how they would like to be referred to. Ideally where the information is available, identify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in as specific a manner as they are comfortable with—i.e. by people/nation or language group. It is important to note that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are a diverse group of people so opinions on what is the most appropriate terminology is varied. This may also change overtime, and you will never have clear-cut 'correct' terminology to use, the best way to know what is appropriate is to keep asking.

ABORIGINAL OR TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER

If in doubt, the most common and widely used terminology is "Aboriginal" or "Torres Strait Islander" peoples. "Peoples" is often used instead of people to stress that both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities are made up of distinct nations, clans and language groups.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have a right to determine their own individual cultures and identities and how these are referred to. As such, there is the sense that overarching titles oversimplify the hundreds of nations that exist within Australia. This is why referring to specific language/clan/nations is often preferred.

There will be some people who don't like using the word Aboriginal, or Torres Strait Islander but at this point in time they are the most commonly used umbrella terms.

INDIGENOUS

The use of the word 'Indigenous', is often used to describe 'both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples', but can also be used singularly.

It is widely used to describe a group of organisations or initiatives.

Example: "Indigenous organisations from across the country have held a press conference at Parliament House this morning calling for health policy reform."

Again there will be people who don't like the word Indigenous as it's not as specific, but there are certain contexts where it is the most commonly used terminology at that time.

ABORIGINAL

The term "Aboriginal" does not include Torres Strait Islander peoples, and reference should be made to both if applicable. Quick refresher: Aboriginal refers to the hundreds of nations and clans of first peoples that originate from NSW, QLD, NT, ACT, TAS, SA, VIC, WA. Torres Strait Islanders refers to the clans that originate from the Torres Strait Islands off the coast of QLD.

For an in-depth discussion of how to use these terms appropriately, check out the [Style Guide](#) from the Australian Government. You will find some of the information from the Style Guide included below as an overview.

CAPITAL LETTERS

Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islanders, and Indigenous should always be dignified with a capital 'A' and 'I'. Aboriginal should never be abbreviated and Torres Strait Islander should be used in full and not shortened to 'TSI'. In the same vein, don't shorten Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to ATSI, unless of course it's part of an acronym of an organisation.



OTHER TERMINOLOGY

Other terms you will see used to describe Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples is “First Australians”, “Indigenous Australians”, “first peoples/First Peoples”, and “First Nations”.

You may also see terms like Koori, Koorie, Goori, Murri, Palawa, Nunga, Noongar, Anangu and Yangu (which are often used in specific states and territories) but it is advised you don’t use these terms unless specifically noted by the individual, group or community.

More often than not, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples will prefer to be described by their tribe/clan/language group, profession, community position or other. So JUST ASK.

To learn more, you can also read resources from reliable websites such as Reconciliation Australia’s article: [Blak, Black, Blackfulla – Language is important but it can be tricky](#).

Show respect by using the terminology that an individual prefers

- If someone introduces themselves as Aunty or Uncle, this is a term of respect and should be used.
- You may ask an Elder if they want to be called Aunty or Uncle – but don’t assume.
- The guide above provide general advice, but if someone you encounter has a different preference, use their preferred terminology for them.



Glossary of Healing Terms

A GUIDE TO KEY TERMS RELATED TO ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER HEALING

HEALING

Healing enables people to address distress, overcome trauma and restore wellbeing. Ways to support healing include reconnecting with culture, strengthening identity, restoring safe and enduring relationships and supporting communities to understand the impact that their experiences have had on their behaviour and create change.

Healing occurs at a community, family and individual level. Healing continues throughout a person's lifetime and across generations.

International best practice in healing involves combining traditional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural healing practices with western methodologies.

COLLECTIVE HEALING

Collective healing moves away from treating people individually to a model where individuals develop their own skills and capacities to empower healing in themselves and their families and communities.

Whatever form it takes, collective healing is supported by bringing people with similar experiences together, often with their children and grandchildren, in a safe space where they can share, get to know their own story, build understanding and skills, and take positive steps towards a better future.

STOLEN GENERATIONS

The Stolen Generations refers to the tens of thousands of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children who were forcibly removed from their families and communities between the early 1900s and the 1970s. Stolen Generations children were removed as part of deliberate assimilation policies adopted by all Australian governments. The children were sent to institutions or adopted by non-Indigenous families. They were separated from their culture, family, land and identity and many of them suffered abuse and neglect.

TRAUMA

Trauma affects the way people think and act and overwhelms their ability to cope and engage. It can affect a person for many decades and in many different ways. Common symptoms include fear and anxiety, difficulty with relationships, impulsive behaviour, feeling sad and hopeless, tired and confused.

Research has shown that people are not only affected by traumatic events they directly experience. Witnessing or hearing about trauma from a family or community member can also have an impact.

Unresolved trauma contributes to many of the social and health problems affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. If people have not had the opportunity to heal, they may act out their pain in negative ways including physical or emotional violence, abuse or addiction.

INTERGENERATIONAL TRAUMA

If people don't have the opportunity to heal from trauma, they may unknowingly pass it on to others through their behaviour. Their children may experience difficulties with attachment, disconnection from their extended families and culture and high levels of stress from family and community members who are dealing with the impacts of trauma. This can create developmental issues for children, who are particularly susceptible to distress at a young age. This creates a cycle of trauma, where the impact is passed from one generation to the next.

In Australia, Intergenerational Trauma predominantly affects the children, grandchildren and future generations of the Stolen Generations.

Stolen Generations survivors might also pass on the impacts of institutionalisation, finding it difficult to know how to nurture their children because they were denied the opportunity to be nurtured themselves.

SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL WELLBEING

This refers to a feeling of being healthy on a physical, spiritual, emotional and social level.

It is a state where individuals and communities are strong, proud, happy and healthy.

It includes being able to adapt to daily challenges while leading a fulfilling life.

For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people land, family and spirituality can also be considered central to wellbeing.

RESILIENCE

Resilience is an individual or collective inner strength, developed over time, as a result or reaction to stress, sadness, dysfunction or trauma.

Resilience is about experiencing and identifying adversity and learning how to cope.

Coping may include developing supportive relationships, maintaining links to culture and community or visiting a support program.

KINSHIP

Kinship refers to the patterns of social relationships, the way people are organised into groups and how they are related to one another.

It defines how people behave within a community and how they understand their roles and responsibilities.

SELF-DETERMINATION

Self-determination refers to independence—the freedom of a group of people to determine their own future.

This may include defining their political status and governing themselves without influence from outside groups.

For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people it means taking control over their own affairs.

Welcome to Country or Acknowledgement of Country

Adapted from [Reconciliation Australia](#).



WELCOME TO COUNTRY

Protocols for welcoming visitors to Country have always been a part of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures. Boundaries were clear, and crossing into another group's Country required a request for permission to enter. When permission was granted the hosting group would welcome the visitors, offering them safe passage and protection of their spiritual being during the journey. Visitors had to respect the protocols and rules of the land owner group while on their Country.

Today, while these protocols have been adapted to contemporary circumstances, the essential elements remain: welcoming visitors and respect for Country. Welcome to Country is delivered by Traditional Owners, or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who have been given permission from Traditional Owners, to welcome visitors to their Country. Your local Aboriginal Land Council or Native Title representative body can advise on organising a Welcome to Country by a Traditional Owner in your area.

Welcome to Country occurs at the beginning of a formal event and can take many forms including singing, dancing, smoking ceremonies, and/or a speech.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

An Acknowledgement of Country is an opportunity for anyone to show respect for Traditional Owners and the continuing connection of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to Country. It can be offered by any person and like a Welcome to Country, is given at the beginning of a meeting, speech or event.

Including recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in events, meetings and national symbols contributes to ending the exclusion that has been so damaging. Incorporating welcoming and acknowledgement protocols into official meetings and events recognises Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional Owners of land and shows respect. An Acknowledgement of Country can be expressed on behalf of an organisation in different forms of communications, such as email signature blocks, websites, and on social media.

There is no specific wording for an Acknowledgement of Country, just be sincere and do some research on the Country you are acknowledging. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples may also wish to acknowledge their own mob/s and other First Nations peoples present.

See the AIATSIS page [Welcome to Country](#) to learn more.

Important dates – classroom calendar

Below are some significant dates for First Nations Australians. You may also wish to refer to the [Timeline of Trauma and Healing](#) to see some of the events, trauma and healing that's taken place in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities over the last two and a half centuries.

February 13	National Apology to the Stolen Generations (2008)
March 18	Close the Gap Day
March 21	Harmony Day *
May 26	Sorry Day and Anniversary the 2017 Uluru Statement of the Heart
May 27	Anniversary of the 1967 Referendum
May 27 to June 3	National Reconciliation Week
June 3	Mabo Day
June 11	Anniversary of the 1988 Barunga Statement
July 1	Coming of the Light
First week of July	NAIDOC week
August 4	National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day
August 9	International Day of Indigenous People
August 14	Anniversary of the Yirrkala Bark Petition to Parliament (1963)
First Wednesday of September	Indigenous Literacy Day
September 13	Anniversary of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007)
December 10	Redfern Address (1992)

*Harmony Day was introduced by the Howard Government in 1999. This is the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, acknowledged by the United Nations in 1966 after a massacre in South Africa. To learn more, read this [fact sheet](#) from the Australian Human Rights Commission.