

Our Healing. Our Future.



**HealingFoundation**  
Strong Spirit • Strong Culture • Strong People

## CLASSROOM ACTIVITY SHEET:

# Year 12

September 2023

### Overview

This Year 12 unit is designed to enhance and enrich students' knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the Stolen Generations.

The four activities may be spread over the course of a week, a month, a term or the year. They can be delivered at any time of the year but could be aligned with Sorry Day (26 May), National Reconciliation Week (27 May–3 June) or NAIDOC Week (first week of July). The lesson plans aim to allow teachers to guide and support students in their learning, incorporating individual responses, small group activities and whole-class discussions. The activities have been designed to showcase what could be done to guide and support students in their learning journey.

This unit is 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. Activities have been designed to be collaborative to allow students to share their thoughts and ideas. Group work skills have been embedded into the activities to guide this process. The transcripts and worksheets included with these activities may be printed individually or compiled as a booklet for students to document their responses.

All of the activities have been linked to the Year 12 English curriculum in the Australian Curriculum and Units 3 and 4 in the Senior English syllabus and Achievement Standards.

#### ACTIVITY 1: CONTINUING CULTURE

Students will research, and reflect on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, learning about how policy has affected different areas and how First Nations resilience is keeping culture alive.

#### ACTIVITY 2: VOICE

In this activity, students will get to analyse if there is equity in whose voices are heard. How can they help to voice this information?

#### ACTIVITY 3: THE POWER OF STORY

Students will have the opportunity to read, discuss and reflect on the powerful written testimonials, and the number of testimonials, from the *Bringing them Home* report. They will be asked to make connections to other learning and justify their ideas and thinking by using evidence in their research.

#### ACTIVITY 4: RESILIENCE

In this activity, students have the opportunity to reflect on and unpack their own personal attitudes and perspectives.



Scan the  
QR code to  
access links  
to resources

## Checklist for preparing your classroom

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- Liaise with your local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander resource centre or library to source age-appropriate texts on a range of topics, including culture and Country, Dreaming stories, Stolen Generations stories, reconciliation, the National Apology to the Stolen Generations and NAIDOC Week, as well as texts for your own reference.
- For your own background knowledge consult the following list of resources:

### Read

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- Fact Sheet: [Bringing them Home report](#)
- [The White Girl](#) (Chapter 1) by Tony Birch
- [Tell me why](#) (article) by Archie Roach
- [Born-again Blakfella](#) by Jack Charles. This book is available to purchase online and at various book retailers, including Big W
- The Healing Foundation's '[Preparing your classroom](#)' fact sheet
- Tips teachers can use when talking about racism ([article](#))
- Educational resources from [AIATSIS](#)
- The Healing Foundation's [Glossary of Healing Terms](#)
- [Bringing Them Home 20 years on: an action plan for healing](#) - The Healing Foundation



### Watch

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- The Healing Foundation's [intergenerational trauma animation](#)

## Wellbeing

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While some of the content included in these activities can be confronting or overwhelming, it is important for all Australians to understand our full history, including the experiences of Stolen Generations survivors, their families and communities, and the impacts of past government policies that are still being felt today.

The lesson plans have been developed in close consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous teachers to ensure that content is age-appropriate, but it may cause sadness and distress to some students. This is particularly the case for Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander students. Please take this into account when preparing your lessons and consider additional classroom support for certain activities.

The Healing Foundation has developed a separate fact sheet, included in this kit, to help support teachers with these classroom activities. Before running these lessons, it is important to let parents and carers know in advance that you will be working on issues related to the Stolen Generations.

It is also important to be able to manage and understand your own feelings as an educator and those of your students. Being comfortable to ask for and give support helps to reduce the fear of asking for help and is important in building a supportive culture at your school.

Before running these lessons consider a phone call or letter to parents/carers. You could also engage the local community or Aboriginal Land Council in your activities.



# Year 12

## Introduction

- Why this learning is important:
  - To change the way we look at our collective history
  - To support reconciliation and an honest understanding of our past – not just one perspective
  - To become aware of past government policies that still affect many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
  - To understand human rights violations that have occurred in Australia so that real action to make amends can be taken
- Discuss wellbeing tools with your students and acknowledge that some of the content may be confronting and upsetting. Acknowledge that these truths need to be heard for our nation to grow and heal together
- Watch the [Intergenerational Trauma Animation](#) with students.

## Who are the Stolen Generations?

For about a century, thousands of First Nations children were systematically taken from their families, communities and culture, many never to be returned. These children are known as Stolen Generations survivors, or Stolen Children.

In the 1860s, Victoria became the first state to pass laws authorising the removal of Aboriginal children from their families. Similar policies were later adopted by other states and territories – and by the federal government when it was established in the 1900s. The Stolen Generations were taken by the police, from their homes, and on their way to or from school. They were placed in more than 480 institutions, adopted or fostered by non-Indigenous people and often subjected to abuse. The children were denied all access to their culture, they were not allowed to speak their language and they were punished if they did. The impacts of this are still being felt today.

There are currently more than 33,000 Stolen Generations survivors in Australia. More than one third of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are their descendants. In Western Australia, more than half of the population have Stolen Generation links.

## Intergenerational trauma

Trauma in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities is not just experienced individually, but also between generations and across communities. The ripple effect is felt far and wide.

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 disconnection from their extended families and culture and have high levels of stress. 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.

A [report by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare](#) found children living in households with Stolen Generations survivors are twice as likely to experience discrimination, twice as likely to experience violence, and 1.5 times more likely to have been arrested in comparison to other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

## Class discussion

- Ask students to make groups of three.
- Ask each group to explore and analyse the three documents below, drawing out the main points of each document to share with each other.
  - [AIHW Stolen Generations report](#)
  - [AIHW Children's report](#) and summary poster
  - [Bringing them Home – 20 years on report](#)
- Come together as a whole class to share this information and clarify findings.

A great way to run a class discussion for each of the activities below is through a yarning circle. You can read more about this process by reading the article '[About yarning circles](#)'.

## Activity 1: Continuing Culture (80 minutes)

Students will research, and reflect on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, learning about how policy has affected different areas and how First Nations resilience is keeping culture alive.

Activities have been designed for individual use or as a whole unit of work. Activities can be sourced from across year levels and adapted.

### Creating cultural safe spaces

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- Recap that at any time if students need to talk about their feelings regarding the subject matter the school has support in place.
- Share perspectives and opinions in a safe and respectful way.
- Debrief at the end of every lesson.

Other subject areas that can be incorporated into this learning include History, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Visual and Performing Arts, General capabilities, and Cross Curriculum Priorities.

### Curriculum links

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- The ways points of view and values are represented. [ACEEN067](#)
- Synthesising ideas and opinions to develop complex argument. [ACEEN071](#)
- Analysing and evaluating how different attitudes and perspectives underpin texts. [ACEEN076](#)

### Resources

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- Video: *First Contact*, [Episode 1: Elcho Island snippet](#).
- [Timeline of Trauma and Healing in Australia](#).
- [Gambay – First Languages Australia map](#).
- [How to structure student discussions with a walk and talk](#).

#### EXTRA RESOURCES/FURTHER READING

- [Government policy in relation to Aboriginal people](#).
- [The Policy of Assimilation](#): Aboriginal people will live as white Australians.



## Lesson

### INTRODUCTION

- As a whole class, watch *First Contact*, [Episode 1: Elcho Island snippet](#).
- Discuss the main points raised in this episode by addressing the following questions:
  - What do you think the purpose of this show is?
  - How do you think the people in this show formed their opinions?
  - What lies and propaganda were used?
- Divide into small groups.
- Assign students a video on The Healing Foundation website to investigate, such as the stories of Michael Welsh, Gwen Schrieber or Florence Onus.
- In their small groups, get students to discuss the difference between this story and the opinions shared in *First Contact*. Ask questions such as:
  - How do these videos challenge the views from *First Contact*?



### INVESTIGATION

- In small groups, students pick one focus area of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture. Use the [Government policy in relation to Aboriginal people](#) and [The Policy of Assimilation](#), as a starting point for students to research how policy impacted the focus area. Encourage them to conduct their own research to answer the following questions:
  - What was this focus area like before colonisation?
  - What is this focus area like now?
  - What policies impacted this focus area?
  - What is currently being done to heal/regain/restore this focus area? What else can be done?

#### EXAMPLES OF FOCUS AREAS:

Before Cook/invasion/colonisation:

- Caring for Country.
- Lore.
- Reciprocal way of living with the environment.
- Sustainability.
- Language and culture flourished.
- Inter-nation trade.
- Songlines connected people and Country together.

### EXAMPLE

- Languages:
  - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages flourished before settlement – provide examples.
  - There are 250 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages spoken in Australia, and now there are only approximately 50 that are spoken fluently today.
  - There are lots of positive things that are happening in this area. Many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities are revitalising, regaining and rebuilding their language communities. However, there is still a long way to go.
  - To heal, regain and restore this focus area, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island language can be embedded into the school curriculum, specific to the location. This will allow for the language to be continually used and learnt.



## CONCLUSION/DEBRIEF

- Here are some possible questions to pose to the class or small groups, as a way of connecting what students have learnt and how to move forward:
  - What do you know about the history of Australia? What did you know and what are some of the new learnings you can take away?
  - How could you use this knowledge to educate other people?
  - What needs to happen for Australians to truly understand and acknowledge the truth of this nation?
  - Think big! Who are some people who might be able to help? How could you request their help?

Hold a walk and talk session to unpack any questions and feelings students may have.



Get the Links



## Activity 2: Voice (80 minutes)

In this activity, students will get to analyse if there is equity in whose voices are heard. They will consider how they can help to voice this information.

Activities have been designed for individual use or as a whole unit of work. Activities can be sourced from across year levels and adapted.

### Creating cultural safe spaces

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- Recap that if at any time students need to talk about their feelings regarding the subject matter the school has support in place.
- Share perspectives and opinions in a safe and respectful way.
- Debrief at the end of every lesson.

Other subject areas that can be incorporated into this learning include History, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Visual and Performing Arts, General capabilities, and Cross Curriculum Priorities.

### Curriculum links

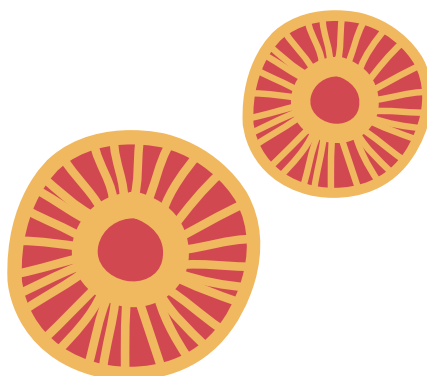
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### Resources

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- Video: Telling Our Stories – [Michael Welsh](#).
- Documentary: [K'gari](#).



## Lesson

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### INTRODUCTION

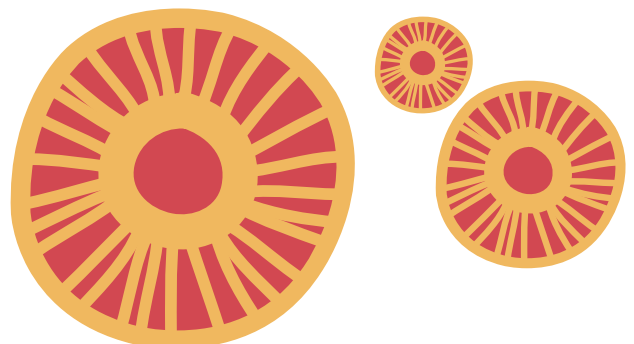
- Recap what students already know about the Stolen Generations.
- Watch Michael Welsh's video.
- **Key questions:**
  - Was there any new information you have learnt by hearing Michael's story?
  - Michael talks about 'Healing our past to heal our future'. What does he mean by this?
- Students complete the [K'gari](#) documentary individually, then discuss as a group.
  - For some of us this is new information. Why?
  - Why do you think some aspects of Australian history are more well known than others?

### INVESTIGATION/CREATION

- Ask students to create a text for someone who might not know anything about the Stolen Generations. The text or object they create can be whatever works best for your students and subject. Some ideas include:
  - A small book for upper primary aged students
  - A speech for an assembly during National Reconciliation Week or on Sorry Day
  - A blog
  - An article for the local newspaper or school news
  - A song
  - A school mural
  - A dramatic production.
- Share these ideas and creations with The Healing Foundation for survivors and other students to see what you've learned.

### CONCLUSION/DEBRIEF

- Discuss and reflect on the learning journey so far.
- What are students still wondering about? What would students like more information about? Are there any elements they would like to discuss further?



### Get the Links





## Activity 3: The Power Of Story (80 minutes)

Students will have the opportunity to read, discuss and reflect on the powerful written testimonials, and the number of testimonials, from the *Bringing them Home* report. They will be asked to make connections to other learning and justify their ideas and thinking by using evidence in their research.

Activities have been designed for individual use or as a whole unit of work. Activities can be sourced from across year levels and adapted.

### Creating cultural safe spaces

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- Recap that if at any time students need to talk about their feelings regarding the subject matter the school has support in place.
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### Resources

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- [Bringing them Home report extracts: written testimonies.](#)
- [Timeline of Trauma and Healing in Australia.](#)
- [Map of Stolen Generations Institutions.](#)
- Video: *First Contact*, Episode 2, Clip 3: [Cootamundra Girls Home](#).

#### EXTRA RESOURCES/FURTHER READING

- Video: [After the Apology.](#)
- [Children who'd spent a night at Nan's were being deemed with neglect: Larissa Behrendt on child protection.](#)
- 'Saving the children' are the three most dangerous words uttered by white people – Amy McQuire.
- Video: *First Contact*, Episode 2, Clip 3: [Cootamundra Girls Home](#).
- [Home Girls: Cootamundra Aboriginal Home Girls Tell Their Stories.](#)
- [Cootamundra remembered.](#)
- Video: [MC Philly](#) speaks about *Heal Together*.



## Lesson

### INTRODUCTION

Remind students that today's lesson might be confronting and that during today or any time in the future if they need to talk to someone about their feelings they can approach the teacher for support and information.

- Watch *First Contact*, Episode 2, Clip 3: [Cootamundra Girls Home](#).
- Discuss in small groups, using the following questions as prompts:
  - Why do you think people doubt historical events like the Stolen Generations?
  - Why would hearing stories first hand affects people's understanding of historical events like the Stolen Generations?
  - What do you think the impact is on survivors who have to prove their story to people like those in the video?

### INVESTIGATION

- In pairs, students can read statements from children who were stolen in the *Bringing Them Home* report. Be mindful that some of the stories on this site include physical and sexual violence, as well as many other possibly triggering themes. Decide the best way for your students to peruse these stories, keeping in mind their histories and their safety.
- Guide students to using the [Timeline of Trauma and Healing](#) as well as the [Stolen Generations Institutions Map](#) alongside these stories.
- **Example:** *'So the next thing I remember was that they took us from there and we went to the hospital and I kept asking – because the children were screaming and the little brothers and sisters were just babies of course, and I couldn't move, they were all around me, around my neck and legs, yelling and screaming. I was all upset and I didn't know what to do and I didn't know where we were going. I just thought, well, they're police, they must know what they're doing. I suppose I've got to go with them, they're taking me to see Mum. You know this is what I honestly thought. They kept us in hospital for three days and I kept asking, 'When are we going to see Mum?' And no-one told us at this time. And I think on the third or fourth day they piled us in the car and I said, 'Where are we going?' And they said, 'We are going to see your mother'. But then we turned left to go to the airport and I got a bit panicky about where we were going ... They got hold of me, you know what I mean, and I got a little baby in my arms and they put us on the plane. And they still told us we were going to see Mum. So I thought she must be wherever they're taking us.'*

Confidential submission 318, Tasmania: removal from Cape Barren Island, Tasmania, of eight siblings in the 1960s. The children were fostered separately.

- **Keep the following key questions on the board while students read through the statements:**
  - Why is hearing the stories from Stolen Generations survivors important to changing the narrative of Australia?
  - Is it possible for the Stolen Generations to receive justice?
  - How can this be achieved?
- Share recommendations.

### CONCLUSION/DEBRIEF

- Discuss and analyse why this information is not common knowledge to all Australians.

#### Get the Links



## Activity 4: Resilience (80 minutes)

In this activity, students have the opportunity to reflect on and unpack their own personal attitudes and perspectives.

### Creating cultural safe spaces

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- Recap that if at any time students need to talk about their feelings regarding the subject matter the school has support in place.
- Share perspectives and opinions in a safe and respectful way.
- Debrief at the end of every lesson.

Other subject areas that can be incorporated into this learning include History, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Visual and Performing Arts, General capabilities, and Cross Curriculum Priorities.

### Curriculum links

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- The ways points of view and values are represented. [ACEEN067](#)
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### Resources

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- Video: Telling Our Stories – [Brian Gray](#).
- **Appendix 2:** Venn diagram.
- Video: [Apology 11 Collective Healing](#).
- [The Theory of Change](#) – The Healing Foundation.
- [Outcry after Scott Morrison says ‘there was no slavery in Australia’ amid Black Lives Matter protests](#) – news article by Zoe Tidman.
- [Transforming my white identity from an agent of oppression to an agent of change through education in contemporary Australian society](#) – Journal article by Kimberly Smith.
- [White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack](#) – Peggy McIntosh.
- [Truth Telling](#) – ABC Compass.



## Lesson

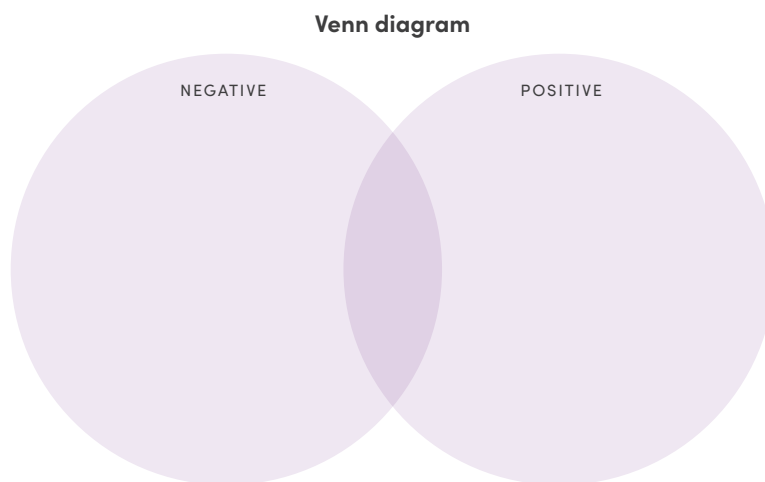
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### INTRODUCTION

- Watch [Brian Gray's](#) video.
- Discuss and respond to some of the issues raised in Brian's video.
- **Key questions:**
  - What are the different attitudes and perspectives held by people Brian met in his life? Compare and contrast these perspectives.
  - Why did people hold these perspectives?
  - How have these perspectives and attitudes been perpetuated through our history?

### INVESTIGATION

- Ask students to write around the outside of the Venn diagram (see **Appendix 2**) all the events that Brian talks about in his video. Then, place the events on either the negative impact or positive impact in Brian's life.



- In the middle section of the Venn diagram, write down how Brian explains he was feeling throughout the video.
- Explore the concept of collective healing that has helped many Stolen Generations survivors with their healing journey.
- After reading the *Theory of Change*, ask students to synthesise their own ideas and opinions based on the facts they have found, to develop a complex argument to inform their school community about the Stolen Generations and intergenerational trauma.

### CONCLUSION/DEBRIEF

- Ask students to share their work with three other people. This could be through conversations, writing a blog, creating an artwork, writing an article in the school newsletter, a persuasive essay or writing, composing and performing a song or performance to be showcased to an audience.

## Continuing the work

### CLASSROOM READY

The film *Servant or Slave* (available through [Kanopy](#) and [Channel 10](#)) is a 60 minute documentary in which Stolen Generations survivors share their experience of being stolen and pressed into domestic servitude. Watch before showing to your class so you can be aware of the content as it includes stories of racism, sexual and physical violence, confinement, domestic family violence, medical trauma and more.

SBS has created [lessons and learning activities](#) to accompany the documentary.

### RESOURCES

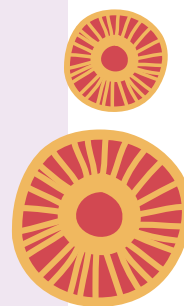
- Join the [Narragunnawali community](#) (and develop a Reconciliation Action Plan for your school) to access a variety of curriculum resources about reconciliation and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and contributions.
- Research more about [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages](#).
- Develop a booklist for your classroom. When choosing books for your classroom, investigate if the author and illustrator are Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander and consider this as part of your selection. For more book suggestions and support in choosing texts or to source other materials, please contact a local Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander library, for example [Dandiiri Community Library](#), or [The Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies](#).

### IDEAS

- Share your outcomes and experience with The Healing Foundation at [resources@healingfoundation.org.au](mailto:resources@healingfoundation.org.au)
- Share the resource and how you used it amongst your networks.
- Share your students' learning journey and tag The Healing Foundation on Instagram @healingourway and on Facebook as 'Healing Foundation'.
- Create a class action plan for how students could help their school learn more about the Stolen Generations.
- Create a [yarning circle](#) in the classroom to share feelings and news.
- Start each day/week with an [Acknowledgement of Country](#) or display a written statement in the classroom.
- Send books from the classroom library home for students to discuss with parents and carers.
- Invite parents and carers to an open day style session, where children can show their work.
- Seek further information or incursions from Elders, Stolen Generations survivors or community members.
- Hold [National Reconciliation Week](#) or [NAIDOC Week](#) celebrations in your school or attend events in your local community.



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](http://www.healingfoundation.org.au/schools) or scan the QR code.



## Appendix 2: Venn diagram

*See Activity 4 for details.*

