Right Way,
Wrong Way
Stronger ways with kids, carers and families

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Winangay Resources
The WINANGAY team

- Deeply concerned by overrepresentation of Aboriginal children
- Passionate and motivated to work toward change by developing innovative resources for workers
- Reconciliation in action – Aboriginal controlled not for profit with a mixed team each bringing different specialisations

Gillian  Paula  Clayton  Karen

Aunty Sue Blacklock
WINANGAY...

- WINANGAY Resources – Stronger Ways with Aboriginal Children and Families
- WINANGAY in Gamilaraay means: to know, to think, to love, to understand.
- The WINANGAY Kinship Care Assessment Tool is informed by research, practice wisdom, Aboriginal Elders, academics and service providers and consumers
Why it matters..

Aunty Sue Blacklock:
“\[\text{This is all about our kids,\,,}\]
as they are our future!

Winangay’s approach means Aboriginal people will be listened to and be equal in the process, so kids, Aboriginal carers and families can say what they need.
Over-represented and rising!

![Graph showing number of children in out of home care by indigenous status from 2008 to 2012.](image)

**Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2013, p.46)**

Notes:
- Rate calculation exclude children whose indigenous status is unknown.
- The ABS has improved the methodology used to obtain estimates of the resident population which has caused a downward revision of the 2012 non indigenous estimates based on the 2011 census (see ABS 2012c d). Due to these changes comparisons of rates over time should be interpreted with caution.

Source: Table A30 and ABS population estimates 2008-2012

Figure 4.6: Children aged 0-17 in out of home care by indigenous status, 30 June 2008 to 30 June 2012 (rate)
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle

- Goal to enhance and preserve the child’s connection to family and community, and sense of identity and culture in all aspects of government intervention with children
  - Recognise and protect the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, family members and communities in child welfare matters.
  - Increase the level of self-determination for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in child welfare matters.
  - Reduce the disproportionate representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the child protection system.

- Elements of the Principle have been introduced in legislation across all Australian States and Territories to varying extents.
UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
UNICEF’s Simplified Version

Articles
• 6. Children have the right to live a full life. Governments should ensure that children survive and develop healthily.
• 7. Children also have the right to know their parents and, as far as possible, to be cared for by them.
• 8. Governments should respect a child’s right to a name, a nationality and family ties.
• 9. Children should not be separated from their parents unless it is for their own good. (the right to stay in contact with both parents.)
• 12. Children have the right to say what they think should happen when adults are making decisions that affect them and to have their opinions taken into account.
• 13. Children have the right to get and to share information,

Crisis Statistics

- One-third (32%) of children living in grandparent families are Aboriginal.
- 15,000 children (over a Third) of those placed in out-of-home care are Aboriginal.
- Continued over representation of Aboriginal children in out of home care concerning rates and increasing.

SNAICC (2013) “we risk another stolen generation”

Aunty Sue “This is another stolen generation”
Kinship care

• Kinship Care is growing exponentially – becoming the preferred option for children entering OOHC both in Australian and internationally

• “More challenging parenting environment than unrelated foster parents”

• Children in kinship care have similar needs & have experienced

• “similar levels of trauma and loss and consequent emotional damage as children placed in home based”
Australian context -

• Impact of child welfare policies and intergenerational trauma on Aboriginal communities

• Aboriginal kinship carer’s fears and concerns about the welfare and assessment process

• Culturally inappropriate assessment tools reflect poor understanding impact of intergenerational trauma and culturally informed approaches and practices
Australian context
Current Practice

Results:

• **Loss and grief** for the families and grandparents and communities

• **Trauma** for the children removed from all that is familiar to them.

• **Families, grandparents, children** powerless, **alienated** and excluded.
Emerging best practice

- Power and decision making is shared
- Collaborative approach - collaborative exchange of information between worker and carer
- Focus: assessing viability - ‘enabling’ the carer, as opposed to ‘approving’
- Acknowledge families as expert
- Family Group Conferencing (FGC) mobilise resources to meet kid’s needs
- Trauma Informed Practice
Kid’s Trauma

Both before and during care
Some Impacts of Trauma

- Emotional outburst
- Acting out
- Withdrawal
- Isolation/Avoidance
- Fear/Anxiety
- Anger and rage
- Sleeping difficulties
- Eating difficulties

- Inability to trust
- Behavioural challenges
- Drug and Alcohol
- Mental health issues
- Self harm and suicidal thoughts
- Homelessness
- Poverty
- Relationship difficulties
Trauma means:

Feel unsafe and afraid
Lose their identity
Don’t trust relationships
Have no voice
Kids …
Feel alone and to blame
Feel failures and no good
Feel unheard
Feel they have no choice
Winangay Trauma Informed Principles:

to be and feel safe

culture and identity

Kids Need...

to connect and feel they belong

to be valued for their strengths

to be given choices

to be listened to

to have a say about what they want and need

trusting relationships that heal hurts
Traditional Principles of Trauma-Informed Care

1. Recognises the prevalence of trauma and understands the impact of trauma on the emotional, psychological and social wellbeing of individuals and communities.
2. Promotes safety and recognises the social, interpersonal, personal and environmental dimensions of safety.
3. Values, respects and supports the individual to self-advocate and enact their choices, their culture and their values.
4. Fosters healing relationships where disclosure of trauma is supported and is responded to appropriately.
5. Promotes collaborative, strengths-based practice that values the person’s expertise and judgement.
6. Recognises the impact of power and ensures that power is shared.

(Adapted from Hopper, Bassuk & Olivet, 2010; Harris & Fallot, 2001; Guarino et al., 2009; Elliot et al., 2005; ASCA, 2012)
Kids need:
(trauma informed care)

• to be and feel safe
• culture and identity
• trusting relationships that heal hurts
• to connect and feel they belong
• to be valued for their strengths
• to have a say about what they want and need
• to be listened to
• to be given choices
Trauma healing

Involves:
- Promoting choice, self direction and autonomy
- Experiencing loving caring relationships
- Releasing stored “fight-or-flight” energy
- Techniques to self-regulate and manage strong emotions
- Processing trauma thoughts feelings and memories
- Building or rebuilding trust for others
- Empowerment, identifying strengths
Kid’s Participation...

- What do workers do that works (for you)?
- What do they do that is helpful?
- What should we do more of?
- What needs to change?
Trauma Informed Approach

Focused on Strengths

CHOICE and CONTROL

Healing

RESPECT and RELATIONSHIP

Creating an Environment of Safety (physical, emotional and cultural)

Participation ‘Having a say’

Shown in all the Worker and Organisation’s Actions
Trauma Informed Organisations

• What would it take for your organisation to become trauma informed?

• What differences would you and others notice?
The Winangay Way............
Winangay Principles of care

- Best Interest of the Kids
- Aboriginal Kids with Aboriginal carers
- Creating safe places and relationships
- Value and maintain cultural identity and connection
- Respecting and Rights are key
- Kids and carers have a say and participate in decisions
- Building Strengths and Capacity
- Kids having stable, safe and long term places to live
- Empowerment and partnerships
- Value and Support for carers
- Winangay Principles of Aboriginal Care
The Winangay development:

• Aim - address major gap as there were no Aboriginal kinship carer assessment tools

• Guided by Elders from across Australia, input workers, Aboriginal kids, and carers as well as Aboriginal reference group

• Shaped by research - national and international
  (Dr Marilyn McHugh and Professor Marianne Berry: the Australian Centre for Child Protection)
Tingha Talk

Kid Safe Home
- No Bettings
- No Fighting
- No Put Downs
- No Insults
- No Wrong Touching
- No Hurting
- No Abuse

Hands off Our Kids

“No Jawbreakers!”
Yarning Up…

- 4 collaborative conversations about:
  - Environment and meeting Needs,
  - Staying strong as a carer,
  - KiDs Wellbeing,
  - Safety and working well with others
SCOPE Model:

S = Strengths acknowledged
C = Concerns and unmet needs identified
O = Options and opportunities to address needs mobilise resources, provide services
P = Power sharing, participatory respectful processes
E = Enabling capacity, empowerment and equality
Applying the SCOPE model:

- **Relationship** (genuine, transparent and accountable)
- **Respect** (for individuals, rights, culture, history and traditions)
- **Plain English** (Tingha test: 'No jawbreakers')
- **Listen** to family they **know** the kids
- **Understand** the impact of intergenerational **trauma** on Aboriginal communities and individuals
- **Applying trauma informed** practices
Families are experts in their own experience and know more about their own strengths and vulnerabilities.

Our job is to engage with them in ways that encourage collaboration and build solid foundations from which to develop a positive intervention plan. (Action Plan) (Salomen N, and Sturmfels D 2011)
**Strengths - Who is the expert?**

**TRADITIONALLY**

Worker is the expert
- Holds the forms
- Directs the process
- Holds the power

‘Other’ is to co-operate
- But has little power

Because workers have the power and know what is needed we often unconsciously direct the process.

**EQUALITY (Mutuality)**

Kids or family are the experts
- Holds the cards/answers
- Directs the process and
- Has some power

‘Worker’ is collaborative
- Works alongside supporting the process
- Has some power
Visual Cards

**Supervision**
Are the kids carefully supervised?

**Works Well with Others**
Heading in the same direction
Honest and Trustworthy
Resolving Conflicts

**Supports Contact**
See you soon!
After?

**Self Care**
Looking after you, recharging and staying strong
Time out
Holidays
Hobbies

**Culture**
Cultural identity
NAIDOC Beading class

**Carer Health**
Check ups

**Transport**
Can you get where you need to go?

**School**
How are they going at school?
Going to school
Homework
Finishing

**Good Food**
Is there healthy food at each meal?
Breakfast
School Lunches
Bush food
Rating Cards
- Strengths and Concerns

- 7 cards that allow you to rate strengths and concerns

Optional Graph
Options and Opportunities

Using the “Kids Say” cards:

What options or opportunities emerged in your conversation?

How can we use this tool in our practice?
Participation and power sharing

• Why is it important to listen to kids?

• How do we create opportunities to listen?

• As workers how do we do this?
Participation and power sharing

- What does it mean to work in “Aboriginal ways” or from a “culturally aware approach”?
Kids having a say… Our Artists
Aboriginal Ways

It is all about **Respect and Relationship** and working with cultural sensitivity

- Cultural safety
- Connecting
- Vouching
- Cultural consultants
- Self determination
- Reconciliation
- Differing perspectives and world views
- Kinship

Some key cultural understandings:

- Communication and decision making
- Jawbreakers
- Indirect communications
- Using Questions
- Silence
- Eye contact
- Shame
- Agreement
- Growling
### Joint Action Plans

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What strengths or protective factors can you identify?</th>
<th>What are the unmet needs or concerns?</th>
<th>Worker Strategy (and when by)</th>
<th>Carer Strategy (and when by)</th>
<th>How did we do?</th>
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<th>Worker’s signature</th>
<th>Carers’ signature/s</th>
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Empowerment

- As workers how can we support or enable empowerment?
- How can we measure change in strengths and concerns?
Examples in action...........

practical tools
Winangay Tool a paradigm shift

- Culturally appropriate tool
- Collaborative, transparent, trauma informed assessment tool
- Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal versions
- Kinship carers knowledge and insights are sought and valued
- Focus on strengths of the carer, safety for the child, concerns and unmet needs, as well as strategies for meeting needs
Research Project

- Tools rolling out in Queensland-Carmody (QATSCIPP (Aboriginal Peak) the Dept of Child Safety and Foster Care Queensland)

- Research project funded by the Sidney Myer foundation partnership with Winangay Resources, Professor Fiona Arney (Director Australian Centre for Child Protection) Professor Morag McArthur (Institute Child Protection Studies, ACU)

- Research in Australia build evidence base what works working with Aboriginal children and families
Aboriginal Work
(worker training)

Aboriginal Ways to work:
• Kinship vs Foster Care: Roles, responsibilities
• Aboriginal Placement Principles and legislation
• Collaborative supportive work with carers and kids
• Trauma informed approaches with carers and kids
• Supporting Cultural Connection Identity and Resilience
• Contact strategies and family dynamics
• Contingency planning
• Staying Strong as a Worker
• Report writing and evidence based practices
• Resources
Strong People Strong Ways: Yarning and Sharing Sessions include:

- What is Kinship Care?, Roles, responsibilities
- Aboriginal Placement Principles
- Staying Strong as a Carer
- Grief, loss, for carers and kids contingency planning
- Growing KiDs Strong
- Safety /trauma informed approaches to care
- Cultural Connection and Identity
- Resilience,
- Resources
Conclusion and Recommendations

- Family Support
- Carer Training
- SEWB (social emotional wellbeing) cards
- Disability cards
- Non Aboriginal versions – strong uptake especially in CALD contexts
Winangay Resources

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