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# Challenges in evaluating Aboriginal healing projects: Definitions, Diversity, Data and Cultural Safety

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# Acknowledgements (1)

- We acknowledge the Whadjuk People of the Bibbulmun Nation whose land we meet on today.
- This country is the only place in the world where Australia's First Peoples belong, and there is no place in Australia where this is not true.
- We also acknowledge the Stolen Generations whose courage and compassion continues to teach us about the true meaning of healing.

# Acknowledgements (2)



Collective healing gathering, Sydney, September 2015

# The Stolen Generations

- Colonisation;  
forcible removal of Aboriginal children
- Transgenerational impacts
- *Bringing them home* report recommendations for healing



# Healing (1)

*“Healing refers to recovery from the psychological and physical impacts of trauma. For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people this trauma is predominantly the result of colonisation and past government policies. Healing is not an outcome or a cure but a process; a process that is unique to each individual. It enables individuals, families and communities to gain control over the direction of their lives and reach their full potential. Healing continues throughout a person’s lifetime and across generations. It can take many forms and is underpinned by a strong cultural and spiritual base.”*

(Healing Foundation Glossary of Healing Terms)

## Healing (2)

- Healing for members of the Stolen Generations involves **restoring and making connections**.
- **Collective healing** broadens the scope for who does healing and who healing is for; involves moving from a model where expert professionals work with individuals to a model where individuals develop their own skills and capacities to empower healing in themselves and their families and communities.

# Aboriginal health & wellbeing

*“Aboriginal health is not just the physical wellbeing of an individual but is the social, emotional and cultural wellbeing of the whole community in which each individual is able to achieve their full potential as a human being thereby bringing about the total wellbeing of their community. It is a whole-of-life view and includes the cyclical concept of life-death-life”.*

(NAHSWP, 1989)



# Methods

## Development of *Collective Healing Resource*

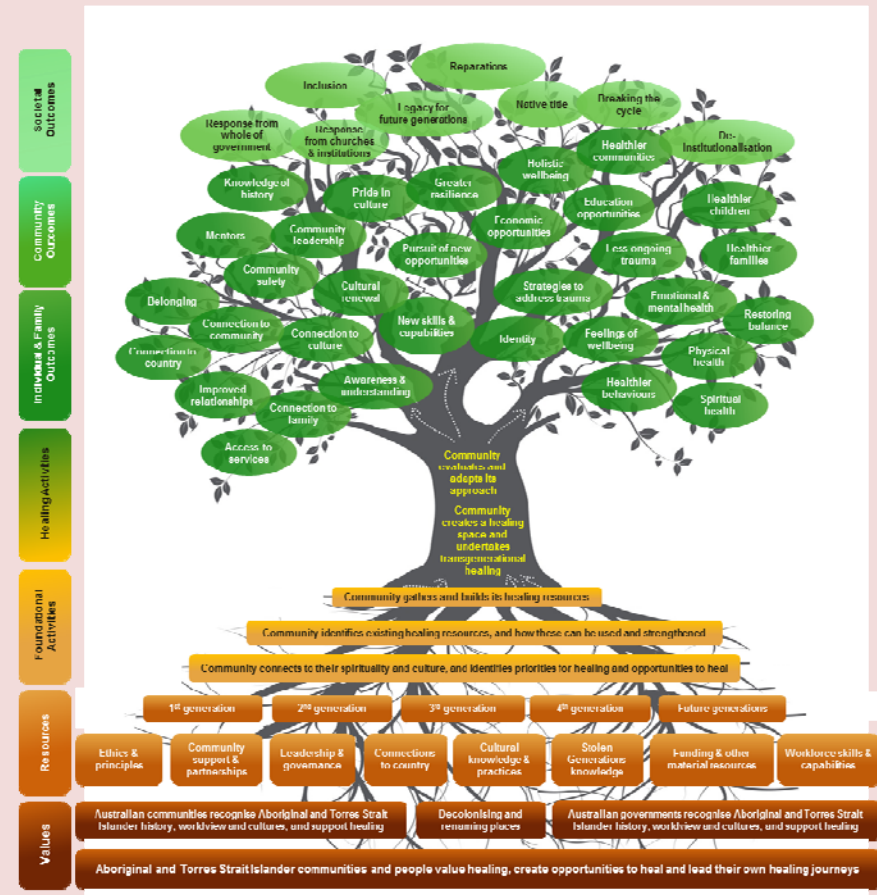
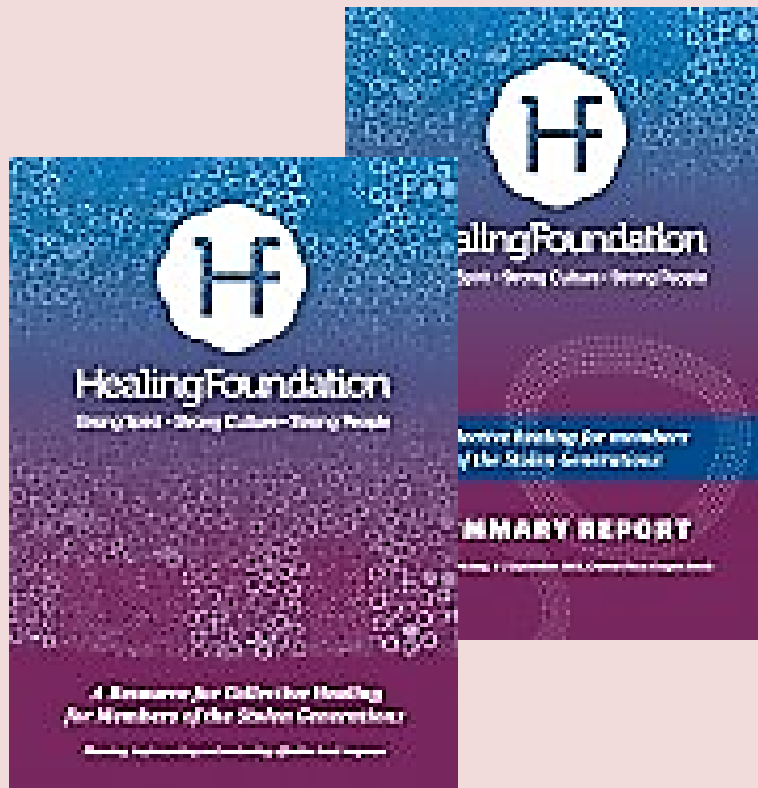
- literature review and analysis of the policy context
- review of purposively-selected Stolen Generations projects (12)
- stakeholder consultations/key-informant interviews (19)
- national workshop

Second national workshop



# Healing Foundation

<http://healingfoundation.org.au/our-publications/>



# Program strategies & elements

- Group-based with strong Indigenous cultural themes
- Workshops: therapeutic, skills development, or both.
- Yarning circles
- Healing camps and day trips
- Healing gatherings for former residents of institutions
- Community commemorative ceremonies
- Documenting personal and group stories

# Good practice features

Content	Delivery
Reflects an Aboriginal world view – holistic Has an education component Has an experiential component Builds on traditional cultural strengths Provides tools and builds skills Promotes empowerment and self-determination Is inclusive of family and community Connects people to services and follow-up	Emphasises safety – trauma-informed Ensures support is available, with the opportunity to work individually or in a group as needed Allows time for engagement Is confidential, non-judgemental and flexible Respects individual differences

# Evaluation models & methods (1)

- *Ngaa-bi-nya* (Williams, 2016) builds on Stufflebeam's CIPP model: contextual Landscape factors, culturally sensitive Ways of Working, critical Resourcing issues, and outcomes-oriented Learnings.
- Participatory Action Research, Community-based Participatory Research and the Most Significant Change Technique.
- Recognise and reflect diversity among Stolen Generations groups and individuals –  
*Geographical, social and cultural landscapes*

# Evaluation models & methods (2)

- **KRSGAC:** interviews with Stolen Generation members not currently engaged, participant observation, taking photos, recording stories and gathering reports and other data.



- **Link-Up NSW:** survey with 10 rating scales and space for comment, and open-ended questions.



# Evaluation models & methods (3)

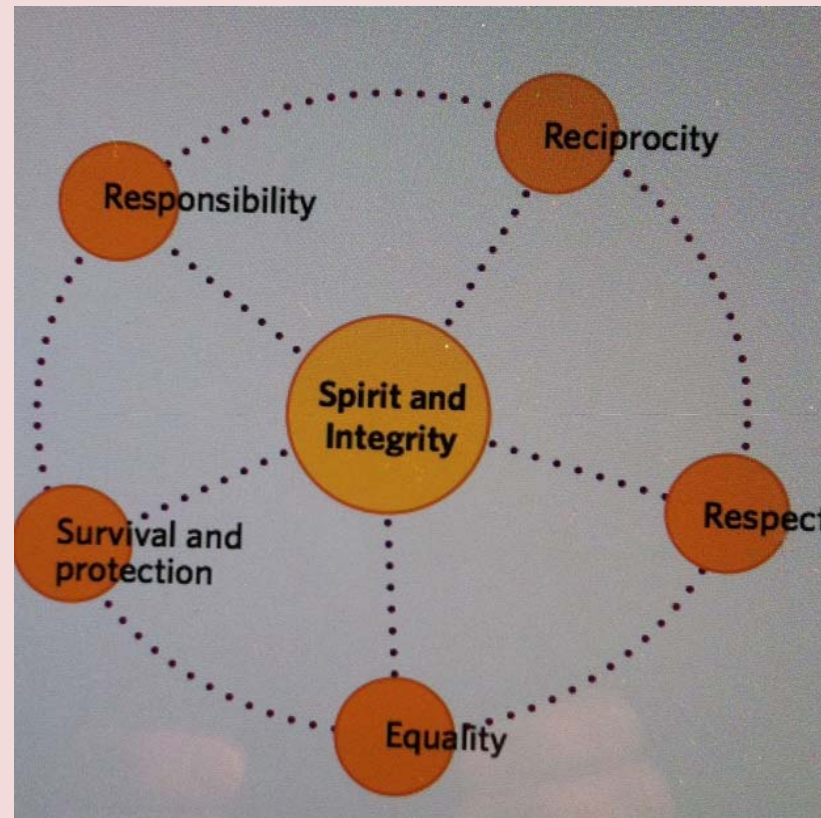
**Connecting Home:** outcome measures which cover six dimensions or life areas –

1. My identity
2. My life
3. My safeguards
4. My health and wellbeing
5. My rights
6. My community and belonging.



# Ethics & principles

Keeping Research on Track: A guide for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples about health research ethics (NHMRC, 2006)





# Conclusion

- High-quality evaluations will be both rigorous and incorporate Indigenous perspectives and values.
- Qualitative, open-inquiry models and data collection methods that preference and support Indigenous worldviews and ways of creating and sharing knowledge,
- Culturally sensitive methodologies and tools,
- Cultural safety for participants, workers and organisations.

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