

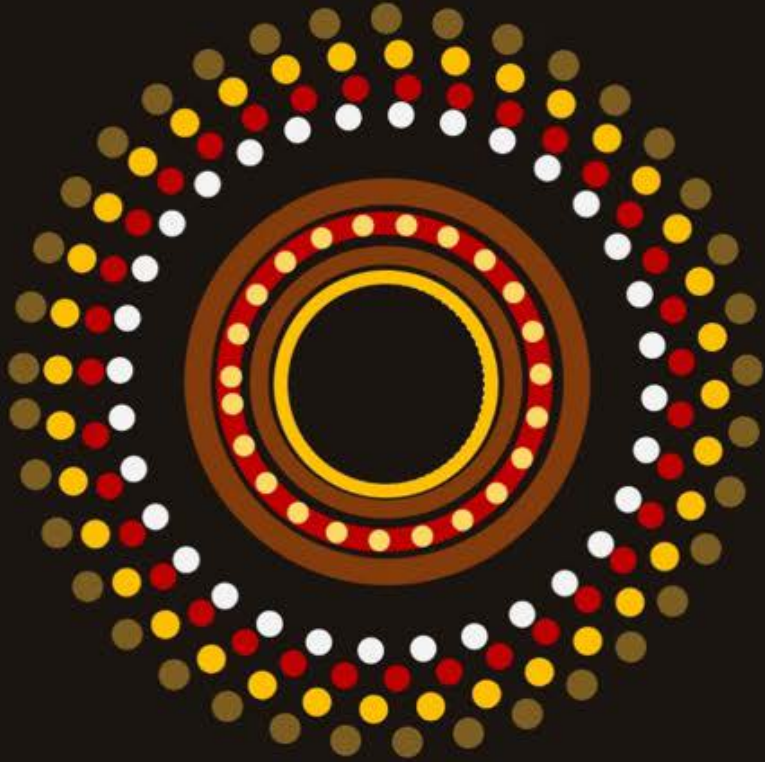


Awakening
Cultural Ways

Cultural Considerations in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Family and Domestic Violence

Presented by Samantha Wild



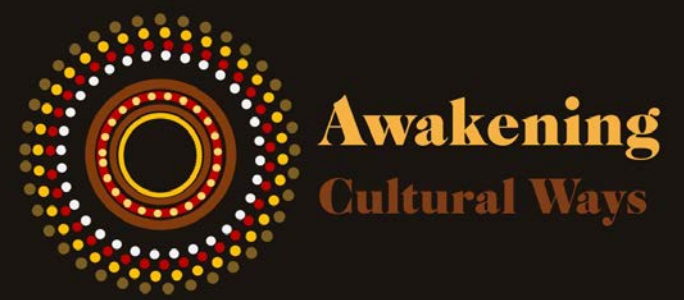


Awakening Cultural Ways

Delivery of innovative solutions to complex
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander policy, planning and programs



The Story

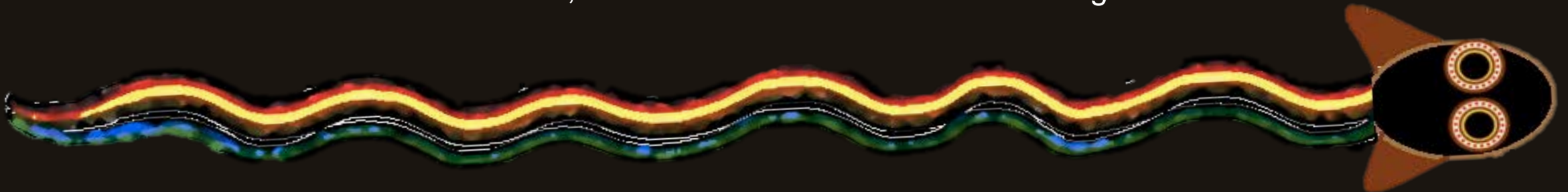


First Nations people are ancient knowledge holders of sacred wisdom and stories of this Land.

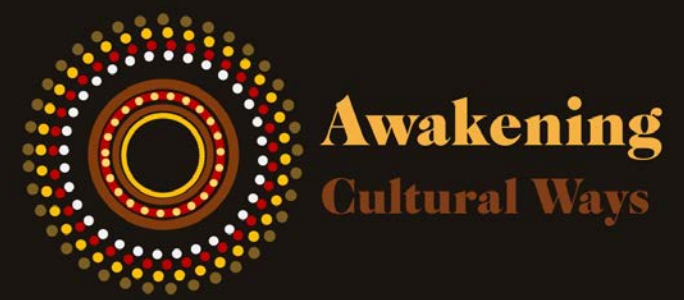
A long time ago there were no animals or people, the land was barren and silent. From one generation to another Dreaming stories tell of the magnificent creation of animals, people and the land.

One glorious day a mythical rainbow serpent woke up from her deep sleep to travel across the nations to create land, seas and country. That is how she became known as the Mother of Life.

The serpent created ancient lores and stories for the people to abide by and she fiercely avowed harmony and justice. One day the rainbow serpent look across the nations and realised the glory of her creation, then she vanished into the Dreaming.



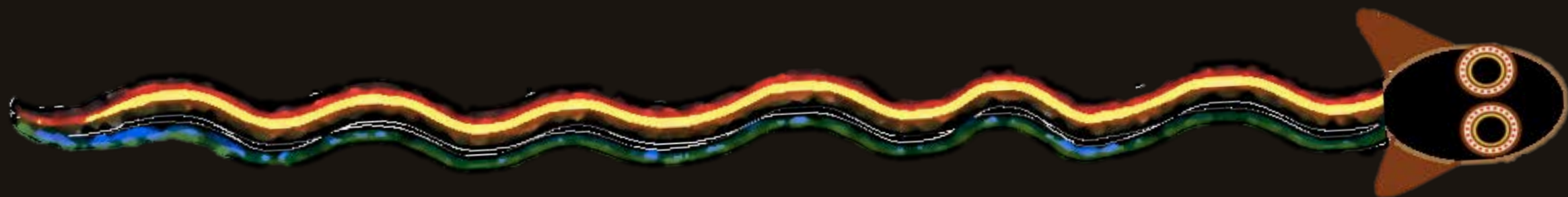
The Story



Awakening Cultural Ways believe the ancient ancestors and rainbow serpent is watching over the People and their Country. Once again, the serpent will stir from her deep sleep and her awakening will bring the ancient cultural ways to the land, people and animals.

Awakening Cultural Ways acknowledges the time for renewal of cultural practice frameworks requires a best of both world approach with elements of western and traditional knowledge systems to support the reconciliation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. We call for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to be leaders in the development of solutions which are evidenced based and culturally grounded, and this is the time of an awakening to the important work of healing and empowering Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

The logo (top right) represents the wide-eye of the rainbow serpent and her awakening from a deep sleep. She is the Mother of Life, the ancient caretaker of lore and justice. **Awakening Cultural Ways** was founded to empower Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the oldest continuing culture in the world and restore cultural practice frameworks.



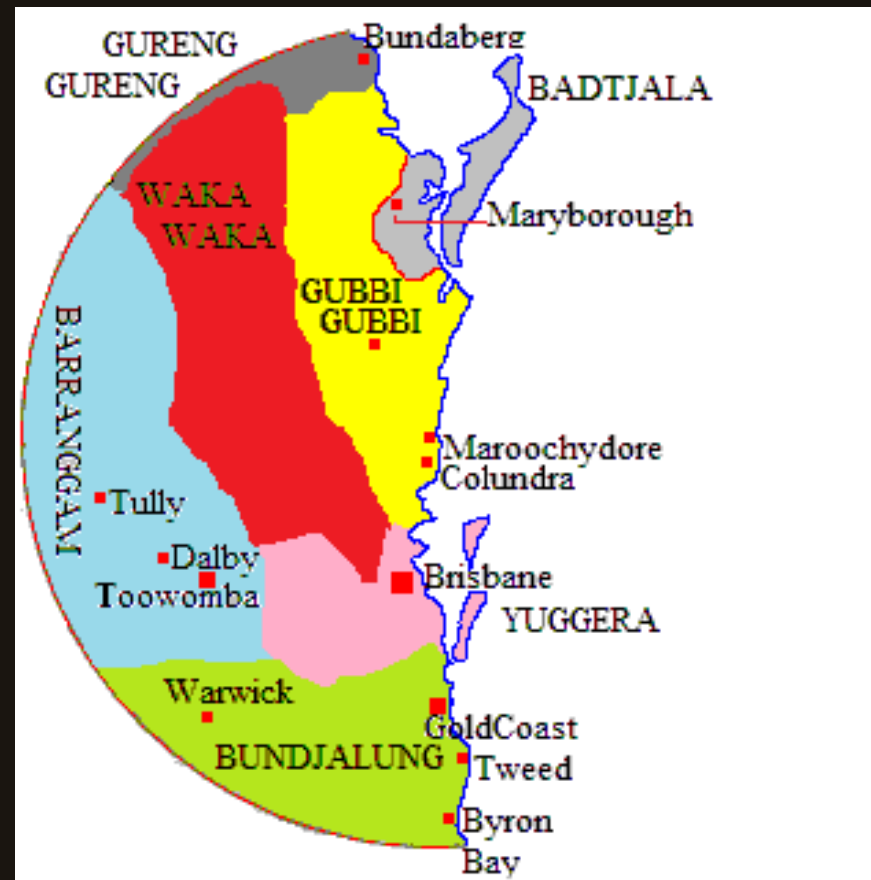


Disclaimer notice

This map indicates only the general location of large groupings of people, which are listed under group names in the table. It does not indicate individual languages or dialects. Boundaries are not intended to be exact. The names appearing in this publication are those of the author and are those of the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Studies. The name should appear above the group of people in a particular region, unless the author has indicated otherwise.

NOTE: DISTANCE FROM COAST BY AIRLINE IS IN KILOMETRES
AND MILES (1 KILOMETRE = 0.62 MILES)





Learning Objectives

1. Increase awareness of the scale and severity of the problem of violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women
2. Identify the underlying causes or drivers of family and domestic violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women
3. Reviewing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander best practice prevention frameworks



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Closing the Gap

Violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women:

- 3.1 times the rate of non-Indigenous women
- 3 in 5 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women experience physical or sexual violence
- 11 times more likely to die due to assault than non-Indigenous women
- 10.9% of the burden of disease of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women aged 18-44
- 32 times the rate of hospitalisation due to family violence related assaults
- 2/3 households experiencing family violence risk exposure to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children



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Myth busters

- Violence is not part of traditional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture
- Not all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men are perpetrators of violence
- Men of all cultural backgrounds are perpetrators of violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women
- This is not an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issue, it is an Australian issue
- Alcohol is a contributing factor and a trigger for violence, but it is not the cause'



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Causes

Frustration and stress can lead to violence in any community, but Aboriginal communities face particular stressors, such as:

- loss of land and traditional culture (some cultural practices lessened interpersonal violence)
- breakdown of community kinship systems and Aboriginal law
- lack of respect within families, and from younger generations towards Elders
- loss of identity
- racism.



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Causes

A range of other issues may also contribute to family violence:

- high rates of imprisonment
- poverty and financial problems
- unemployment
- poor physical and mental health
- lack of education
- single-parent families and early parenting
- substance and drug abuse
- poor or inadequate housing
- social isolation
- lack of access to services.



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Principles of prevention

- A decolonising dynamic - self determination, community ownership and leadership
- Cultural safety
- Trauma informed practice and practitioner self care
- Cultural healing focused
- A holistic approach using social and emotional wellbeing
- Prioritising and strengthening culture
- Using strengths based and community strengthening approaches
- Adapting to different community, demographic and geographic contexts
- Addressing intersectional discrimination
- Non-Indigenous organisations working as allies in culturally safe ways



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Social and Emotional Wellbeing

Awakening Cultural Ways



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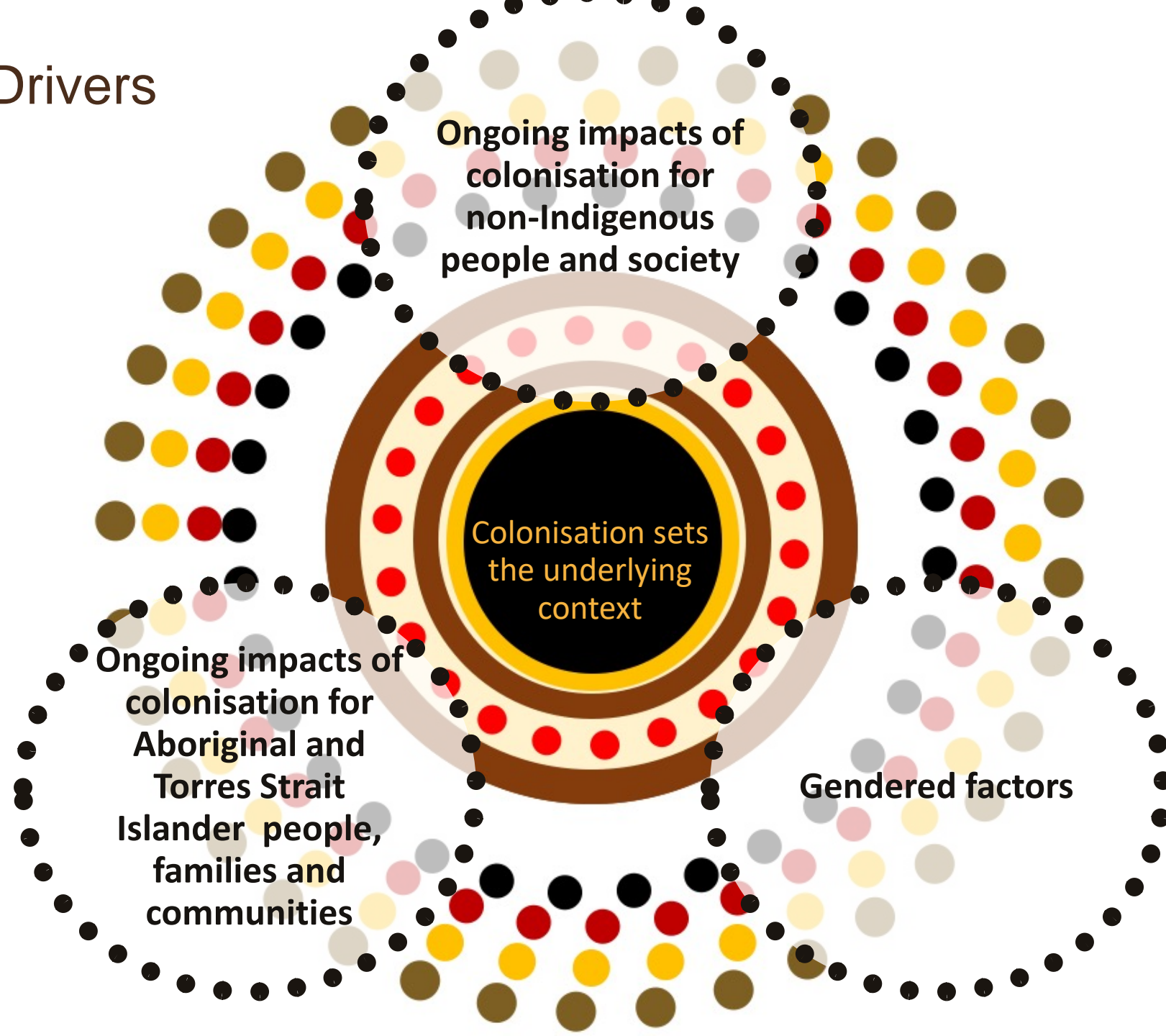
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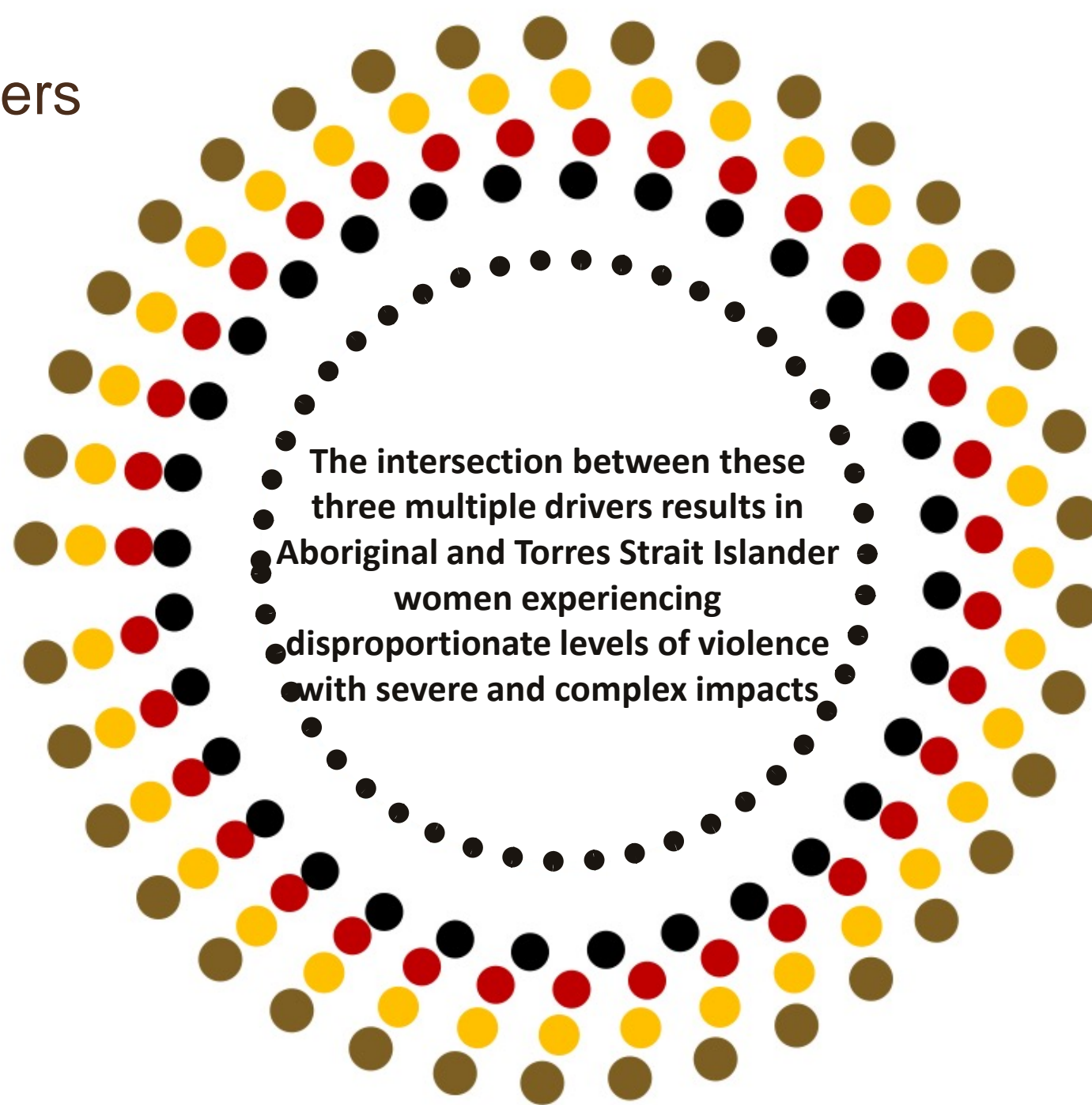




Intersecting Drivers



Intersecting Drivers



Ongoing impacts of colonisation in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, families and communities

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- Intergenerational and collective trauma
- Systemic oppression, disempowerment, racism
- Destruction or disruption of traditional culture, family and kinship, community relationships and cultural norms about violence
- Personal experiences and exposure to violence
- Condoning of violence within the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities



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Ongoing impacts of colonisation in Non-Indigenous Society

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- Racialised structural inequalities of power
- Entrenched racism in social norms, attitudes and practices
- Perpetration of racist violence
- Condoning of, and insufficient accountability for, violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people



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Gendered factors

- Condoning of violence against women
- Perpetrators control of decision making and limits to women's independence
- Stereotyped construction of masculinity (men's business) and femininity (women's business)

Additional drivers

- Destruction or disruption of traditional culture, family and kinship, community relationships and cultural norms about violence
- Personal experiences and exposure to violence
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women as invisible women
- Condoning of and insufficient accountability for violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women



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Paradigm Shift

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders are calling for a paradigm shift towards collective processes of community healing grounded in Indigenous knowledge
- The current focus on “coercive control” and male power as the explanation for violence against women in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities misses out forms of interpersonal violence, such as “couple fighting”, which are a reflection of chaotic lifestyles, alcohol abuse, and trauma



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Culture

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- Strong cultural identity is fundamental to strong mental health and social and emotional wellbeing and culture and communities are unique protective factors for mental health.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with strong attachment to culture have better self-assessed health and mental health.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and families prioritise cultural knowledge and mainstream education as a protective factor for young people living in two worlds.
- Casual factors which increase resilience through enculturation are not clearly defined in literature.



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Identity

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- Individual ownership and holding of cultural responsibility and obligations within the whole of community
- Strengthen holistic social and emotional wellbeing and maintenance of cultural identity
- Notion of 'Always was and Always will be' continuation and sustenance
- Formation of cultural safety through strict cultural protocols and practices
- Anything outside of known society norms is perceived as a realm of unsafe practices
- Leadership to inform Western frameworks of cultural responsibilities to the collective community
- Strong collective pride, self-determination and collaboration



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Cultural Identity

Awakening Cultural Ways

- Belonging, safety, collective kinship and familiar systems
- Indigeneity, valuing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of being, knowing and holding
- Strengthen holistic individual and collective wellbeing
- Generational responsibilities to navigate cultural systems
- Maintenance of cultural identity and transference of cultural knowledge
- Requires access to culture, heritage and cultural expression
- Cultural endorsement within society and institutions
- Balance and harmony of living in two worlds.



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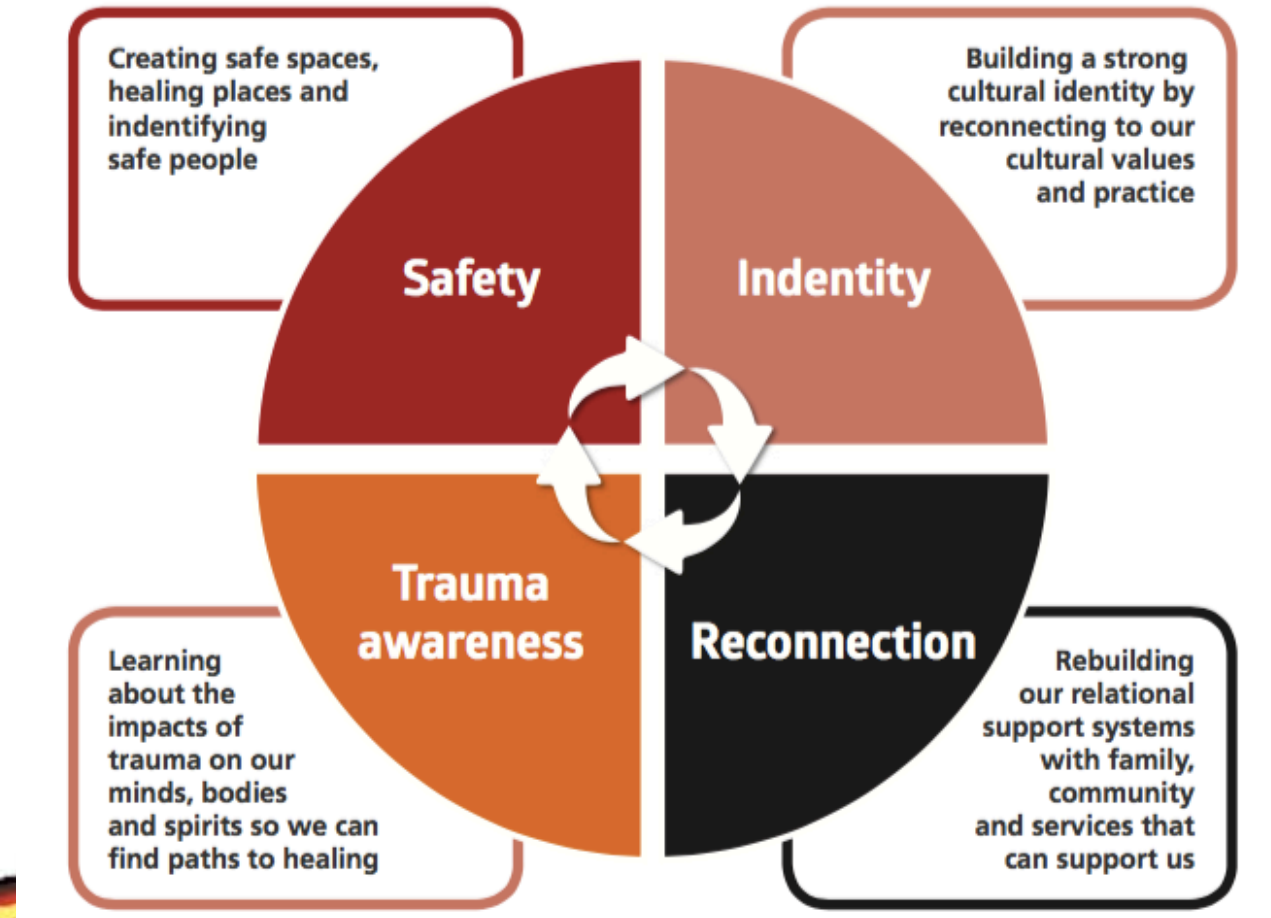
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Principles of prevention in prevention



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Honouring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women

- Respect, support and promote the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women
- Allow for self determination, choice and decisions about their lives and relationships
- Support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women participation in leadership and decision making
- Promote equality by challenging racist and sexist attitudes towards Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women
- Strengthen positive equal and respectful relationships between women and men, and girls and boys



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Responding to disclosure

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- Name it
- Safety comes first
- Violence is never acceptable
- Be culturally aware
- Acknowledge family violence is not an aspect of traditional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture
- Be aware that the crime has both a victim and a perpetrator and can be multigenerational
- Use sensitivity and ethical considerations when sharing a survivor story
- Family violence is greatly under-reported crime
- Family violence is a major contributor to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children being removed from their families

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Responding to disclosure

Awakening
Cultural Ways

- Create a safe, respectful and empowering space
- Discuss confidentiality and reporting responsibilities
- Use non direct body language and questioning
- Allow for silence
- Reinforce Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women's strengths, culture and resilience to violence, building self esteem, identity and sense of independence
- Enable 're-empowerment'
- Use a social and emotional wellbeing team and interagency response
 - Holistic wrap around support
 - Intervene in and respond to violence ensuring safety and legal, physical, financial, social and emotional supports are available



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Working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Men

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men are part of the solution
- Recognise, promote and support the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men in violence prevention
- Challenge attitudes that normalise violence
- Hold men accountable for their actions- to themselves, each other and to their lore and custom, their families and communities
- Acknowledge the damaging and traumatic impacts of colonisation on men while maintaining there is never an excuse for violence
- Provide opportunities for transformation through a range of cultural and therapeutic healing practice both group and individual



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Towards an Aboriginal and Torres Strait
Islander Violence Prevention Framework
for Men and Boys



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Address the legacies of colonisation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, families and communities

Awakening Cultural Ways

- Heal the impacts of intergenerational trauma, strengthening culture and identity
- Strengthen and support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families, women and girls, boys and men, and children and young people
- Challenge the condoning of violence in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities



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Address the legacies of colonisation for Non-Indigenous Society

- Challenge and prevent all forms of racism, indifference, ignorance and disrespect towards Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and cultures
- Address racialised power inequalities and amend discriminatory policies and practices
- Challenge the condoning of violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people



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Address the gendered drivers of violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women

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- Implement intersectional approaches to preventing violence against women across the Australian population
- Challenge the condoning of violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women by challenging both racist and sexist attitudes and social norms
- Support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women's participation in leadership and decision making
- Challenge gender stereotypes, and the impacts of colonisation on men's and women's roles, relationships and identities
- Strengthen positive, equal and respectful relationships between women and men, girls and boys
- Engage both Indigenous and non-Indigenous men to challenge harmful and violence-supportive ideas about masculinity and relationships

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