Innovation, Applicability and Transferability

Keeping Older Aboriginal Peoples Strong

A project commissioned and funded by Resthaven Incorporated

Aim of the project

There are many reasons why mainstream aged care services can find it difficult to meet the needs of older Aboriginal peoples. The aim of this Project was to identify ways in which aged care services could support the social, cultural and spiritual wellbeing of older Aboriginal peoples and improve the acceptability of community and residential care services for these members of our communities.

Who was involved?

The project team comprised predominantly Aboriginal researchers from the Wardliparingga Aboriginal Research Unit at the South Australian Health and Medical Research Institute (SAHMRI). Two distinct advisory panels comprising of Aboriginal and non-Indigenous stakeholders and representatives from the aged care sector provided governance and advice to the research team. Older Aboriginal peoples from across metropolitan and remote locations in South Australia were consulted to explore their perspectives on staying strong.

How did we do it?

The project team conducted individual and group interviews with older Aboriginal peoples to explore their understandings of social, cultural and spiritual wellbeing. These understandings were used as a foundation to co-develop a *Framework for Keeping you Strong* with the project's advisory panels which was later reviewed by representatives from the aged care workforce.

What did we find?

Older Aboriginal peoples talked about the importance of maintaining their Aboriginal identity through connections with family and community, as these connections are critical to health, dignity and happiness. They said that holding on to culture was essential to their sense of self and wellness. These understandings informed the development of a *Framework for Keeping you Strong* (see over page) which identified strategies to enhance the resources, environments and systems within the aged care sector to support older Aboriginal people's wellbeing.

The project team would like to thank the Aboriginal peoples who contributed to this important project.

SAHMRI — South Australian Health & Medical Research Institute | WARDLI Aboriginal

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KEEPING YOU STRONG FRAMEWORK

For the Older Aboriginal Peoples of South Australia

CULTURE	The Right Resource, The Right Environment, The Right Systems **SUGGESTED STRATEGIES**

THE RIGHT RESOURCES

STRENGTHENING

Cultural Identities

- Employ the right workforce with the attributes, skills and knowledge to provide care to Aboriginal peoples
- Provide opportunities for cultural competency learning and training activities for non-Indigenous staff
- Use appropriate providers to deliver cultural competency training to staff
- Undertake reflective work practices
- Develop partnerships with Aboriginal communities
- Exchange information with key Aboriginal organisations on service delivery
- Evaluate services provided to Aboriginal peoples
- Support Aboriginal people's cultural needs and requirements

THE RIGHT ENVIRONMENT

VALIDATING

Cultural Traditions

- Provide welcoming spaces
  › Acknowledging traditional custodians
  › Displaying Aboriginal flags
  › Displaying artwork and/or artefacts from local communities
- Encourage the use of traditional practices, e.g. smoking ceremonies where appropriate
- Communicate and use appropriate language
- Provide access to Aboriginal cultural events and occasions
- Provide access to Aboriginal specific literature, films and/or documentaries, music
- Provide outside spaces for use by Aboriginal peoples and families
- Engage with Aboriginal organisations to encourage visitors
- Engage with other organisations to encourage visitors, e.g. schools and kindergartens

MAINTAINING

Cultural Practices

THE RIGHT SYSTEMS

- Develop a Statement of Reconciliation or Reconciliation Action Plan
- Review policies and procedures to ensure there are no barriers to Aboriginal people receiving culturally appropriate care and meeting their needs
  › Assist Aboriginal peoples to remain engaged and connected with families and communities
  › Provide Aboriginal people opportunities to participate in cultural activities
  › Provide opportunities for Aboriginal people to attend Aboriginal specific social outings and engagements

UPHOLDING

Cultural Connections

- Review policies and procedures to ensure there are no barriers to the recruitment and retention of Aboriginal peoples into the workforce
  › Develop and implement an Aboriginal workforce recruitment and retention strategy
- Review policies and procedures to ensure there are no barriers to engaging with Aboriginal organisations and groups
  › Collaborate with Aboriginal organisations and communities to work with Aboriginal people, their families and communities

Keeping Older Aboriginal Peoples Strong
through Acknowledgement of
Cultural Identities, Cultural Traditions, Cultural Practices and Cultural Connections
INDIGENEITY AND INDIGENOUS RIGHTS

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SAHMRI South Australian Health & Medical Research Institute