



ChildProtectionPeak



Identifying and Developing the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child and Family Support Evidence Base

A SCOPING REVIEW



Centre of Excellence

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Attachment One: Intersection of Knowledge areas	<i>Error! Bookmark not defined.</i>

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QATISCPP acknowledges the shared wisdom and insights that came from Indigenous knowledge systems globally to inform this work. We honour and pay respect to our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander elders and leaders across Australia in their continued efforts to ensure our children grow up strong in their culture and live a life that is full of opportunity.



1. Introduction

In 2019, QATSCIPP was funded to establish a Centre of Excellence. The role of the Centre is to establish and embed best practices in policy, program and service delivery to significantly improve outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families in Queensland. One of the first priorities set in establishing the Centre of Excellence was to identify a foundational evidence base to guide development.

Initial discussions indicated that there were a number of knowledge bases that contribute to the existing evidence base including rights-based approaches, trauma and healing, and child protection (both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and mainstream). While Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child and family support policy, program and practice has been informed by these knowledge bases there appears to have been limited efforts to bring these together to create a comprehensive and integrated evidence base.

It was therefore agreed to review and establish the current evidence base through a two-stage process.

Stage 1 is to undertake a scoping review to:

- examine the evidence available across the knowledge bases
- identify what each knowledge base has to offer
- identify knowledge gaps
- inform a metasynthesis of the evidence base.

Stage 2 is to undertake a metasynthesis to:

- identify and synthesise the current evidence base for policy, program and practice in promoting the safety and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and support of their families and communities
- inform priorities for ongoing research
- to contribute to the development of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child and family support framework.

The paper reports on the outcomes of the scoping review.

2. Method

A team of three reviewers was established to undertake the scoping review. Each of the researchers was allocated one or more of the knowledge bases to review.

A select review of academic and grey literature was undertaken involving a search of online data bases and internet search engines in respect of each of the knowledge areas. This was supplemented by searching key authors and reviewing reference lists from key literature. Literature identified was shared across reviewers where relevant to more than one knowledge area.

A framework for reviewing and synthesising the literature was established involving:

- identifying what we know, what we know doesn't work and gaps in each of the knowledge bases
- reviewing the outcomes of the review of each knowledge base
- identifying the intersections of the knowledge bases

- identifying the key messages.

Senior staff within QATSICPP provided cultural oversight and input at all stages of developing, conducting and reporting on the scoping review.

Over 80 academic papers and 20 reports were reviewed across the knowledge areas.

3. Limitations

The scoping review involved a select review of the literature. There may therefore be other literature within and outside of the knowledge areas identified that is relevant to establishing the evidence base. Additionally, there is a risk of bias in the literature included and excluded by the reviewers.

4. Summary of the Evidence

The following provides a brief summary of the evidence identified in each of the four knowledge and gaps in the literature.

4.1 Rights based approach

A rights-based approach draws on international declarations and conventions, and state legislation to establish the specific rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, families and communities to retain and practice their culture and to self-determination, and the obligations of governments and other duty-bearers to fulfill their obligations in protecting and promoting those rights.

The literature identifies:

- the right of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children to grow up safe and well, connected to kin, community, country and culture
- the right of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to self-determination in meeting their own social, cultural and economic needs including the safety and well-being of children
- the right of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to create, collect and interpret their data
- the historical and continuing systemic issues and racism impacting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and driving their over-representation in the child protection system
- the state's failure to meet their obligations and address these issues in policy, program and practice
- how this failure translates into contemporary child protection systems and perpetuates over-representation
- the actions required to meet the obligations and address these issues in policy, program and practice.

The gaps identified in the literature include limited documentation and examination of:

- the relationship between individual rights and collective rights in Australia
- the impact of self-determination in service design and delivery on child and family outcomes in child protection.

4.2 Trauma and healing

The literature identifies:

- colonisation, and the impacts of past policies including the forced removal of children from their families have resulted in disconnection of people from their families, community, culture and country
- this disconnection and the resulting trauma and disadvantage have had and continues to have a devastating impact on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as evidenced by poor social and economic outcomes
- there is fundamental agreement that this trauma continues to be experienced intergenerationally
- ongoing mass removal of children by child welfare agencies continues to weaken the essential relationships and the very nature of the kinship structures
- as genocide was a foreign concept for Aboriginal people, there is no existing complete healing process for trauma of this magnitude.

In mainstream trauma literature there is fundamental agreement that stages of recovering from trauma are establishing safety, reconstructing the trauma story and restoring connections between survivors and their community. We know we can recover and heal from trauma and in doing so end the transmission of trauma.

Aboriginal literature across all nation's points to trauma recovery and healing from genocide as needing to address these 3 areas.

1. Self-determination and community governance
2. Reconnection and community life; necessary to strengthen connections to culture, community, family and spirituality
3. Restoration and community resilience. Rebuild social relationships & broken social networks.

The trauma literature from across the globe is growing rapidly – the following themes align to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge.

Connection is critical it is healing and builds resilience

The best predictor of how you are doing in the present is not your experiences of adversity but your experience of connectedness or lack thereof.

Trauma informed practice

There is a major focus on trauma informed practice as critical to creating change. Particularly a focus on understanding trauma, training staff in trauma and supporting safe relationships including cultural competence.

Addressing inequities of power being central to healing

Historic trauma is not just a physic wound it must be conceptualised as dispossession and domination. Healing therefore “is not simply the recuperation, vitality, and preservation of ‘culture’ as such, but the role of individual and collective agency, and the opportunity to redress enduring inequities of power”.

Collective and Community approaches

A focus solely on the treatment of individuals can only be part of a comprehensive solution. Addressing collective and community trauma needs to include equitable opportunity (economic empowerment) place (create safer public spaces) people (rebuild social relationships).

Truth telling central to healing

Systemic attention to psychological trauma depends on the support of a political movement – advances in the field only occur when they are supported by a political movement. In the absence of strong political movements for human rights the active process of bearing witness inevitably gives way to the active process of forgetting.

Gaps in Literature

The gaps identified in the literature include:

- the majority of research undertaken on social and emotional wellbeing of children traumatised by abuse has not explored the impact on Aboriginal children despite their over-representation in child protection
- there is very little evidence of trauma informed practice and service delivery being evaluated in relation to its impact on creating better outcomes for children and families
- most of the identified literature on historical trauma and its impact has been conducted in countries other than Australia, so the impact on Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young peoples in particular remains limited
- there is a limited evidence base of trauma informed therapeutic approaches which have included Indigenous pedagogy for children and young people in the literature – practitioners have tried to address this through identifying a cultural lens with which to view this within.

4.3 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child and family support responses

The literature identifies:

- community development approaches to designing solutions including utilizing local knowledge and wisdom to guide develop and implement local responses within an Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander community based organisation is critical
- the child is seen not as separate but in relationship to, and with others. So Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander responses are built on strengthening the
 - The child's relationship to their whole family not just to their parents.
 - The child's relationship to their community, not just their family.
 - The child's relationship to the land and the spirit
- a fundamental goal of the ACCP is keeping children and young people connected to family, community, culture and country and, recognising community as a strength for children. The important role of culture in building resilience for Aboriginal Children and families is evidenced
- traditional and contemporary child rearing practices among a range of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families is an important way to ensure cultural connection and cultural identity is maintained
- it is in the best interests of Aboriginal children for their connection to family, community and culture to be maintained, developed and supported. However, many Indigenous family support organisations are limited by resources and funding scope to what they can do to support greater community healing
- the enormous role that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations play as central to creating a community hub and sense of restoration of social fabric
- creation of Indigenous community-based child and family services alone does not solve the significant problems of child safety in Indigenous communities. It requires a substantial injection of additional funds to address the underlying socioeconomic disadvantage, as well as providing the additional services that are needed.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander agencies are undertaking work to support healing through:

- holistic healing approach
- narrative rather than diagnostic assessment and planning approach
- culture as treatment – views Aboriginal culture as essential
- family strengthening approach – address the underlying issues by promoting a positive and culturally appropriate approach
- empowerment model – participant families become active participants in treatment rather than passive recipients.

Devolving control of services and responsibility for outcomes to Indigenous managed agencies is more than promising practice – it works!

There are increasing calls for self-determination to be set out in legislation and applied to:

- child and family led decision making
- child and family services designed, developed, delivered and evaluated by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- delegation of powers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community controlled organisations
- First nations jurisdiction over the protection and care of children.

However, limited strategy exists nationally on how to achieve this within a staged or focused approach.

Gaps

The gaps identified in the literature include:

- very poor reflection of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child rearing practices in child protection literature
- the lack of documented Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge about children and families, providing culturally designed and delivered services and outcomes
- limited evidence in the child protection literature that funding for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander services has a trauma and social disadvantage loading despite evidence of this need in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander family support literature nationally and internationally
- studies have shown mainstream approaches to assessment often ignore important aspects of Aboriginal children's social and emotional wellbeing, such as spirituality and cultural connection
- there is limited evidence of community development approaches being utilised within child protection systems and this leaves them at odds with the evidence of what works from an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander world view
- no national data is available on the adherence to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child placement principle.

4.4 Mainstream child protection

The literature identifies:

- historically in Australia there has been an over emphasis on a child protection orientation (tertiary / emergency) and neglect of an orientation towards family services (primary / preventative / universal)

- Australia's emphasis on child protection has created a lasting legacy with the stress being on parental culpability or inadequacy in relation to the upbringing of children
- this legacy is particular for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents and families
- an Assessment Framework should be based on a research informed ecological model addressing strengths and difficulties within three domains, the child's developmental needs, parenting capacity and wider family and environmental factors
- an overarching practice framework can help address quality of practice and decision making (amongst other things)
- system approaches that accommodate diverse perspectives and creativity within a rigorous analytical framework that favors accountability are thought to work best
- child protection systems that have clear vertical features of governance and lines of accountability and horizontal features - a series of relationships which are necessary to ensure the planning, provision and evaluation of services – are deemed to be best practice.

Gaps

The gaps identified in the literature include:

- contemporary child protection systems are not certain as to what they may achieve for children as they do not routinely measure outcomes for individual children
- further work is required to strengthen the comprehensiveness, content and approach of child protection practice frameworks as they generally lack identification or guidance on the specific skills, techniques and tools required for each aspect of child protection practice
- there is also poor specification or guidance regarding the qualifications, experience, knowledge or skills required in effective child protection practice (in the Frameworks)
- child protection systems are generally not underpinned by a relevant evidence-based approach drawn from research to inform 'what works' in child protection and that provides a definitive model applicable in any context
- with regard to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island children, there is no evidence in the literature of Indigenous knowledge systems being used to collect and interpret the data. A mainstream reading of the data therefore, means interpretation of outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families are skewed
- the degree to which 'promising practices', if coordinated and comprehensively rolled out, leads to reductions in actual rates of child abuse and neglect at the community level.

5. Intersections

The core concepts or themes and connections identified across the four knowledge areas are set out in Attachment One. In summary the intersection points to how each of the fields of evidence can be drawn upon to provide a coherent theory of change.



6. Discussion

The purpose of this scoping review was to examine the available evidence base across knowledge bases – rights-based approaches, trauma and healing, child and family support, and child protection (both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and mainstream) and to inform a metasynthesis of the evidence base.

Overall, the scoping exercise indicates that each of the four knowledge base areas provide a particular lens through which to understand and explore the issues. Further, it confirms that at this stage knowledge across the four areas is not well integrated. However, preliminary analysis of the intersection of the areas identifies core concepts that could inform an overarching evidence base.

The critical messages emerging from the scoping review are as follows:

1. A rights-based approach is fundamental to linking knowledge systems - it is where the rights of Indigenous people children, families, and communities are enshrined, and the principles of empowerment and self-determination are prioritised.
2. A rights-based approach requires investment in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander led outcomes particularly utilising a community development approach – this then leads to an improved child protection system.
3. Child protection literature suggests that a forensic approach is not working, and better outcomes come from a family support approach.
4. Despite recognition of the overwhelming nature of intergenerational trauma, trauma and healing is largely absent within child protection system and is not highlighted outside of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander literature.
5. It is clear from the analysis of child protection, rights and trauma and healing that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have merged these frameworks in their understanding of the limitations of current mainstream approaches of how to create change.
6. There are no identified outcomes in child protection and no identified theories of change. This contributes to child protection continuing oscillation between a child rescue frame and a family preservation frame as if these two things are mutually exclusive. A theory of change allows for an 'escape' out of this ineffective vacillation.
7. Much of the best information in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander field is practice based. It is mostly contained in people assessing their practice and the literature therefore points only to promising practice. There is a need to place a greater value on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge, evaluation methods, funding regimes and requirements of peer reviewed journals to address this.
8. Despite all the oscillation and changes in child protection and the lack of data systems, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people continue to advocate for what they know works. The

literature points to over 25 years of consistency in their advocacy. The literature has continued to address intergenerational trauma, reconnection of families and communities and if anything, has become more explicit and detailed within a system that does not understand these concepts.

The key questions arising from the scoping review to guide the metasynthesis are:

1. What does each area of literature identified in the scoping paper offer in understanding and critiquing current policy, program and practice approaches to promoting the safety and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and support of their families and communities?
2. Drawing on each area, what are the core components of a new integrated and comprehensive framework for supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families?
3. What are the gaps in the current literature and what are the research priorities for addressing those gaps to support the ongoing development of the framework?

7. Conclusion

“The gap between what we know and what we do is greater than the gap between what we know and what we don’t know!” (Professor Dorothy Scott)

The scoping paper has demonstrated that there is a significant evidence base across fields of knowledge that have not been unified to build a stronger, more effective evidence base. The evidence demonstrates significant knowledge has been amassed that if well integrated can strengthen a new body of knowledge to effect change. The need to address the gaps identified in the literature and to value Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge and evaluation methods including data sovereignty has been highlighted.

The fields of evidence identified in this paper and the intersections between these demonstrate that utilising a metasynthesis can develop an evidence based Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child and family support framework to deliver improved outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families. This is consistent with the aim of the new Close the Gap agreement.

The new national close the gap agreement is developed around four priority areas which include:

- shared decision making
- building the community-controlled sector
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander led data
- transforming government organisations.

One of the new targets is to by 2031 reduce the rate of over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out of home care by 45%. This requires a significant focus on reducing the intervention of child protection systems in the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families to achieve this.

The metasynthesis will assist in addressing these four priority areas and meeting this target through establishing a robust evidence base that will result in an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child and family support framework. This framework can then be utilised as the blueprint for Aboriginal

and Torres Strait Islander evidence-based policy and practice and can be implemented and invested in by state and commonwealth governments as the means to achieve this.

Finally, the outcomes of this review are a reminder of the importance of not relying solely on published literature in scoping Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge and the continuing need to use other means of accessing that knowledge and applying this to the evidence base.

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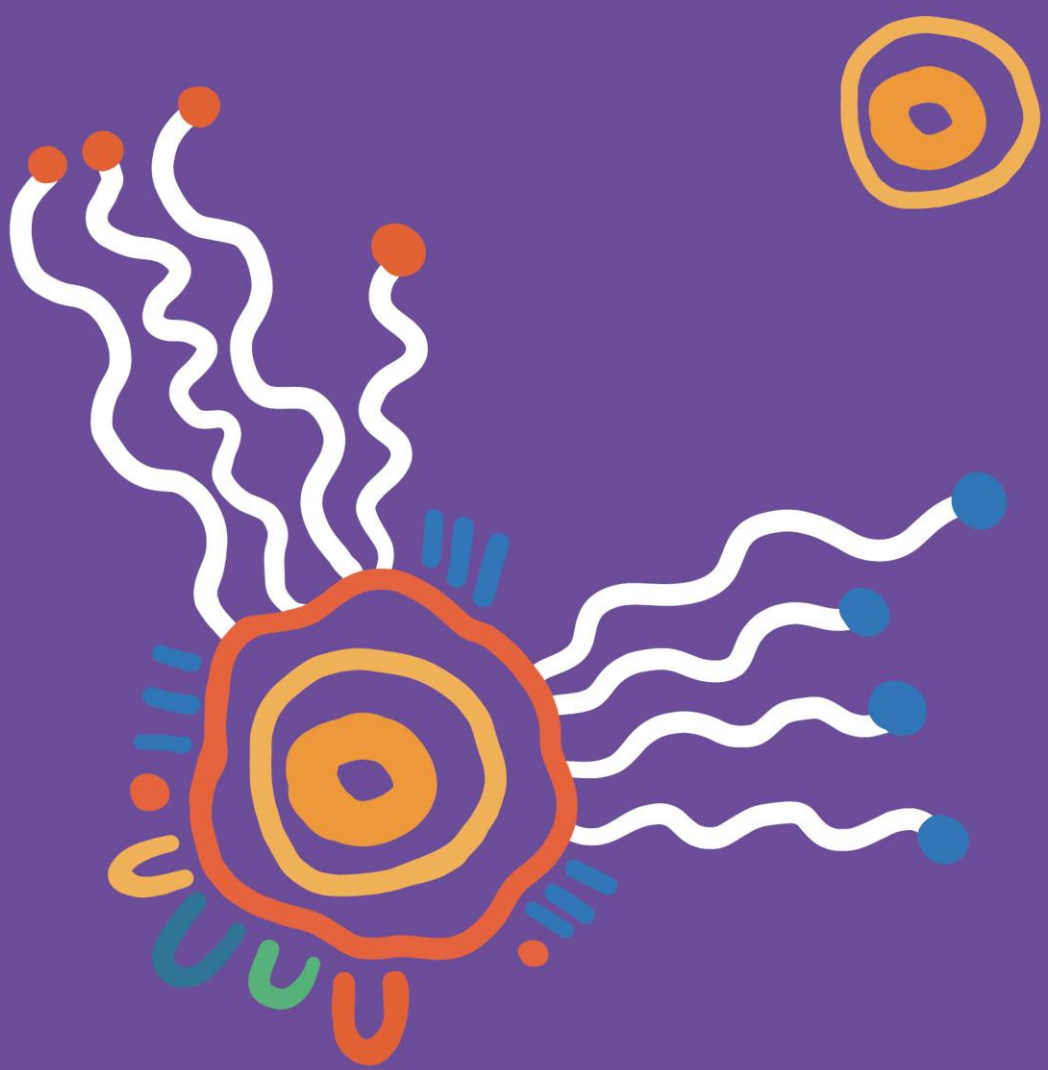
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Attachment One:

Intersection of Knowledge areas



Attachment One: Intersection of Knowledge areas

What We Know Trauma and Healing	Rights Based Intersection	Child Protection Intersection	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisational responses	Gaps
	Human rights recognise the inherent value of each person and are based on principles of dignity, equality and mutual respect. They are universal, inalienable and interdependent. Rights equals needs plus obligation plus accountability. The right to live culture and self-determination – individual and collective rights A rights-based approach recognises the rights to protection of both families and children. Families are recognised as the fundamental unit for bringing up children and the best interests of the child must be considered in all actions affecting them. When the rights of parents and children are in conflict, it is important that that children's views are heard independently	Child protection is largely focused on the harm to a child and parental capacity to protect and care for their child rather than the underlying factors that cause vulnerability and disadvantage for some children, families, communities and cultures, and prevent them from realising their rights. Contemporary casework practice is reinforcing the memory of the authoritarian state that dominated and subjugated Aboriginal lives during the protection era and retraumatising families. Respect for children's and parent's rights, demands an understanding that the striking of the balance must be informed by a child's development framework There is a particular risk in child protection orientated countries – like Australia - that parents are seen	We know that devolving control of services and responsibility for outcomes to Indigenous managed agencies is more than promising practice – it works! Providing services that are culturally safe and respect Aboriginal knowledge, experience and obligations. Empowering families to make decisions to protect children and create safe arrangements Aboriginal agencies are undertaking work to support healing through - Holistic healing approach - Narrative rather than diagnostic assessment and planning approach	Parental behaviour still seen in the context of maltreatment – very little focus on trauma and grief Therefore systems are geared towards parenting skills rather than family healing or reconstructing family systems. Child protection systems are not certain as what they may achieve for children as they do not routinely measure outcomes for individual children.



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	of parents in the course of assessments at points of major decision making. The best interests of children must be informed through a cultural lens and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives.	as personally responsible for their reactions to the range of adversities they face and the role of the social worker defaults to a kind of social policing wherein parents are required to change but not offered the help to do.	- Culture as treatment – views Aboriginal culture as essential - Family strengthening approach – address the underlying issues by promoting a positive and culturally appropriate approach	
Colonisation , the forced removal of people from their country to missions and stations, the use of people as indentured labour, and the removal of children from their families resulted in the disconnection of people from their families, community, culture and country. This disconnection and the resulting trauma and disadvantage have had and continues to have a devastating impact on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as evidenced by poor social and economic outcomes.	A rights-based approach to ensuring the safety and well-being of children and families shines a light on the historical and systemic issues and racism impacting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, empowering them to take their own action and advocating for reform.	Actions that take into account the historical context and prioritise cultural safety work best Failures of the child protection system in utilising a forensic approach to identifying children at risk rather than utilisation of a family support model. Adversarial, risk management driven, forensic systems that do not support families are likely to fail children and families. Research suggests that family group conferences <i>'lead to greater feelings</i>	Importance of community development approaches to designing solutions including utilising local knowledge and wisdom to guide develop and implement local responses within an Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander community based organisation Community development implies an awareness of exploitation and oppression. It is based primarily on the notion that people are capable of finding solutions to their problems. Key principles of an Indigenous approach to	The degree to which economic strategies aimed at improving the financial wellbeing of families <u>actually</u> reduce the incidence of child abuse, or in particular, neglect, in Indigenous communities Studies have shown mainstream approaches to assessment often ignore important aspects of Aboriginal children's social and emotional wellbeing, such as spirituality and cultural connection.



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		<i>of empowerment by families, are usually able to produce a plan that is acceptable, mobilise greater informal and formal support for families, and would seem to increase the safety of children and other family members where violence is a concern' (Harris 2008, p.2).</i> A family support approach treats child safety as a societal issue and recognises the importance of cultural safety. The focus is on the supports that are needed to be able to overcome structural disadvantage, skills deficits and lack of social support in the role of parenting and caring for children. A lack of understanding of the importance for Indigenous children and families of (re)connection to family, community and culture.	community development include: • community empowerment (local knowledge and cultural appropriateness) • Indigenous leadership • trust • flexibility • leverage • sustainability (Burchill et al. 2006). Aboriginal understanding of the person views the individual holistically. The child's physical, emotional, social, spiritual and cultural needs and wellbeing are seen as intrinsically linked, and they cannot be isolated. Aboriginal understandings of the person see the individual in	There is limited evidence of community development approaches being utilised within child protection systems and this leaves them at odds with the evidence of what works from an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander world view



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			relationship to family, community, tribe, land and the spiritual beings of the law and dreaming. The child is seen not as separate but in relationship to, and with others. So Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander responses are built on strengthening the • The child's relationship to their whole family not just to their parents. • The child's relationship to their community, not just their family. • The child's relationship to the land and the spirit beings which determine law and meaning	
Impact of Trauma on children and pathways to healing		Vital importance of early intervention and support services for Aboriginal parents and families as a	Fundamental goal of the ACCP: keeping children and young people connected to family,	There is a limited evidence base of trauma informed therapeutic approaches which



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The earlier the exposure to trauma, the more severe the impact can be Trauma changes in the structure and function of children's developing brains, their hormonal systems, and DNA Recovery requires brain based approaches and means to support children and families reconstruct concepts of safety Making sure regulatory base line, connection part – safe enough to change Stories of survival important to offering children a different story of their history and the opportunity for hope and pride in their culture and its survival Research into historical trauma in Native American communities		means to halt the removal of children into care Any child protection system of framework has to deal with the fundamental dilemma of determining at what point the state intervenes to protect the child, with evidence that both over and under intervention in family life may bring unintended and unwanted consequences. Shifts over time in child protection services reflect different responses to this dilemma.	community, culture and country and, recognising community as a strength for children Therapeutic responses for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children have combined trauma and developmental responses with identification of six cultural foundational pillars as a means to build a culturally strong model of care	have included Indigenous pedagogy for children and young people in the literature – practitioners have tried to address this through identifying a cultural lens with which to view this within Literature reviews have highlighted the dearth of research about Aboriginal children's social and emotional wellbeing. The absence of an agreed upon definition of Aboriginal children's social and emotional wellbeing was particularly noted. Assessment frameworks and outcome measures have mainly been developed for non-Aboriginal populations with some exceptions. The majority of research undertaken on social and emotional wellbeing of children traumatised by abuse has not explored the impact on Aboriginal children despite



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has demonstrated that when education around HT, increased awareness of the effects of grief and trauma that was passed on to generations, and sharing these experiences resulted in a cathartic relief (Brave Heart & DeBruyn, 1998). The grief resolution resulted in overall better quality of life and better cultural identity and commitment at both individual and community levels toward healing				their over-representation in child protection. Much of the research in relation to Historical trauma is from a deficit perspective. Studies that did use a strengths-based approach, however, were able to demonstrate the importance of protective factors, including family support and culture. Most of the identified literature has been conducted in countries other than Australia, so the impact of Historical Trauma on Australian young peoples in particular remains limited Studies on historical trauma that had been conducted with young people revealed that in general young people did not have knowledge of the concept or its potential impact.



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Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Approaches to trauma and healing As genocide was a foreign concept for Aboriginal people, there is no existing complete healing process for trauma of this magnitude. Aboriginal literature across all nations points to recovery from genocide as needing to address these 3 areas. 1. Self-determination and community governance; 2. Reconnection and community life; necessary to strengthen connections to culture, community, family and spirituality	A rights-based approach to ensuring the safety and well-being of children and families shines a light on the historical and systemic issues and racism impacting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, empowering them to take their own action and advocating for reform. Shift from: • welfare to rights • individual protection to social protection		Impact of intergenerational trauma as widespread and pervasive and neglected within the understanding of how to build robust responses Necessity of connection to community, family and identity to supporting young people to grow developmentally, socially and emotionally strong Research has identified traditional and contemporary child rearing practices among a range of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families is an important way to ensure cultural connection and cultural identity is maintained Studies have identified that mainstream approaches to assessment often ignored important aspects of Aboriginal children's social and emotional	How this works in Child Protection Practice is not clear Limited focus on restoring social structures and fabrics Trauma and healing is not being addressed in the child protection system and is not highlighted outside of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander literature Limited evidence in the child protection literature that funding for ABTSI services has a trauma and social disadvantage loading despite evidence of this need in ABTSI family support literature nationally and internationally. Very poor reflection of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child rearing practices in child protection literature.



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3. Restoration and community resilience. Rebuild social relationships & broken social networks			wellbeing, such as spirituality and cultural connection. The literature highlights that it is in the best interests of Aboriginal children for their connection to family, community and culture to be maintained, developed and supported. However, many ABTSI family support organisations are limited by resources and funding scope to what they can do to support greater community healing. The literature does outline the enormous role that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations play as central to creating a community hub and sense of restoration of social fabric. Research shows creation of Indigenous community-based child and family services alone does not solve the significant problems of child safety in	



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			Indigenous communities. It requires a substantial injection of additional funds to address the underlying socioeconomic disadvantage, as well as providing the additional services that are needed.	
Connection is critical it is healing and builds resilience Knowing that we can fall back into the safety and care of community helps us to recover. Inoculates children against the impact of trauma The best predictor of how you are doing in the present is not your experiences of adversity but your experience of connectedness or lack thereof. So, if you experience adversities but have strong relational connections, your risk is much	<u>Connection</u> The right of children to grow up safe and well, connected to kin, community, country and culture. The literature promotes recognition and respect for culture documents how connection to culture contributes to the safety and well-being of children and supports families in providing care highlights the strengths of culture in community and family life, and child rearing	We know that not understanding the role culture can play in developing resilience for Aboriginal children will likely lead to negative outcomes. The disconnection of children and young people in care from their culture is well documented, with issues relating to: • identification of cultural background • identification of kin and care by relatives • cultural support planning • use of permanent care orders	Important role of cultural in building resilience for Aboriginal Children and families Focus on the development of kinship care models and means to strengthen kinship care in legislation, policy and practice Culture as resilience –creating a culturally imbued framework for families Empowerment model – participant families become active participants in treatment rather than passive recipients	Reconnection - as the movement of children in OOHC from a placement outside of their family and kin to a placement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander relatives or kin where it is safe and, in the child's, best interest to do so. <u>Currently there is no national data available on reconnection.</u> No national data is available on the adherence to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child placement principle.



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lower than if you no adversities but have disconnections.	highlights the importance of connection in establishing safety and providing a foundation for healing requires culture to be included as an essential factor in considering a child's best interests and applied to all statutory decision making. Notwithstanding changes in policy and legislation the translation of the ACCP in practice has not been realised.	There is a problem when agencies or others than a member of a child's own cultural and family groups define kinship. A member of the child's own cultural and family group is best placed to define a child's kinship connections. They are the only ones who truly understand their own cultural kinship ties.		
Addressing inequities of power central to healing Historic trauma is not just a physic wound it must be	The right to self-determination and empowering Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to meet their own social, cultural and economic	There is a strong view that for a child protection system to be effective it must reflect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's right to self-determination in line with Australia's human rights obligations	"the demand for self-determination is a demand not only to have the management of service delivery to Aboriginal communities, but to have the opportunity to make decisions about policies affecting	What this means in policy, legislation and service delivery terms is less clear from participant, to partner, to driver



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conceptualised as dispossession and domination. Healing therefore “is not simply the recuperation, vitality, and preservation of ‘culture’ as such, but the role of individual and collective agency, and the opportunity to redress enduring inequities of power	needs including the safety and well-being of children. Australian and international evidence demonstrates that self-determination: is the only policy approach that has produced effective and sustainable outcomes for Indigenous peoples in service design and delivery achieves positive outcomes for Indigenous children and families		Aboriginals so that Aboriginals may have some real control over what happens to them. It is a step beyond self-management. “It is about finding agreed ways that Aboriginal people and their communities can have control over their own lives and have a collective say in the future wellbeing of their children and young people. As the Uluru Statement from the Heart implores: When we have power over our destiny our children will flourish. They will walk in two worlds and their culture will be a gift to their country.	(Davis, 2019; Libesman, 2015) Increasing calls for self-determination to be set out in legislation and applied to: • child and family led decision making • child and family services designed, developed, delivered and evaluated by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples • delegation of powers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community controlled organisations • First nations jurisdiction over the protection and care of children. But limited strategy exists nationally on how to achieve



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				this within a staged or focused approach
Need to move beyond the individual to address collective Despite the increasing recognition of the widespread nature of trauma as an epidemic at the population level, the predominant focus for addressing trauma remains at the individual level. No epidemic has ever been resolved by paying attention to the treatment of the affected individual – Dr George Albee	Framing of the problem - individual vs systemic (Libesman, 2015) - a rights-based approach may further encourage a focus on the individual – danger in turning systemic issues (e.g. poverty) into parental risk factors	Focussing on issues in the absence of how they relate to the overall system leads to failure. Unless broader societal factors are understood little progress will be made in child abuse and neglect (e.g. poverty, discrimination, poor housing, unemployment)	Calls for Holistic responses that respond to corresponding understanding of overwhelming socio and economic disadvantage	
Collective and Community approaches A focus solely on the treatment of individuals can only be <i>part</i> of a comprehensive solution. To address collective and community trauma including equitable opportunity (economic empowerment) place (create	Self-determination to the care and protection of First Nations children is understood and located within broader calls for structural change including constitutional reform to set out and protect the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander people including	Prioritising investment in service delivery by community-controlled organisations in line with self-determination. Investment should reflect need and be proportionate to the engagement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families within child protection systems.		



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safer public spaces) people (rebuild social relationships)	control over their own lives and those of their children.	Until governments and the service industry accepts that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are best placed to lead and implement solutions we will continue to tell the same story for generations to come.		
Truth telling central to healing Systemic attention to psychological trauma depends on the support of a political movement – advances in the field only occur when they are supported by a political movement powerful enough to legitimate and an alliance between investigators and patients and to counteract the ordinary social processes of silencing and denial. <i>In the absence of strong political movements for human rights the active process of bearing witness inevitably</i>	Most recently the <i>Uluru Statement from the Heart</i> calls for the establishment of a First Nations voice to Parliament enshrined in the constitution and a process of truth telling and agreement-making between governments and First Nations through a Makarrata Commission.			



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<i>gives way to the active process of forgetting.</i>				
Trauma Informed Practice There is a major focus on trauma informed practice as critical to creating change. Particularly a focus on understanding trauma, training staff in trauma and supporting safe relationships including cultural competence		Effective child protection systems are where both preventative and emergency services are combined. Inquiries into Australian child protection systems over the last two decades have consistently highlighted issues of inadequate workforce capacity and poor quality of practice and decision making. One of the key reforms used by systems to address these issues includes the implementation of an overarching practice framework. An Assessment Framework should be based on a research informed ecological model addressing strengths and difficulties within three domains, the child's developmental needs, parenting capacity and wider family and environmental factors.	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander services are highly professional and drawing on a body about early intervention, case management, trauma, parenting, and child development Many are moving to embrace trauma informed responses, and all clearly articulate in the literature their commitment to addressing intergenerational trauma across the life course for both children and parents.	Further work is required to strengthen the comprehensiveness, content and approach of child protection practice frameworks Poor coordination of strategies between governments, agencies and communities that leads to duplication, service gaps and confused data collection and reporting. Poor access to services, including appropriateness of 'mainstream' (not Indigenous specific) services and availability of services in rural and remote areas. Given the level of burden and risk in families and communities is extremely high and virtually universal the



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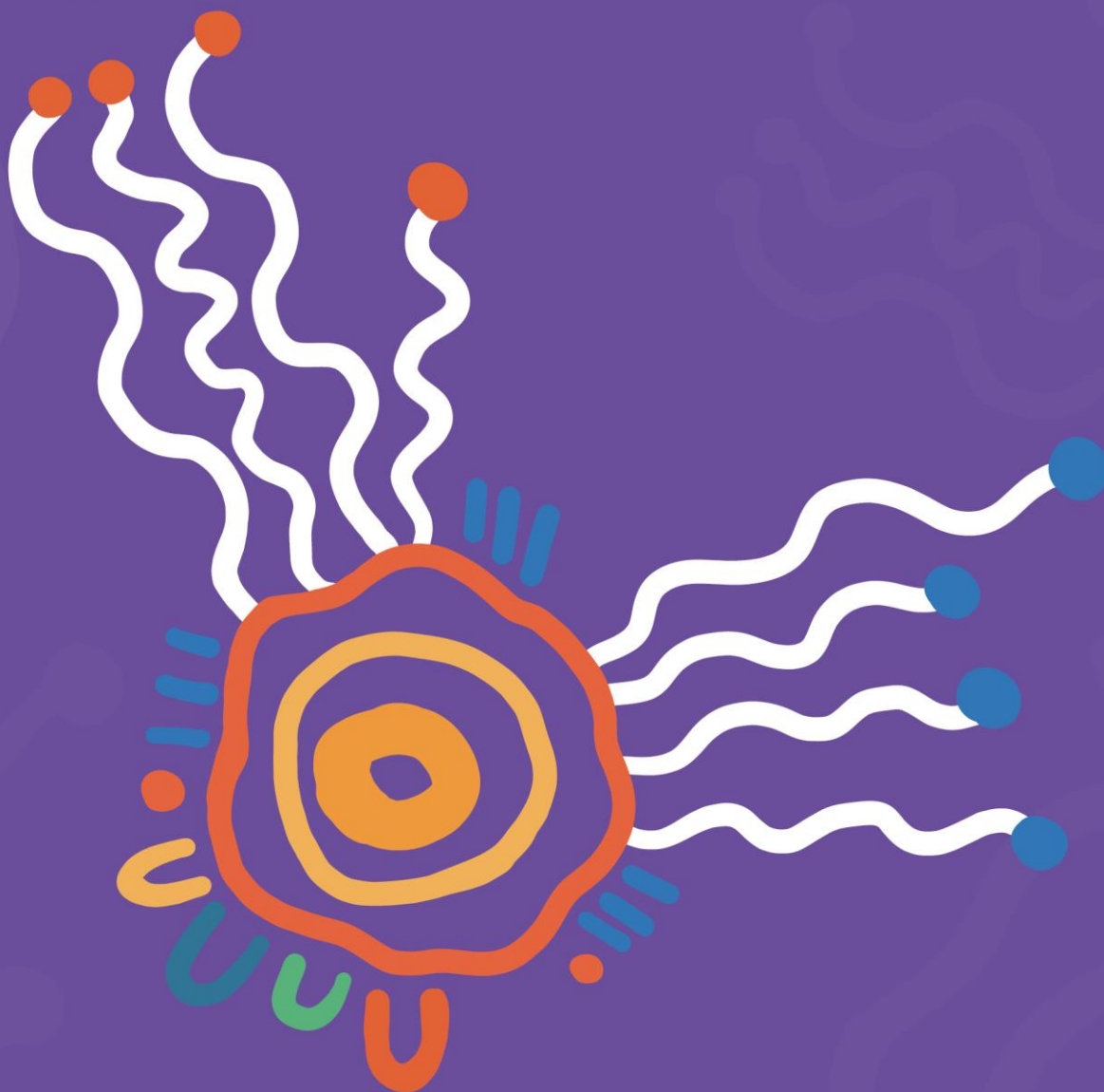
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				resources required to overcome the backlog of disadvantage and inequity is enormous, hence providing adequate support for the healthy development of children is essential. This is not currently utilised as a frame to match service funding or program development, so services are stretched to meet need continuously Very little evidence of trauma informed practice and service delivery being evaluated in relation to its impact on creating better outcomes for children and families
		Shifts in relationships between the state and the family are expressed in legislation and culture. Australia exhibits features of both child protection and family service	Organisational and worker cultural awareness and their journey towards competence is a key to their ability to enhance	Frameworks lack of specification or guidance regarding the qualifications, experience, knowledge or skills required in effective child



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		orientations with the former creating a lasting legacy that is inhibiting movement towards the latter.	Aboriginal children's social and emotional wellbeing	protection practice (in the Frameworks) There are currently no means to assess cultural competency within non-Indigenous organisations or government with no linkages to the need for this as leading to better social and emotional wellbeing for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children – mostly looked at in a framework of best practice





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