



Respectful practice

A workbook for AoD, community services, social workers and psychologists.

This workbook supports workers to prepare for respectful support and counselling practice.

The workbook draws on accounts graciously provided by men at Galiamble, an Aboriginal-controlled AoD Rehabilitation Service.

The principles for respectful practices that are explored within the workbook are relevant for all professions and cultural contexts.

It is an opportunity to learn from the First Peoples of Australia - the worlds oldest continuing culture. Aboriginal culture is based on appraches to identiy that honour connections with family and community.

The workbook reflects directions in 'best practice' for counselling and supports for all settings, irrespective of cultural difference.

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The booklet 'Thinking of coming to Galiamble?' provides further, fuller accounts from the men about what is important to them, and the contributions of Galiamble to thier lives. This workbook should be used with the booklet, where possible.

This is a resource prepared with the participation of men at Galiamble Men's Recovery Centre, a service of Ngwala Willumbong Corporation.

The men shared their stories about their lives, to promote respectful practice. This resource originated from men's reflections on their time at Galiamble, supported through narrative groupwork and counselling. These sessions were facilitated by Marnie Sather and Greg Smith. Contributions include men residing at Galiamble between 2017 and 2022.

The Steering Group for the project included Uncle Les Stanley, Mark Hammersley, former Senior Manager of Ngwala's Men's Recovery Centres, and Galiamble residents.

This workbook format was developed by Carol Harrison and Greg Smith, with input from Anne Fitzpatrick.

The project could not have taken place without the support of the Board of Ngwala Willumbong, Chair Marion Hansen and the many Board members, managers and staff who have been involved over these years.

We hope that these words contribute to your understandings, and to respectful relations between all peoples.

Some names have been changed to protect privacy. Actual names used on request.

Front cover: Uncle Les Stanley
Layout Design: Josh (Sankar Ramamurthy)
Enquiries: Galiamble 03 9534 1602

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These stories are 'gift giving' tools.

They provide an opportunity for you to pay attention to the language used in the stories so you can have a greater understanding of the story teller's experience.

Exercise self-reflection, push away your biases and judgment and appreciate the ancient cultural experience of storytelling.

Your responsibility is to reflect on how you can respond without compromising the storyteller's truth-telling, wellbeing and healing.

Carol

This is all about growth. For everyone.

If you work in this field, and don't become a different person, something is wrong.

Uncle Les

This is about ...

The workbook is a resource to promote respectful practice, irrespective of the culture of workers or peoples being supported. It is not a 'guide' to practice with Aboriginal peoples.

As the workbook is based on accounts from a number of Aboriginal men, however, it is important to provide access to additional cultural input where this is available. If you are not an Aboriginal service, discuss the use of the workbook with Aboriginal workers or trainees involved with your service and discuss how they would like to be involved. Where possible, include an Aboriginal Elder in the leadership of program. Alternatively, you could invite an Aboriginal service with which you have a relationship to be involved.

In our multicultural society, the workbook will support discussion between participants about the relevance of content to their particular cultures. Your service could include another service focusing on a specific cultural group, to be part of the training.

The workbook

This workbook provides opportunities to

- practice 'deep' listening
- reflect on helpful and un-helpful approaches to support
- plan a culturally-supportive framework for your practice.

Each section has questions for individual reflection, and for group discussion.

In group settings, it can help to take turns in reading selected passages. The questions provide a starting point for discussion. It is important that all discussions are respectful to the contributors and each other. If the discussions do not feel respectful, positive and helpful, do not continue.

Preparation

Trainers and tutors should be familiar with narrative understandings of problem story and strength story, cultural awareness and inter-generational trauma.

Trainers should prepare the groups, help determine appropriate 'ground rules' for discussion, de-brief at the end, and agree on a processes to follow up any matters for further input or discussion.

Why are the materials from men?

This workbook came about from a project with Aboriginal men. We hope to develop similar resources using stories from Aboriginal women. This workbook will contribute to the development of cultural strength-based training.

Female workers

Individual Aboriginal services have different policies about women working with Aboriginal men. It is not unusual for Aboriginal and mainstream 'universal' services, to include women in support roles with Aboriginal men.

Female workers will need to check with employing agencies regarding policies and practices. It is important to ensure that individual men are comfortable being supported by women, and in what circumstances.

Practitioners interested in ‘mainstream’ western research regarding ‘best practice’.

The relationship between counsellors and the person being supported contributes as much or more to outcomes, as the particular counselling approach being taken.

Effective counselling and support relationships prioritise alliance, collaboration, agreed goals, consistency between what the workers says and how they behave, and ‘real’ relationship. Responding to the culture and spirituality of the person being supported is central to effective relationships.

Skilled self-disclosure by support staff and counsellors can contribute to effective outcomes. This is reflected by growing recognition for the role of ‘lived experience’ in AoD and mental health fields.

Further reading:

Flückiger, C. (2022). *Alliance (Unpublished manuscript). Cognitive and Behavioral Practice*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cbpra.2022.02.013>

Miller, W. R., & Moyers, T. B. (2015). The forest and the trees: relational and specific factors in addiction treatment. *Addiction*, 110(3), 401-413.

Norcross, J. C., & Lambert, M. J. (2018). *Psychotherapy relationships that work III* [Article]. *PSYCHOTHERAPY*, 55(4), 303-315. <https://doi.org/10.1037/pst0000193>

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Notes, thoughts, reflections ...

Now that I have read this, what is one thing that I could do differently in my practice

What is important in the men's lives?

Relationships with our children

My main goal was to get my children back.
I will do whatever it takes to be able to be a father to them again.

If I am going to be in a position where they give me my kids back, I need to be a role model for my kids. I can't be telling them to do things when I am not doing them myself.

Larry

I wanted to connect back with my kids ... I have seven boys.

I share about them, I don't like to, but I have to for me. I talk about them. The pain's still there, still hurts, but I've got some sort of light on the subject now. But in time, things will happen in time. I just hope not 27 years time.

... I've always thought that way. At Gali, these things have gotten stronger and clearer.

Mitch

Before Gali, I'd shot up in front of my youngest. I was meant to be looking after him. I'd just make sure he wouldn't roll off the bed while I had enough time to have a whack. The same as the other kids. I would get paid, the rent would be due, there'd be no food and then I'd get a gram, an eight ball ...

I guess I was very selfish at the start trying to kill myself. I was thinking the kids would be better off without me and all the stuff that goes on with the drugs ...

Before, I went to sleep and hoped I wouldn't wake up the next day. But now I look forward to getting up in the morning and firing everyone up a bit.

As hard as it is staying alive, my kids aren't going to experience that. It's not just one of them who would experience that, it's five of them. If I was to die, take my own life, like I've thought about, there are five children affected by the death of a father.

There is positive to it all: I'm real protective. There is no real positive about my dad dying when I was 15. But I guess there is, because I'm not going to die for my kids. That's a positive. But when you've got nothing and people are telling you you're worthless or that you are doing stupid things, you think you are.

Whereas to my kids, no matter what I do, I'm the greatest bloke in the world. I'm the strongest man they know.

Notes, thoughts, reflections ...

Now that I have read this, what is one thing that I could do differently in my practice

I had a rough upbringing. Because dad died when I was young I had to look at TV and all the scumbags that hung around. I thought “That’s how you are if you’re a man”. I thought you had to get drunk, you’ve got to fight.

My son used to bring in the BWS catalogue. He’d say “Dad, your catalogue is here ...” He’d open it up and he’s, “Dad, there are your cans, let’s go get some.” He was five, six years old. He knew what the BWS catalogue was. He knew where the cans were in the shop, just because of me repetitively doing it. He’s picked up on it.

I once heard my son say to another boy “You’d better watch out, my dad is a better fighter than you.”

I don’t want that message passed on to my kids. They don’t need to follow it. There’s no harm if they don’t know how to fight. That’s a good thing if they don’t know how to fight. He shouldn’t know that.

Fathering is the most important thing in my life.

I’m trying to do the best thing for my son ...

The other day had been a year since I had seen my youngest boy. I was in the worst mood ever.

I just went up to the room and boosted the music and cried and let it all out and had a day of being miserable and then woke up the next day and didn’t get over it, but saw new challenges. After Gali, it’s all about my kids. Because I’ve given up drugs, big deal. If the kids are happy, that’s what’s important.

I put my girlfriend before my kids as well and that affected my relationship pretty badly with them. I created the kids. They’re my responsibility. No one else is going to pay for them and give them knowledge. I’m just looking forward to going over this Christmas and spending the whole holidays with them.

Colin

Notes, thoughts, reflections ...

Now that I have read this, what is one thing that I could do differently in my practice

Respectful practice

What problem story words would the men use to describe the way they see themselves?

In what ways may services have contributed to 'problem story' ways of seeing themselves?

Narrative approaches identify 'problems' as something that people have a relationships with: not located within their identity. As indicated in a later section of this workbook, these problems have their origin in society, racism and disadvantage.

Cultural and other strengths stories support individuals, families and communities to change their relationships with these problems.

What are some of the problems that the men are in relationship with?

How are these influenced by the nature of the society?

What forms of inter-generational trauma were a barrier to the men becoming the dads they want to be?

What would have been unhelpful ways of responding to the men?

Notes, thoughts, reflections ...

Now that I have read this, what is one thing that I could do differently in my practice

A 'better kind' of man ...

I want to be a better bloke than I was before.

Larry

It's good having people like you around, Larry, because it checks you, as a human, as the person you want to be. He's been great at Gali.

Jimmy

I want to say you're a good man Larry and that side of you is what I was introduced to and I think that's what's going to keep you in good stead.

*Rohan
feedback to Larry*

I'm trying to be genuine, not fake.

You see it everywhere you go, the fakeness in society. It's that mask that everyone puts on to fit in. I guess that's probably why I did it. Like around my mates who would do it.

I prefer to lead by example these days and have respect. Not have respect from fear, and everything that goes with fear. It's about living with openness and honesty, and some kind of integrity, without the mask.

Integrity is the right word. The one thing I've focused on is being assertive but being respectful. To have morals and not be a people-pleaser. People pleasing leads to resentment all that sort of shit. I prefer to have someone upset about what I've said, providing I've done it respectfully, I've got no problem with that person being upset, because that's their problem, not mine. Because I haven't done something that they wanted me to do. There's no problem with that.

Whereas before I probably would have been a bit worried with certain people: whether I had done the right thing, so I'd go along with what they wanted.

That's not good for you. I really don't have time to be sitting around thinking about that sort of stuff. It's more action these days, and not being stuck in my head: "What I could have done differently, or why didn't I just say I didn't want to go here?" Instead of going, and hating it the whole time, that sort of thing. A lot of this has got to do with my sponsor. And of course Dean, the psychologist. People like that, you guys. A number of things. I didn't just start to do it all by myself. I had a lot of guidance.

If I'm struggling, I don't want to get anything off them. I want to be able to be a good person, a good man in our family, and if I can do that, that will help me many times over,.

Brian

Notes, thoughts, reflections ...

Now that I have read this, what is one thing that I could do differently in my practice

This is a place of healing where you can come and fix yourself up. The opportunity's here for you to get your life on track. That's what they offer here. They offer you that opportunity and it's up to you to take it or leave it and I chose to take it because I want that opportunity to get back out there and be a good person and be a good dad and do the right thing and just have a good lifestyle.

Larry

I just want to be a good example and good Aboriginal man.

Colin

You're setting and the encouragement you're giving to others and you're growing. You're growing into a good young man. That's what I see.

*Mark
feedback to Colin*

Notes, thoughts, reflections ...

Now that I have read this, what is one thing that I could do differently in my practice

Respectful practice

What are the times in your life when you have been challenged to become 'a better kind' of person?

What was that like for you? What kind of supports would have been helpful for you at the time?

What attributes would you now like, to become a better kind of person?

What blocks get in the way?

List some empowerment strategies that support others to become better versions of themselves.

What are some strategies to support people to be able to share their vulnerabilities in safe and supportive settings?

What could local community offer men who would like to become a better men?

Notes, thoughts, reflections ...

Now that I have read this, what is one thing that I could do differently in my practice

Aboriginal Culture and Spirituality

We're great with spirituality. Once upon a time we only took what we needed, we never took any more and we never took any less, we took exactly what we needed. Once upon a time, when everyone sat down and spoke together, nothing was hidden. You were punished, you were taught. And that's consistent with what Aboriginal culture is about, connecting, sharing

Mitch

A spiritual life

Coming to this place, I've learned a few things, and seen a lot of things. I've experienced a lot of spiritual things, and I'm getting all this strength. I don't know where it comes from. The bases are drawn from my ancestors, this special place, being connected to community around here. Going on Indigenous camps with men, talking about our problems or whatever it is that's on our mind. It's so healing, I can't believe how healing it is. From four months ago, it's a total change.

Personally, I draw strength from all of those things. I'm not trying to push my beliefs on anybody else, but I believe us Indigenous men, we can tap into something that's really powerful inside. Like that identity from where we come from, where we're going, it's powerful. Imagine trying to put us all into a mainstream rehab? For me it wouldn't work. It didn't work, from experience. This is the place which I needed. I believe a lot of other Indigenous men need. And I'm so glad it's here.

For me, a spiritual life is not worrying about me. It's what I can offer the stream of life. Not what I can gain out of anything, it's what I can give. So it's not me worrying about myself anymore, it's starting to see what I could do for the community. What I could do for another human being. Who can I help? All these certain things, I'm living spiritually. I feel it. I'm getting all this energy. I couldn't get out of bed. I couldn't get out of the house, and now I'm not thinking about myself. I'm thinking about what I could give.

There's all this strength that I'm getting from doing that. It's just living that spiritual life. It's pretty basic at the moment, but it is something that I'm growing on, and then it dips into other things like trees, water, sun. It's everywhere. It's birds. That spiritual life is everywhere for me. A lot to do with it is connection to other people, and what I can do. And it's really powerful.

Worrying about other things, not littering, not using as much water as you should, or putting stuff in the bin. Or someone needs a hand. Just living outside myself. Then thinking about how my ancestors used to live, and how they used to live in a community, and how no one starved, how they all helped each other. How they survived all those years. It wasn't because they were selfish, it was because they were always thinking about other things outside themselves.

That's how they draw their strength. That's how they survived for so long, they cared about their land. They cared about everything that's around them. I draw strength from that, and then try and, in our society, try and use that same basis what they lived on, in a new way, from what I can gather, in my own perspective of how I think they would have liked me to live now.

Brian

Notes, thoughts, reflections ...

Now that I have read this, what is one thing that I could do differently in my practice

Respectful Practice

Who has been influential in your own understandings of spirituality?

What do the men include within 'spirituality'?

How does Aboriginal culture and spirituality support richness and resilience in the lives of the men?

What can these accounts contribute to your life, and decisions that you make?

Notes, thoughts, reflections ...

Now that I have read this, what is one thing that I could do differently in my practice

What we look for in workers

The staff don't just treat you as an addict. They actually treat you as a person. And that's very important. Even when we are not the most willing of people, they persist with you, and help you a lot.

It's nothing against other places. In addiction, when we weren't in here, the world didn't look at us too well. Even our own families didn't look too well at us. So to be shown that respect and the understanding of where we're at. We have a lot of respect for the staff, to know that they have conquered addiction and now they're trying to give back.

Harry

A place of Respect

As soon as I walked through the door it felt right. They didn't lock you up like the other rehab I went to. You had your phone. They treated you like a man. That's what I felt. If you want to go and use drugs or whatever, it's out on the street. It's right there. You are not locked up at Gali.

You could have your phones, you could go down the street, so all of them things that make you feel like a man. And then, on top of that, you still get all these services: from the start, it just felt right for me. Out in the other world everything's full-on guidelines. ... there's guidelines here, but it's more they treat you like a man, which really helped me. It's being trusted. Because you come here to get well.

If you were in a place where they were locking us up and you can't go outside, not listen to radios, not allowed to do all these things. What's that say to you? It's like you're locking yourself, like you can't be trusted. I think, for an Indigenous rehab, we shouldn't be put on big strict rules.

There's got to be overall rules, but in our culture we're sick of all these rules, all this new age stuff. But that's the way the world's going ... It was hard coming in to Galiamble but you're sick of the world out there. You want to come into a sacred place. You want to come into a place where it's different than outside.

You need this place to be run differently, because out there, we've been getting smashed. We can't survive. We don't know how to live out there.

This place, it needs to be a special place.

Brian

Notes, thoughts, reflections ...

Now that I have read this, what is one thing that I could do differently in my practice

Respectful Practice

How can practices by support services, contribute to a lack of cultural and emotional safety?

Identify the spiritual and emotional requirements you would need in your practice, to support your connections with the men:

Brian's statement describes finding it hard to come into the service. He was sick of the world outside, and needing a sacred place.

What would contribute to a place being 'sacred'?

Notes, thoughts, reflections ...

Now that I have read this, what is one thing that I could do differently in my practice

Relationships with workers

Rohan the worker gave me the best bit of advice the other week, which I think was passed down from Mark. That was “If you’re not going to be constructive don’t be destructive.” So whenever I’m going to say something now I’m thinking “Is it going to be a help or am I better off just keeping my mouth shut and just letting it go?”

Because I don’t want to be that negative effect.

Colin

Sitting up there after detox thinking what the hell is going on here? Within 48 hours, I felt like I’d been here for a long time. The staff are really helpful, the guys are really helpful. I don’t think there’s been a question I’ve asked that’s been too big. I don’t think I’ve said anything that could be frowned upon in other places. That’s not happened here, they’ve always been good and genuine, both the staff and the fellow clients or inmates

Jimmy

There’s a voice for us, or someone’s actually caring or someone’s actually taken notice or trying to help I guess. And trying to get our voices heard and the problems that we go through. But when we talked to you, it just feels like someone’s taken an interest, someone wants to help, someone wants to get our ideas or our thoughts. Record them. And hearing that you go up to the desert and take photos for communities up there, you start to think, “Oh, this bloke’s interested in our culture or trying to record stuff and trying to have it put out there.”

It feels like it’s getting documented, the things that are going on instead of it just slip through the cracks. So there’s someone that’s actually genuine. Sometimes I talk to other people and they don’t have an interest. It just feels different. You’re actually wanting to learn or wanting to know why things are like this, why things are like that ... Hearing people’s ... See stuff in you, that you probably don’t see in yourself, you know? And when you hear that stuff you’re like, “Am I really like that?” Or, “Hang on. I actually am.”

Brian

Notes, thoughts, reflections ...

Now that I have read this, what is one thing that I could do differently in my practice

Respectful practice

How do you feel when you are treated like a number?

What relationships with staff were important to the men?

What values and attitudes of the workers contributed to these relationships?

What did workers do that contributed to positive relationships?

What's the best advice you have received that gave an opportunity for growth?

Notes, thoughts, reflections ...

Now that I have read this, what is one thing that I could do differently in my practice

Non-Aboriginal workers

I've felt very comfortable with you and Marnie from the start. Out there, there's not too many people taking notice of Indigenous people, who want to work in this type of field. Once I heard a little bit about both your stories, and how you both do certain things for the community, and you want to learn about it, then that builds trust, and then that makes me want to open up.

Out there, there's not a lot of people that want to help. You're giving Indigenous people a voice. And you are wanting to try and help, in whatever way you can.

That brings trust, because we can be very closed off. Someone that comes in with a clipboard and says "This is how we're doing things, and this is the way that it is." You just pull back from it. I won't open up if that's the case.

Or I feel that they're doing it because it's just a job for them. It has to be a passion. You're not going to open up to someone that's just doing it because they're getting paid. You're not going to open up about what's inside. For me, anyway.

Brian

It's definitely not a race card when it comes to workers: there's more non-Indigenous workers here than there are Indigenous.

Harry

Some of the boys and obviously myself have judged a worker that hadn't experienced being on the 'other end' of it. The attitudes from the boys would be a lot different to somebody that had 'lived it.'

I just say be yourself. Don't be somebody that you're not. That's important.

Jimmy

Notes, thoughts, reflections ...

Now that I have read this, what is one thing that I could do differently in my practice

For any workers workers

It's a tough game. It's a tough gig, I couldn't do it. I struggle with relapses in the rooms. I struggle with people who have relapsed. I couldn't do what those people do here. The workers. I want to, but I couldn't do it. I couldn't. It's an up and down game. It's an emotional wear down. It's not for the faint hearted.

And at the same time you can't be too rough either, you can't be too kind either, you have to find a medium. At the end of the day, we can't help those who don't want it. You can't. All you can do is try.

Mitch

Notes, thoughts, reflections ...

Now that I have read this, what is one thing that I could do differently in my practice

Respectful practice

Mitch describes a 'tough gig' for people in support and therapy roles.

What does 'not giving up' on someone require?

What is your experience of managing these in your relationships with others?

In other sections of this workbook, the men talk about the need for 'care' and sometimes 'going the extra mile'.

What could an 'extra mile' look like in your practice?

What might 'acts of care' involve?

What would support you being able to sustain positive attitudes as a worker?

Notes, thoughts, reflections ...

Now that I have read this, what is one thing that I could do differently in my practice

Words from experienced workers

We asked current and past workers about what they have learnt during their time at Galiamble.

What has stood out to you about what is important to the men?

One of the biggest things I have noticed is the men wanting to re-establish contact and relationships with family, in particular their children

Damian Z

After working with a lot of men that all had different goals and needs, what stood out to me was the common theme: These men were after a win. They wanted and needed something positive to happen in their lives to motivate them to continue 'having a go'. That's what Galiamble was able to provide.

A home for the homeless, reconnection with family, some clean time from substances, help with physical and mental health. All are 'wins' for a man who feels like everything in his life has gone.

Dale

1. Family
2. Culture: where their mob is from
3. Respect

Rohan

I keep hearing the men talking about the wonderful support they have had from 'their brothers'. They are not talking about their family-of-origin brothers, rather the other residents. There is such a sense of family at Galiamble.

David

As a worker, although our worlds were different, I needed to connect with the men through my own personal experience of Alcoholism. Through the many differences, the pain and the remorse were similar. The men needed to know that I was one of them.

Pat

Notes, thoughts, reflections ...

Now that I have read this, what is one thing that I could do differently in my practice

Respectful practice

Dale talks about the men wanting a win, needing something positive to happen in their lives.

What are some attributes the workers bring that help create change for the residents in Galiamble?

How would you keep hope thriving?

What are the benefits for the men to stay connected to other men?

Notes, thoughts, reflections ...

Now that I have read this, what is one thing that I could do differently in my practice

What changes did you make, to be more open to helpful relationships with the men?

The best change I made was to ignore the reasons why the man needs drugs or alcohol, and focus on the fact that he does. My own lived experience was that I was shamed for a lot of my mistakes and the men don't need that. They just need help fixing them. Forget their past, just help build their future.

Dale

The most important thing was to stop seeing the men as people with a problem. Rather they are individuals with stories to tell, wisdom to impart and they are creative with endless possibilities.

David

Being non-Aboriginal, I had to 'un-learn' all the racial prejudice I had grown up with. I had to be mindful that colour didn't make any difference. Alcoholism and drug addiction affects all the same. It requires a common solution, a kind of spiritual awakening.

Rohan

I never put myself above the men, I am there to help and serve them.

Damian Z

When the men came home from weekend leave, I tried to connect with them by asking questions about their families.

Pat

Notes, thoughts, reflections ...

Now that I have read this, what is one thing that I could do differently in my practice

Respectful practice

The workers talk about what they had to do to be more open to helpful relationships with the men.

Which of the staff's comments do you connect to the most?

How do those comments 'resonate' with your own experience?

What are your hopes relating to 'being open' to people with whom you work?

What practices and connections with others, will support you in continuing to be open?

Notes, thoughts, reflections ...

Now that I have read this, what is one thing that I could do differently in my practice

How did you manage what mainstream would call ‘professional boundaries’?

When a man needs a hug, he needs a hug.

David

I tried to remember that as a non-Aboriginal man, working and living with the men on a daily basis, what is normal in mainstream circles is not ‘normal’ in Aboriginal culture. It was about looking at my own expectations and working around that.

Pat

I found this tough. I learned early on that being ‘one of the brothers’ can put you into tricky situations. I had to adjust my boundaries a few times. Being a past client myself had me wanting to be a part of their journey. That sometimes put me too close when things went sideways in the lives of the men.

At the end of the day I’m a worker. I’ll help men to the best of my ability from that side of the fence. If the end result is that the men benefit, but I don’t get invited to hang out as a brother, I can live with that.

Dale

It wasn’t easy. I guess over time I got better at saying ‘no’. I came to realise any money loaned must be treated like a gift and if they paid me back it was a bonus.

Working at Galiamble I would often come up against the mens’ own prejudices. Along with their alcoholism, these could be directed at the workers. At times, that made my job scary. The only way I could deal with it was to take the attitude that their anger was not personal: it was because that was the best they could do at that moment. Over time, as I built rapport and they got well, they would sometimes come around.

Rohan

I disclose very little personal information about myself of personal life, I also try to give myself time to recharge and “turn off” on the weekends

Damian Z

Notes, thoughts, reflections ...

Now that I have read this, what is one thing that I could do differently in my practice

How did your time at Galiamble contribute to your life?

It's given me an entirely different view of men who have spent time in prison. It helped me become a much better communicator and given me a lot more confidence, particularly with public speaking. It has also vastly expanded my knowledge of Aboriginal Culture.

I have also been given a lot more happiness and fulfilment with life.

Damian Z

Galiamble didn't contribute to my life, it saved it. I was heading down a real dark road when I entered Galiamble years ago as a client. I got that win I spoke about. I got that clean time from drugs that I couldn't get on my own. I got out of jail and was given some love and compassion. I found my identity as an Aboriginal man.

That is what drove me to want to work in the community, to give to others what was so freely given to me. I lived a very selfish and lonely life before Galiamble. Now I'm a proud Aboriginal man with a sense of community. I can't see myself doing anything else in my life.

Dale

I feel a real sense of purpose. Not every day is great but the great days are amazing.

David

Galiamble will always be special to me. It taught me to look at my own privileged background and the wider picture of me as a non-Aboriginal, through the eyes of the men. At the same time, working on by own empathy, compassion and kindness. My experience at Galiamble taught me to be more welcoming and forgiving.

Pat

I can't thank Galiamble enough for the opportunity to help men adjust to life without drugs or alcohol, and to share that journey with them. It gave me a place to grow – 'grow up', in a sense.

It gave me a sense of purpose and direction that I didn't have before. I finally realised the value in helping others.

Galiamble gave me an opportunity to learn about Aboriginal culture, the beauty of the art and the depth of Aboriginal spirituality.

Rohan

Notes, thoughts, reflections ...

Now that I have read this, what is one thing that I could do differently in my practice

What else would you like to say to possible new workers?

Leave the office door open and never miss out on a yarn with a fella who wants a yarn. Some of the best stories I've ever heard have come from men at Galiamble.

Dale

In a nutshell, be yourself. The men will tell you if you are not being authentic. Be a good listener. Learn to walk alongside the men, not try to be in front of them. You're not there to teach them, you're there for them to teach you.

Pat

Its not always easy, but the rewards far outweigh the challenging moments. We also are privy to many moments that most people would never experience.

Damian Z

We are there to help the men solve their own problems. If we can do it with humility and compassion, we are probably doing a great job.

David

The work is a great opportunity in a wonderfully rewarding field. It is not, however, for the feint-hearted. Working in AOD has many disappointments.

There is nothing better than seeing men, who were once 'written-off' by society , turn their lives around , reunite with their families and become 'stand up' men in the Aboriginal community.

Rohan

Notes, thoughts, reflections ...

Now that I have read this, what is one thing that I could do differently in my practice

Respectful practice

Thinking about cultural processes or customs, do you think they would have an impact on professional boundaries? Why or why not?

What learnings have you had from your own experience?

How would you like to manage your 'boundaries' in your practice?

How might this depend on your workplace? How would you manage differences between your own approaches to boundaries, and those of your workplace?

What could you do, to help you manage decisions about your 'boundaries'?

Notes, thoughts, reflections ...

Now that I have read this, what is one thing that I could do differently in my practice

Problem story and cultural strength story.

People seeking support to change their relationships with alcohol and other drugs, can refer to 'problem stories' relating to their identity.

What were some of the 'problem stories' implied in the accounts of the men?

Western culture promotes damage-centred approaches to identity, 'locating' problem stories within the individual. These stories, however, have their origins in society, racism and social disadvantage,

How may institutions and services have perpetuated 'problem stories' in the lives of the men?

How could these unfold in the person's life?

'Double' listening supports attention to cultural strength stories and identities.

What are some of the strength stories evident in the accounts of the men?

How have these 'sustained them' in the challenges they have faced?

How did connections with other men at Galiamble provide opportunities to recognise and develop cultural strength stories?

Why do connections with others, challenge problem stories and make cultural strength stories more visible?

How could your practice identify and support cultural strengths in the lives of people with whom you will be working?

Notes, thoughts, reflections ...

Now that I have read this, what is one thing that I could do differently in my practice

All practice as cross-cultural

Reflect on your learnings from the men at Galiamble.

What have you learnt that is particularly important in working with Aboriginal men?

Reflect on what is important to the men, their hopes for the future, how they want to be treated by the community , services and people who are there to support them.

What is common between these, and people from other cultures?

In a multi-cultural society, what have you learnt here, that is relevant all our future work in the AoD and wider community sectors?

Notes, thoughts, reflections ...

Now that I have read this, what is one thing that I could do differently in my practice

Being open to change

The men's descriptions of what they value in respectful relationship are those that are 'on the same level'. These have been described as 'real' relationships. These relationships result in changes in the life of the support worker, not just the person being supported.

These changes can be influenced by exposure to other people's lives and ways of thinking, such as you have experienced in this workbook.

Are you aware of differences and developments in any of these areas, as they relate to you?

- Insights into the lives of others
- Insights into privilege and social advantage
- Your social position relating to social disadvantage, marginalisation, and racism
- Seeing your social position from the perspectives of others
- Different ways of 'seeing the world'
- your role in the work
- your place in wider community.

Notes, thoughts, reflections ...

Now that I have read this, what is one thing that I could do differently in my practice

Reviewing and Reflecting

What were your learning goals at the start of this workbook?

1.

2.

3.

How have you gone with these? Did they change along the way?

What have you found challenging?

What do you want to remember from the readings, and your reflections?

How do you want these to make a difference in your practice?

What can you do to sustain these hopes? How can you get support from others in these intentions?

How do you want these to make a difference in other parts of your life?

Notes, thoughts, reflections ...

Now that I have read this, what is one thing that I could do differently in my practice

Starting points for further reading:

Growing up Aboriginal in Australia. Anita Heiss (Ed.) Black Inc (2018).

Working Together: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Mental Health and Well-being. Principles and Practice. Pat Dudgeon, Helen Milroy and Roz Walker (Ed) Commonwealth of Australia (2014).

Inner Deep Listening and Quiet Still Awareness. Miriam-Rose Ungunmerr
<https://www.miriamrosefoundation.org.au/dadirri/>

Narrative therapy and community work:

Dulwich Centre: On-line resources, courses and study pathways
<https://dulwichcentre.com.au>

Collective narrative practice : responding to individuals, groups, and communities who have experienced trauma. David Denborough. Dulwich Centre (2008).

Yarning with a purpose: First Nations narrative practice. Dulwich Centre (2020)

Stories of hope for Aboriginal children, families and culture: Narrative responses to a national crisis. Aunty Barbara Wingard and Dulwich Centre Foundation (2018).

Aboriginal narrative practice: Honouring storylines of pride, strength and creativity. Barbara Wingard, Carolynanha Johnson & Tileah Dram-Butler. Dulwich Centre (2015).

What is Narrative Therapy?: An easy-to-read introduction. Alice Morgan (2000).

Feedback

The workbook is possible only because of the generosity of the men who contributed accounts of what is important in their lives.

As a matter of respect and relational practice, it is important that the men receive feedback on how their accounts have contributed to the lives of others.

We request that you provide feedback on your experiences with the workbook. You can provide feedback individually, or as a group.

The workbook is a new approach to supporting respectful practice. We are very interested in getting feedback on the use, impact and possible development of the workbook.

How did you use the workbook?

What difference has the workbook made to your understandings of respectful practice?

What is one (or more) examples of a difference or new initiative in your practice, supported by the use of the workbook?

Do you have specific suggestions for changes or additions to the workbook?

Other feedback ...

Please send to gregsmith1010@optusnet.com.au
for the Respectful Practice Working group.

