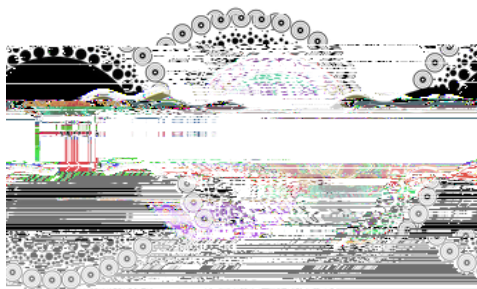


What do strengths-based sexual health approaches for Aboriginal young people look like?: Perspectives from staff who design and deliver them





A report from the project 'Fostering the sexual well-being of Aboriginal young people by building on social, cultural and personal strengths and resources' funded by the Australian Research Council Linkage Program (LP170100190).

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This report outlines the successful features of strengths based sexual health programs for Aboriginal young people as understood by staff who design and deliver these programs in NSW. The research is part of a larger project that sought to move beyond deficit focussed approaches to Aboriginal young people's sexual health by countering risk and problem focussed narratives and offer recommendations for policy and practice that focus on Aboriginal young peoples strengths and resourcefulness.

In this report we document

- The key features of strengths based service delivery for Aboriginal young people as understood by staff who design and deliver them
 - The funding policy and other contexts that are thought to support these strengths based service delivery
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- A general health education program delivered in high schools, once a week over two terms. The program was developed in partnership between Aboriginal staff at a local health district and Aboriginal staff at a local community controlled organisation. The program addressed health holistically with sessions focussed on nutrition, social and emotional wellbeing and sexual health. It used the ways of learning framework and at the core rested on culture and Country.
 - A specialised sexual health education program delivered in a range of settings including high schools at the request of local Aboriginal communities. The program was developed in partnership between a non government health service and an Aboriginal education and research centre. It used the ways of learning framework and draws on cultural ways of learning between Elders and youth, cultural values of men's and women's business and is community led.



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- Non Aboriginal staff knew that cultural ways of working and learning were essential and acknowledged the limits of their work with Aboriginal young people. They sought partnership and co-delivery approaches. It's something that should never go away in terms of something that you think about and reflect on. You need to be respectful to what you know and what influence and impact you can have on a community without being from that community. So there's certain qualities that I can bring to this role and there's certain things that I can't. Staff 5

- The content needs to be fluid. Staff 4: community and youth led, adapted.

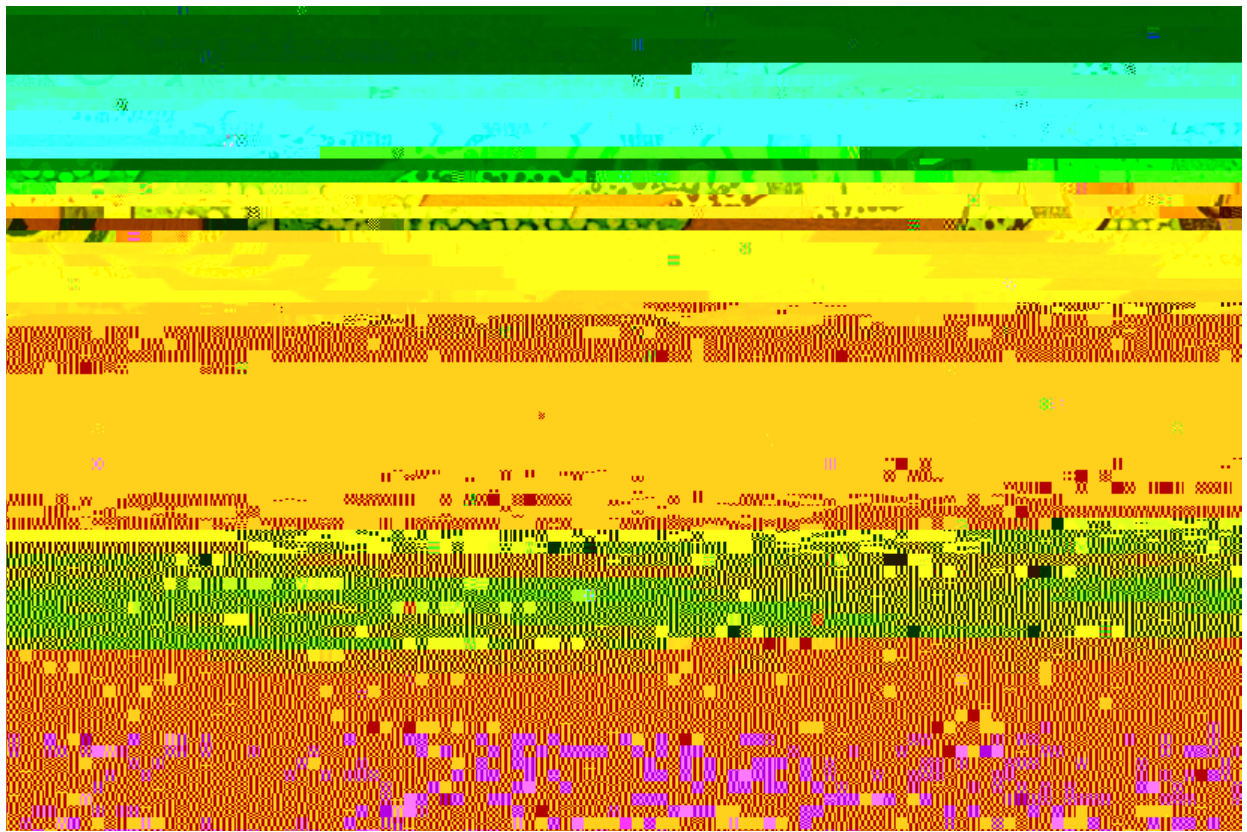
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- Non-Aboriginal participants perceived that, sometimes, assumptions were made by some Aboriginal communities about their motives for being in those communities. They reported how communities could be suspicious of their motives and participants knew they needed to work hard to build trust: “we have to sort of tread carefully and not make it an area where people are questioning why we’re there or what our motives are in terms of, you know, what’s behind us being in this community and delivering this information. We need to make a young person feel that we’re there for the right reasons ... this is where the, the consultation process is really important”. (Staff 5)





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