

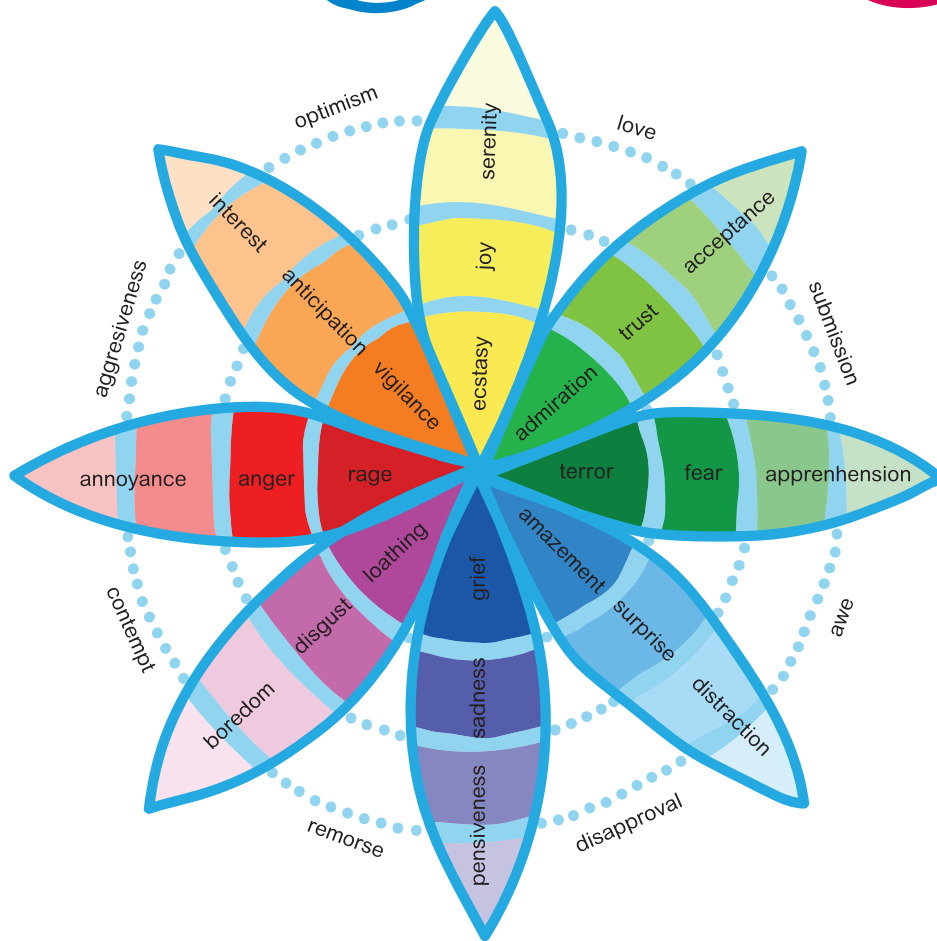


# Suicide Prevention Toolkit

YARNs+HEAL



# When we are feeling unwell



**I feel helpless**

**I will just give up**

**I can't sleep**

**I cannot control  
my thoughts**

**Noone will  
understand what  
I am talking about**

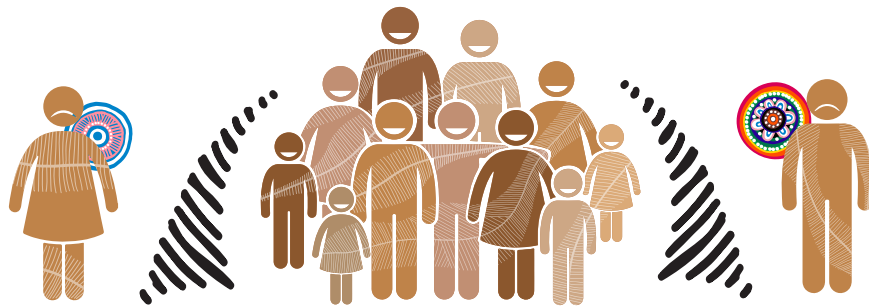
**I don't know what  
to do or where to  
seek support**

**Medication  
won't help**

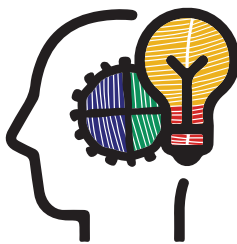
**If you answered yes to any of the above,  
YOU ARE NOT ALONE.**



# Yarns Heal Project has identified the following key factors.



**That blak queer people are not emotionally and spiritually supported in their communities**



**That mental health providers are not understanding the supports needed**



**Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander services do not know how to engage, listen and support**



**That fear, disrespect, lateral violence, identify discrimination and homophobia lead to blak queer folk not accessing support services**

# Identifying a person who will assist me in keeping queer culturally safe?



Identifying someone who will help you in your path to finding a trusted person in your community to talk too. This person may not be a mental health practitioner. This person may be a friend, a family member or someone who has first-hand experience like someone with a lived experience.

Initially talking about what is happening for you is very useful.



## What is the relationship between thinking and feelings?

Have you ever wondered what is this relationship? Thoughts produce feelings which is the natural way of reacting to thoughts, our feelings determine our actions.

### EXAMPLE A

James identifies as non-binary and is 19yrs old, James has this feeling of sadness as his grandfather passed away. This feeling visits him often and James is left feeling sadder and does not know what to do?

### WHAT TO DO?

Sit with your emotions, don't ignore them as emotions tell a story and paint a picture.

- Contact or find a safe person who you can initially talk too about your emotions
- Keep a well-being diary, date and time the emotion and what you were doing at the time
- If the emotions are overwhelming, book an appointment with doctor or community health worker who will help you in identifying what is sitting behind your emotion
- Going to a safe place on country that has meaning for you. Sometimes doing this will ground you and bring clarity to what is affecting you
- Find ways of honouring that person it could be as simple as planting tree, writing a poem or making a cultural object to honour the memory

## EXAMPLE B

Megan identifies as Lesbian and is 25yr old, Megan is comfortable with her identity. Megan has been called names relating to her Aboriginal heritage and identifying as a Lesbian. Megan has isolated herself and hasn't been sleeping and her sister is worried as she is sending her text messages saying, "I hate my life, and I am giving up".

### HOW CAN HER SISTER HELP MEGAN?

- Respond and send a text like "you know I am here to support you, how are you feeling right now, are you having thoughts about suicide" or "are you thinking about ending your life"
- Listen to Megan in the moment when she is expressing herself, don't pass any form of judgement or make assumptions'
- Ask Megan if she would go somewhere on country where Megan can talk more about how she is feeling
- Encourage Megan when she is ready to make an appointment with her doctor who can assess her mental health needs and possibly create a mental health care plan
- Create a family mental health cultural care plan and encourage other key family members to be part of the safety planning as a family

## EXAMPLE C

Jason is a 35yr Aboriginal gay man who lives in a Cape York community and went to his Auntie Rhonda's home late one Thursday night. Whilst Jason was talking to Auntie Rhonda, she heard Jason say that he was going down to the river to a tree. His best friend Mark was standing at the front gate concerned for Jason.

### WHAT CAN AUNTY RHONDA DO?

- Invite Jason and Mark into the home. Auntie Rhonda can respond like this "Jason, whilst we have a yarn here, I can't imagine how you are feeling or what is going through your mind, but I am here to listen and to make sure you are safe, and I love you and you know that bub"

With mark being present, Auntie Rhonda can encourage Mark to talk and bring comfort to Jason also. Given it is late in the night and Auntie Rhonda and Mark are still holding concerns, they can think of doing the following.

- Call the local health clinic or Ambulance station and have a yarn with the staff or everyone can jump in a car and head towards the health clinic, Hospital or ambulance station
- Call Lifeline or 13yarn and have a three-way conversation with a crisis supporter who will talk to Jason and develop a safety plan for the night

This kind a situation can go either way but talking about safety is important for Jason and it is what Jason and family members feel comfortable with in terms of support for Jason.



## EXAMPLE D

Michael identifies as transgender and is aged 19yrs old and lives with his sister Fiona and her family. Michael expressed worry that his doctor is not taking into consideration his personal views associated with the prescribed medication provided by the Doctor. This has left Michael with worry and his sister has noticed that he is not eating and is crying when this worry visits him.

## WHAT TO DO?

- Micheal can ask at any time for a review to talk about his feelings and his concerns with his doctor
- Fiona can attend the next doctor's appointment and act as a support person and advocate with consent from Micheal
- Michael, Fiona, and the doctor can be curious around the worry especially where this worry stems from and how this worry is affecting Michael. Doctor can assess this and possibly complete a referral to a counsellor or psychologist who is familiar and skilled at supporting LGBTIQ+Sistergirls or Brothergirls
- Explore ways of supporting Michael with his worry and tracking this worry in terms of how often this worry visits him and what is he doing at the time when he is worried

**In a situation like the four examples provided, there is no right and wrong way but please be mindful that safety is important for the person who are in emotional distress but also safety for the family, friends and professionals who may respond and provide support.**





# Healing on Country

Country is the place from which we come and to which we will return. Country sustains us culturally, linguistically, spiritually and emotionally.

Many LGBTIQ+Sistergirls and Brotherboys leave country for various reasons and one main reason is to go on a journey of exploration to find your sense of balm queer identity. This is often defined as a lifelong journey and people cross paths with you who will comfort, show love and who will inspire you and not judge you for how you identify.

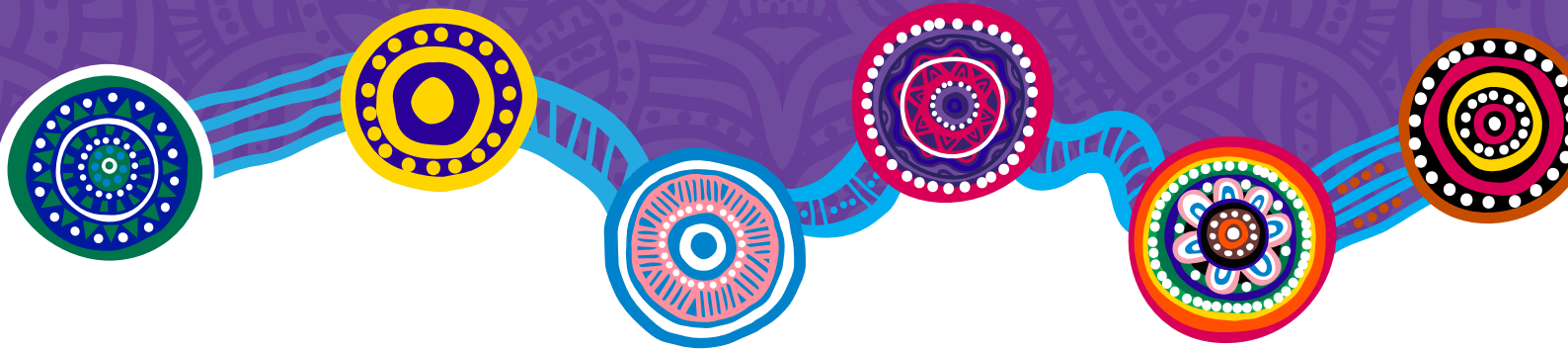
If you are away from country, find a place of safety and comfort in your local area. Another way is printing pictures of your country or looking at photographs that you may have taken or that exists in your family photo album. Look at these photographs and draw comfort and strengthen.

Many LGBTIQ+Sistergirls and Brotherboys return to country for cultural, family and other reasons. The best medicine is returning to country getting to know how your spirit is connected to country, family and community underpinned by kinship structures and relationships.



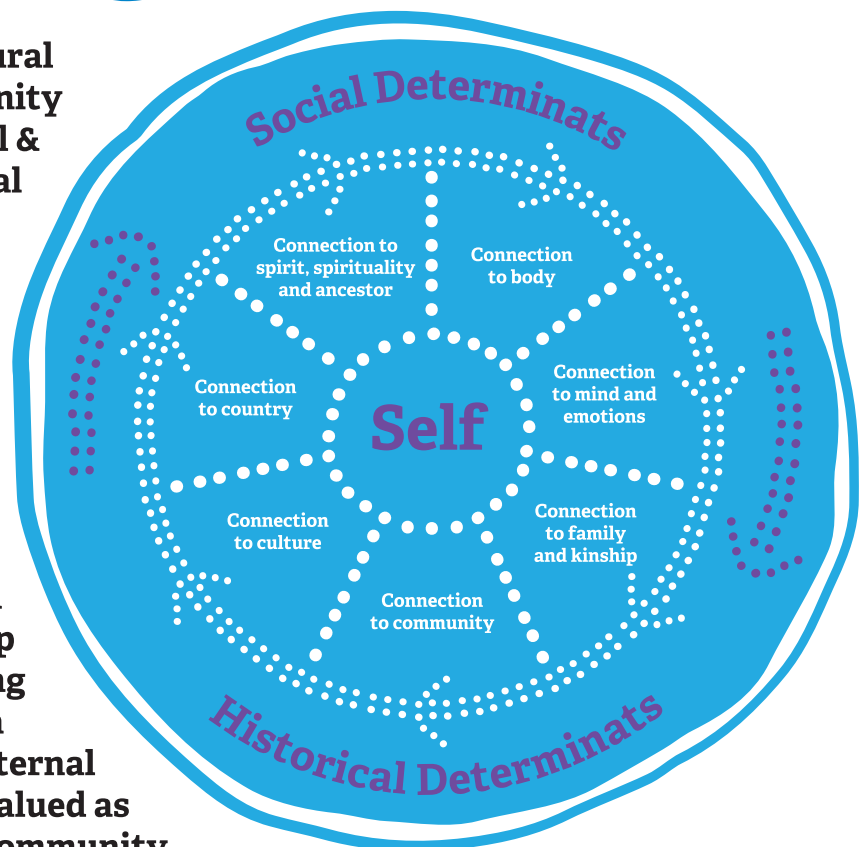
**“You may be away from your country, but your country knows you and this will always stay with you forever”**

# Social & Emotional Well-Being Wheel



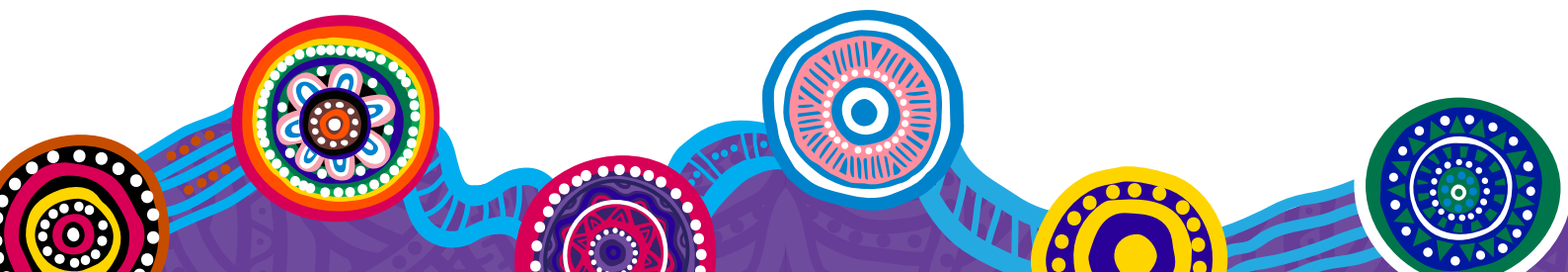
The wheel enhances the cultural model of care. Many community services including Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander medical services are realising the importance of this wheel to support people who are experiencing emotional well-being concerns.

Identity is the way we view ourselves, who we are and what makes us who we are. Developing our identity is an enormous and important step in developing and maintaining positive wellbeing. We gain a sense of identity from our internal sense of self and by feeling valued as a part of a wider group and community.



Sometimes learning who we are can be scary, isolating and difficult. Feeling supported to develop and affirm our identity can have a very real and positive impact on our wellbeing.

For Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander LGBTIQ+ people, having a strong sense of cultural and LGBTIQ+ identity that is respected by the people around them is very important and can help with overcoming barriers and challenges. It's important that all aspects of our identity are supported. There are many components that make us who we are, and all of these deserve the love, attention and support they require.



# Wheel of change in visibility

Yarns Heal project identified that a large majority of support services in the health and well-being areas are not queer blak friendly. Here are ways in which you can help change this



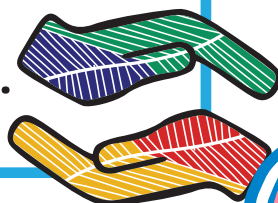
Let the person know that you identify as blak and queer only if you feel comfortable



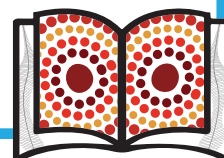
Ask them if they have a LGBTQI+Sistergirl & Brotherboys inclusion policy or ways in which they support blak queer folk



Offer how you could improve the support services from your own experiences (filling out feedback either paper or digital) helps in making the service reshape service support.



If you are having a negative experience, it is your right to make a complaint or write a letter addressed to the CEO or Manager





# First Responders



Supporting a family member or friend when they are experiencing suicidal thoughts would be overwhelming especially in the moment. Here are some very useful tools.

If you are in a yarn with a person who has thoughts of suicide or is self-harming use words of support.



**Do**

- ✓ Be calm and patient with the yarn
- ✓ Listen with your ears and heart
- ✓ Focus on the person and their feelings and experiences
- ✓ Repeat what the person has shared to show the person that you are listening and clearly heard their expressiveness
- ✓ Respect the person's boundaries and preferences for how to talk about what they faced with
- ✓ Ask "are you having thoughts about suicide" or "are you thinking about ending your life"



**Don't do**

- ✗ Dismiss or trivialise the person's concerns or feelings
- ✗ Argue over whether suicide is right or wrong
- ✗ Don't doubt whether the person is suicidal or imply you don't believe them
- ✗ Don't jump to solutions "easy fixer"
- ✗ Use guilt, threats or shame factor
- ✗ Be aware of your language, voice tone and never say in that moment "cheer up or you'll be fine"

**REMEMBER**



If you are concerned and it is after hours, you can call 13yarn or Lifeline and talk to a crisis supporter, you can have a three-way yarn over the phone, and they will help and do a referral over the phone. 13yarn and Lifeline operate 24 hours a day and you can request to yarn with a male or female crisis supporter.









# Support contact information



## If needing support, links to contacts

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-  **Walkern KatatdjIn Rainbow Knowledge website**  
<https://www.rainbowknowledge.org/resources-1>
-  **Deadly Story Cultural Information website**  
[https://deadlystory.com/page/identity/LGBTQIA/Services\\_Organisations](https://deadlystory.com/page/identity/LGBTQIA/Services_Organisations)
-  **Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Community Health Service (ATSICHS) Brisbane, LGBTIQ+ links and resources**  
<https://atsichsbrisbane.org.au/services/wellbeing-health/safe-deadly-places-for-our-lgbtqi-mob/lgbtiq-links-and-resources/>
-  **Walkern KatatdjIn Rainbow Knowledge website**  
<https://www.rainbowknowledge.org/resources-1>
-  **LifeLine Australia**  
<https://www.Lifeline.org.au>
-  **13Yarn First Nations Telephone Crisis Line**  
<https://www.13yarn.org.au>



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