

REVIEW

Working Well Guide: reflections on providing suicide prevention programs in remote Aboriginal communities in Central Australia.

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Researched and compiled by Kristy Schubert

Major contributors: Charles Hodgson, Liz Archer and Laurencia Grant

A report compiled for the We Know Our Strengths Project, a partnership between Waltja Tjukangku Palyapayi Aboriginal Corporation and the Life Promotion Program, Mental Health Association of Central Australia. Funded by the Commonwealth of Australia: National Suicide Prevention Strategy.

Shane Merritt

Aboriginal Consultant

The Australian Child and Adolescent Trauma, Loss and Grief Network

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This is a 103 page report from an Aboriginal Corporation and a Mental Health Association. It is mainly aimed at non-Indigenous workers and those who want to know more about Central Australian Aboriginal communities. The authors describe the 'book' as an 'introductory resource' relating to suicidal behaviour and death by suicide.

It is broken down into sections as follows:

- What is suicidal behaviour?
- Talking about suicide
- Why it's hard for anyone to talk about
- Additional concerns for Central Australian Indigenous people
- Definitions, (definitions of culture, world view, future shock, ethno-centrism, and racism).
- Everything comes from culture (respecting culture)
- Aboriginal people must guide you (listening to the community and valuing Indigenous autonomy and knowledge).
- Having an understanding of history can help you and others
- Don't replace systems that already exist—support them
- Start from strengths, not problems
- Use community development and promote community ownership
- On suicide awareness and intervention training
- Looking after yourself.

A major strength of this report is that it can easily act as a 'how to' guide to people, organisations who want to start a program in an Aboriginal community. It effectively introduces the reader to how important the community is, and how crucial it is to only begin initiatives with community partnership, impetus and ownership.

One part of this guide that resonates is a section with the subheading *"Culture is a strong asset, not an outdated artifact"*. This is on page 34 of the report. "These structures are not outdated artifacts, due for replacement, but contain strong assets—such as organizational structures, education systems and relational understandings—that do their own work to promote health and reduce harm." *"Culture provides meaning, identity and solutions"*. Pg 34.

This guide focuses on interventions with small, remote Aboriginal communities, but it quite transferable as a reference guide for any initiative involving Indigenous people.

It highlights the importance of community strengths, community empowerment, community initiatives, and the importance of drawing on local expertise and guidance. The guide also discusses the importance of respecting each community's diversity.