



Chief Psychiatrist's Community of Practice *Wungen Kartup – Overview, Accessing Us and our Cultural Approach*

Welcome to Country

We begin, by respectfully acknowledging the Whadjuk peoples, traditional custodians of the Noongar Boodja on which we live, work and meet, and recognise that this land was never ceded. We acknowledge the consequence of intervention on First Nations cultural knowledge and wisdom and the ongoing over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in our health, child protection, justice and other systems as a result. We pay our respects to the Elders past and present, their ancestors and their families, and to any Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples present today.

Loren McGowan, Aboriginal Mental Health Worker, Noongar-Yamatji

Welcome

On Reconciliation Week, we acknowledge the strength and resilience of the Stolen Generations people and remember the impact of the government policy and legislation...that led to intergenerational trauma and continues to affect the mental health of Aboriginal families and communities today.

This summary of this session is available on the website of the Office of the Chief Psychiatrist (OCP). Please share the summary with colleagues.

Juliette Stevens, Principal Officer Reviews, OCP

Introduction to Community of Practice

I acknowledge National Reconciliation Week, the key message "Be Brave. Make Change." While Reconciliation Week is an important moment for this presentation, it is also a reminder that discussing cultural security, the need for truth and equity, and how mental health care can be developed with and for Aboriginal people, is a crucial part of the day-to-day work across the sector. As ever, all feedback and ideas for future topics is welcomed.

Dr Emma Crampin, Deputy Chief Psychiatrist

Key Messages

Engaging with Aboriginal people and families starts with yarning; taking the time to get to know each other.

- Building rapport, confidence and trust with health system, other government services and other services or systems that they are involved in is one of the most important steps.
- Building up cultural strength is equally important. Connecting to community, or cultural therapy, or not-for-profit agencies in the community that can provide all sorts of things that we can't.
- We can support returning to country and reconnecting with family. It starts with sharing who we are and where we are from.

An improvement to current access would be to have Aboriginal mental health workers in all hospitals and every mental health space, along with better access to Traditional Healers.

- Access to Aboriginal mental health workers and traditional healers is a challenge across health services despite guidance under the Mental Health Act 2014.
- Wungen Kartup cover the whole metro area and have strong connections to communities and families across the metro area and state. The team travel to find people who have disengaged. Referrers be aware that attending hospital wards quickly is challenging due to high demand for Aboriginal mental health workers.
- The negotiation required between health services can cause delays and reduce access. The cost of Traditional Healers is covered by the referrer.

Use the local council and organisations, which can be outside the health system, to find local Elders to guide connections to the right person and Elders in their community.

- Elders can guide finding the right cultural services, traditional healers, or can conduct a smoking ceremony.
- Connect with Wungen Kartup if you are stuck - and if the person is off country this adds complexity.



A lot of the mob down here are Noongar, but there are a lot of people who are off country in Perth, and it can be hard. If you're already struggling and going through things, it can be more difficult.

When people are on country and surrounded by their family and their mob, we get better outcomes.

Loren McGowan, Aboriginal Mental Health Worker, Noongar-Yamatji

Wungen Kartup Service Overview

- Wungen Kartup means “place of healthy minds”. It is a unique Aboriginal specific service that encompasses clinical and cultural aspects of care.
- The service covers the metro area for NNHS, EMHS and SMHS. There is no clinic - work is community-based.
- There are two different streams:
 - Central: Case management as a multidisciplinary mental health team, with Aboriginal mental health staff.
 - Cultural: Mainstream mental health services case manage, and Wungen Kartup provide cultural support. This is for situations where Wungen Kartup case managing may not be suitable due to risk or not being available out of hours.
- There are 6 Aboriginal Mental Health Workers who work across both streams. There are 19 staff in total, including a program manager, team leader, 1 admin, 2 doctors, 4 nurses, triage officer, 3 social workers.
- It is important that referrers inform the person they are being referred to Wungen Kartup or this can affect the building trust as confidentiality of information in Aboriginal communities is important.
- There is no timeframe for the service as it is guided when the person is well enough and able to be seen by a community clinic or GP. Cultural liaison can continue between the Aboriginal worker and receiving service.
- For more information – including service brochure and referral form – see the [Wungen Kartup website](#).

Mark Booth Clinical Mental Health Nurse, Triage, Wungen Kartup

Connecting with Culture, Connecting with Families, Connecting with Country

- A lot of the work we do as Aboriginal Mental Health Workers is about making that connection and making it culturally secure. It's about building rapport, confidence and trust in the system.
- Most of us know each other or our families, so we make those connections. A lot of the first appointments are yarning about family. Being able to say who you are and where you're from is important in building trust.
- Most of the people we work with have trauma around the health system, it's important to be the lifeline who can explain processes and make the system accessible for people.
- We've been able to re-connect people who have been separated or ostracised from families. Sometimes families are at their wit's end and haven't had mental health support.
- We've been able to connect people with therapy groups, particularly in the Noongar community.
- We've been able to get people back home, on country, and transferred their care.

Loren McGowan, Aboriginal Mental Health Worker, Noongar-Yamatji

