

Nganana Aboriginal Cultural Services



Bringing back Cultural Services to Disability



Did you know the current National Disability Insurance Scheme Price Guide (2022-2023) does not even contain the word “Aboriginal”, “Culture”, or “Indigenous”? As an organisation that supports many Aboriginal people living with disability, we thought it would be of value to address this imbalance and develop some “culturally informed” service types that focus on best practice from an Aboriginal cultural perspective. We have developed several services:

1. Aboriginal Cultural Mentoring
2. Aboriginal Cultural Liaise (Level Two Coordination)
3. Aboriginal Cultural Planning & Assessment
4. Cultural Counselling

two unique service types (**Aboriginal Mentoring** and **Aboriginal Therapeutic Support**) and have contracted a third (**Cultural Counselling**). Essentially these service types have been developed for Aboriginal consumers, delivered by Aboriginal staff.



1. Aboriginal Mentoring

The role of the Aboriginal mentor is twofold:

- (1) to facilitate service delivery between dis-engaged Aboriginal participants and providers of the NDIS,
- (2) to develop an Aboriginal participants cultural identity, including networks with family and community members.

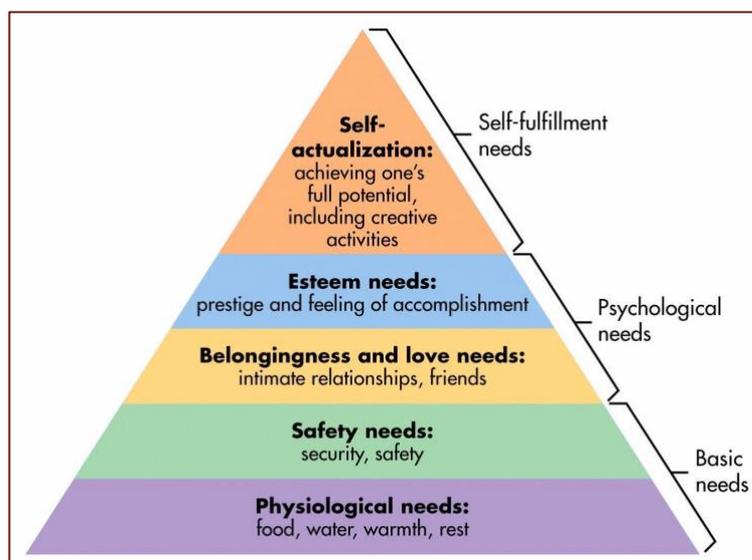
There are many people living with exceptional needs in the community, constantly in and out of disadvantage, drama,

crisis, risk. Fortunately, some are eligible for NDIS services, those with intellectual disabilities and other cognitive impairments that result in them becoming extremely vulnerable in society. The problem is, given their cognitive impairments, vulnerabilities, and constant cycling in and out of crisis, cultural identity and family/community contacts can be fractured or lost. Subsequently Aboriginal participants can become disengaged from their culture, and if they are disengaged from their culture, connection with government stakeholders is tenuous at best, and arguably will never develop to a functional level until cultural connections have first been addressed and work done to restore.

For Aboriginal participants, and especially first nation people living traditionally, connection and building of one's cultural identity including family and community networks is absolutely essential. It includes:

- Building the individual's knowledge of culture,
- Identifying family connections potentially unexplored,
- reconnecting with past family lost through shared intergenerational trauma,
- Identifying and building relationships with family members able to support the individual and adding value to their lives via the creation of more robust informal networks,
- Identifying and building relationships with family members able to support the individual with support at stakeholder meetings and conferences.

Mentoring is so much more than support work. Mentoring is a means of providing an Aboriginal participant living with complex needs with identity, family, advocacy and voice.



1.1 The Essential Nature of Cultural Support

Literature about the social determinants of health is conclusive - cultural connection to family, community and country matters. It has been posited that "culture" occupies a level on the well-known Maslow's hierarchy of needs equivalent with physiological needs, such is its fundamental importance to health and wellbeing. And the

importance of culture in an individual's life includes people living with disability. If an individual's disability prohibits or detrimentally impacts on their ability to develop and maintain social networks and relationships (psychosocial dysfunction), then cultural support services led by Aboriginal Mentoring are considered a reasonable and necessary component of an individual's NDIS plan.

1.2 Reasonable & Necessary – Cultural Support Services

For the NDIS to fund any disability support it must meet eligibility from the perspective of being a logically reasonable support to fund, and be necessary for the individual with disability to achieve their disability related goals and objectives. Some of the criteria for determining reasonable and necessary are listed below:

- (a) the support will assist the participant to pursue their goals, objectives and aspirations included in the participant’s statement of goals and aspirations;
- (b) the support will assist the participant to undertake activities, and facilitate the participant’s social and economic participation;
- (c) the support represents value for money in that the costs of the support are reasonable, relative to both the benefits achieved and the cost of alternative support;
- (d) the support will be, or is likely to be, effective and beneficial for the participant, having regard to current good practice.

Nganana Aboriginal mentors are Aboriginal support staff with professional and lived experience supporting individuals with complex needs. Culturally they facilitate meaningful engagement, and through networking within a participant’s family and cultural networks, pursue goals and objectives, providing opportunity to engage in cultural activities. However more than this, for people living with complex needs the development of a participant’s cultural identity and building of family/community connections can provide the confidence, efficacy and purpose needed to overcome barriers presented by disability and lead to greater independence and wellbeing, as per the purpose of the National Disability Insurance Scheme.

1.3 Structure and Funding for Aboriginal Mentoring

Aboriginal mentoring is funded under the capacity building supports, specifically:

Support Category	Increased social and community participation*.
Item Number	09_006_0106_6_3
Item Name	Life transition planning including mentoring, peer support, and individual skill development.
Structure	Minimum shift is four (4) hours. This time is inclusive of travel and report writing. It also acknowledges time utilised to contact family and community members, document outcomes, and build on the narrative that is the cultural journey embarked by Aboriginal participants living with disability and complex needs. Reports can be distributed at intervals set by relevant stakeholders. Reports include achieved outcomes, family & community connections, risk and wellbeing assessments, any concerns/recommendations for the service.

* **NOTE:** Aboriginal Mentoring is *not* core support work and involves a level of engagement and value adding that is outside the scope of a disability support worker assisting participants with personal care and other activities of daily living. IF there is no or not enough Increased social and

community participation funding in a participant's plan we can use CORE funding short term while the correct funding is being sourced. Core funding "non-contact" will be sourced to cover transport and report writing costs. If funding is utilised from CORE it will be charged at High Intensity Level two.

2. Aboriginal Cultural Liaise

Aboriginal Cultural Liaise is a service type that aligns itself with NDIS level two coordination. It is provided by Aboriginal coordination staff with significant lived and professional experience supporting vulnerable Aboriginal people to connect, network and build capability and independence within their community and society in general.

This is a service type that can be effectively used in conjunction with specialist support coordination, wherein the latter will struggle to engage with a vulnerable Aboriginal participant without the assistance of an Aboriginal level two coordinator who has the necessary ties with the community and understanding of key issues presenting as barriers to service delivery.

Just some of the unique key issues that present as a barrier to engagement for coordination services are:

- Widespread grief and loss; this includes grief about the loss of culture, land, connection, and many, more areas, often connected to the history of invasion.
- Stolen children; the impact of the past Stolen Generations and ongoing removal of children within DCP puts a lot of mental pressure on people, especially when they experience governmental driven services that fail to respond from a cultural perspective.
- Unresolved trauma; trauma is a huge factor in Aboriginal health and a contributing factor for many health conditions. If unresolved, trauma can debilitate a person and be passed on to the next generation.
- Loss of identity and culture; when Aboriginal people are separated from their culture and identity, for example when they do not live on traditional homelands or they do not know where they are from.
- Discrimination and racism; discrimination based on race or culture, as well as racism, can have a huge impact on any person's mental health and wellbeing.
- Few economic opportunities; due to a multiple of factors, many Aboriginal people are economically and socially disadvantaged. If you are constantly stressed about finance or how you are perceived by others, this worry contributes to mental illness.
- Poor physical health; physical health problems contribute to the feeling of inadequacy and exclusion, and some people may subsequently stop socialising or exercising. Twenty three percent of Aboriginal people reported having both a mental health condition and one or more other long-term health conditions.
- Incarceration; being imprisoned has a huge effect on people's mental health and detrimental impact on living independently and living well.

- Culturally inappropriate treatment; especially within health, current government systems are prone to assess Aboriginal people with non-Aboriginal criteria or expose them to culturally insensitive environments.
- Violence; domestic violence, as well as violence in prisons, can present as a significant barrier to independence and wellbeing and contributes to poor mental health.
- Substance abuse; when Aboriginal people misuse substances to ease their inner pain, it can lead to follow-on issues, such as depression and the onset of mental health conditions.

Despite the risk factors, there are also some positive, or protective, factors that help Aboriginal people deal with mental illnesses

- Social connectedness and sense of belonging,
- Connection to land, culture, spirituality, and ancestry,
- Living on or near traditional lands,
- Self-determination,
- Strong Community governance,
- Passing on of cultural practice.

It is these positive protective factors that can be exploited by an Aboriginal Liaise that can be used to offset the barriers detailed above.

2.1 Aboriginal Liaison Rolls

Aboriginal liaise practitioners can assist in the coordination of services for Aboriginal people in a number of meaningful ways:

- Develop a culturally proper engagement strategy that builds trust and understanding between the Aboriginal communities around South Australia and other services.
- Increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people using services that results in positive and productive outcomes.
- Make contacts with and ease engagement with Aboriginal organisations that represents and respects the rights of senior service users, their community and their family.
- Produce a number of targeted resources on the issue of financial abuse, and the stresses, placed on our Aboriginal people by families currently.
- Contribute to the development of education resources about the NDIS, ensuring they are accessible and relevant to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities.
- Travel within South Australia and develop relationships with Aboriginal Families and Communities of Aboriginal NDIS participants.
- Find and fill gaps in community information and understanding about supporting vulnerable people who are NDIS participants with meeting their complex needs in a culturally centred manner.
- Support understanding of cultural obligations including gender approach when supporting participants and their families from a holistically cultural perspective.

2.2 Funding for Aboriginal Cultural Liaise

Aboriginal Therapeutic Support is funded under the capacity building supports, specifically:

Support Category	Capacity Building - Support Coordination
Item Number	07_002_0106_8_3
Item Name	Support Coordination Level 2: Coordination of Supports

3. Cultural Planning & Assessment

Under the National Disability Insurance Scheme every individual with complex needs and support coordination gets help to plan and manage their lives in accordance with the guiding principles of the NDIS. It is important that these principles (some of the most relevant are included below) are acknowledged and included in a participants plan *from a culturally informed perspective*. This is where Cultural Planning & Assessment comes into consideration.

Nganana Inc. is a non-profit organisation with a specialisation in supporting people with high and complex needs, including Aboriginal participants requiring responsive service delivery from a culturally sensitive perspective.

3.1 Cultural Assessment

The Cultural Assessment process takes a participant's life as a cultural person within an Aboriginal context, within immediate family and within their community(ies).

Cultural Assessments incorporate the following areas of a persons life:

1. Family
2. Disability
3. Identity
4. Country / Nation
5. Self Care
6. Family Care
7. Finances
8. Good Supports (formal and informal)
9. Concerns (risk factors)

3.2 Cultural Planning

The Cultural Planning process takes the information above and folds it into a participant's NDIS plan, developing goals and objectives through a cultural lens. An additional narrative can then be formulated that honours cultural norms, needs, opportunities and future directions. A Cultural Plan is broken down into sections:

1. Self Care
2. Family Concerns
3. Financial Considerations
4. My Good Supports
5. Risks

3.3 Funding for Aboriginal Cultural Liaise

Aboriginal Therapeutic Support is funded under the capacity building supports, specifically:

Support Category	Capacity Building - Support Coordination
Item Number	07_002_0106_8_3
Item Name	Support Coordination Level 2: Coordination of Supports
Service Delivery	This support is delivered in an eight-hour block. This includes up to three sessions and a comprehensive report on the indicators above including NDIS goals and objectives.

4. Cultural Counselling

Nganana utilises the services of Mr. Tod Stokes, a Torres Strait Islander man with over 10 years' experience specialising in family violence and working with people of Culture. Tod's practice, Legacy Counselling and Consultancy, works with men supporting them to address issues impacting their lives. Tod is also Regional Director of the Collective Trauma Foundation, an organisation committed to working together to advance the treatment, research, and training in trauma.

Tod can be contacted directly for more information about his service offering.

Tod Stokes

0451 108 060

legacycounselling@gmail.com

<https://www.collectivetraumafoundation>



4.1 Funding for Cultural Counselling

Aboriginal Therapeutic Support is funded under the capacity building supports, specifically:

Support Category	Capacity Building - Improved Daily Living
Support Number	15_043_0128_1_3
Support Name	Counselling
Support Description	Provision to a participant of a support to facilitate self-knowledge, emotional acceptance and growth, and the optimal development of personal resources, to help the participant work towards their personal goals and gain greater insight into their lives.
Service Agreement addendum	Supports to be provided: Counselling. One-hour sessions plus half hour travel per session. Report writing additional by negotiation.