

# ‘THE TRUTH OF OUR STORIES’: A MIXED METHOD EVALUATION OF ELDER AND COMMUNITY-LED CULTURAL TRAINING FOR OUT-OF-HOME CARE AGENCY WORKERS AND NON-INDIGENOUS FOSTER CARERS IN AUSTRALIA

Larissa Jones, Millie Penny, Charmaine Pell, Carol Michie, Alison Walton-Blane, Brad Farrant, Raewyn Mutch, Carrington Shepherd, Sharynne Hamilton

## BACKGROUND AND WHAT WE DID

Truth-telling is emerging as an important approach to healing and for creating a greater awareness and understanding in the non-Indigenous community of the impact of colonisation.

The Elder Co-Researchers, our advisory group members and the out-of-home care research team co-designed a cultural training workshop called ‘The Truth of Our Stories’.

We provided a four-hour truth-telling training session where seven Aboriginal community members shared their historical and contemporary child removal experiences designed to:

1. Assist participants to link historical and contemporary practice.
2. Promote culturally secure ways of working collaboratively with our people and communities.
3. Provide information about cultural activities and resources.

We co-designed a tool to explore participant confidence, knowledge and practices before and after the training.

## OUR FINDINGS

- Participants found authentic story-telling impactful.
- They had greater knowledge and understanding about the historical, cultural and social contexts of child protection practices and its consequences.
- Pre training, foster carers reported higher confidence levels than agency workers engaging with Aboriginal Elders in regional and remote communities.
- Post training, agency workers reported greater increases in confidence for being able to engage with Aboriginal Elders in regional and remote communities.
- Participants reported greater confidence for all elements of the training, with moderate to large gains in knowledge and confidence in many aspects of the training.
- The largest confidence and knowledge gains were related to information provided about Elders, Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation’s and specific cultural resources.
- The Truth of Our Stories cultural training was transformative.

## OUR RECOMMENDATION

We recommend that out-of-home care and mainstream health social and services across Australia, consider co-designing cultural training that incorporates truth-telling with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in which they work.

