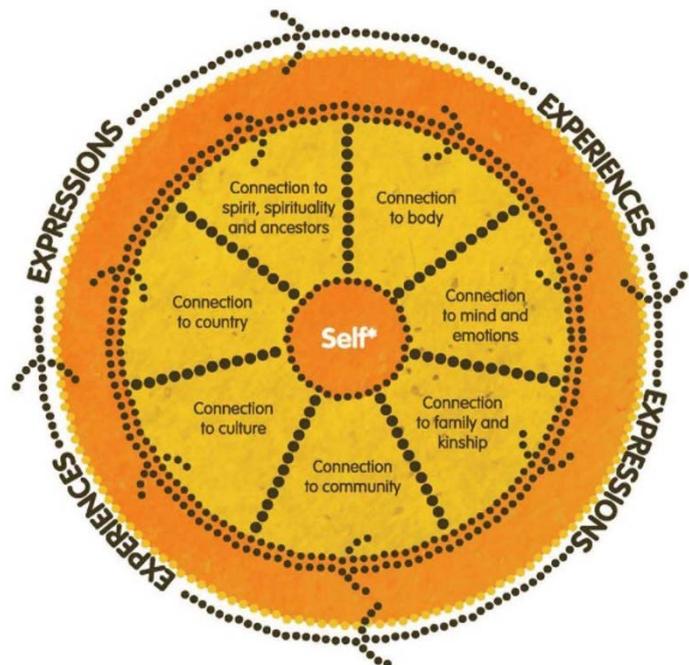


Social and Emotional Wellbeing



Social and emotional wellbeing (SEWB) is a holistic perspective of health which incorporates various elements, including:

- connection to culture
- connection to Country
- connection to spirit, spirituality, and ancestors
- connection to body
- connection to mind and emotions
- connection to family and kinship; and
- connection to community.¹



The social and emotional wellbeing model provides the opportunity to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families to share their histories of connections within their families and communities.



The *National Strategic Framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' Mental Health and Social and Emotional Wellbeing (2017–2023)* provides a dedicated focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander social and emotional wellbeing and mental health. It sets out a comprehensive and culturally appropriate 'stepped care' model that applies equally to both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander specialist and mainstream health services. The nine guiding principles of the framework are as follows:

1. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health is viewed in a holistic context.
2. The right to self-determination.
3. The need for cultural understanding.
4. The impact of history in trauma and loss.
5. Recognition of human rights.
6. Impact of racism and stigma.
7. Recognition of the centrality kinship.
8. Recognition of cultural diversity.
9. Recognition of Aboriginal strengths.²

For children and young people, the SEWB approach ensures healthy growth and development, from birth to 18 years and throughout adulthood.

All children are vulnerable, but given the context for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children – the prevalence of disadvantage, gaps in education, life expectancy and reaching their full potential in a whole range of life domains – they are, unfortunately, more at risk.

The place and care of children in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures is central to family, Community and cultural life. Kinship relationships, systems, and processes within communities 'grow children up' to understand and contribute to all aspects of life.

A child's sense of safety is created by family and Community, and it is a responsibility shared by both. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples invest in children to continue traditions, customs and stories.

Connection to Land; spirituality and ancestry; kinship; and cultural continuity are all important protective factors and sources of resilience, strength and healing for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who are experiencing problems.³

References

1. Dudgeon, P., Rickwood, D., Garvey, D., & Gridley, H. (2014). A history of indigenous psychology. In P. Dudgeon, H. Milroy & R. Walker (Eds.) *Working together: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mental health and wellbeing principles and practice*, (2). (pp. 39–54). Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia.
 2. Australian Health Ministers' Advisory Council. (2017). *National strategic framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' mental health and social and emotional wellbeing (2017–2023)*. Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia. [Available here](#).
 3. Zubrick, S. R., Shepherd, C. C. J., Dudgeon, P., Gee, G., Paradies, Y., Scrine, C., & Walker, R. (2014). Social determinants of social and emotional wellbeing. In P. Dudgeon, H. Milroy & R. Walker (Eds.) *Working together: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mental health and wellbeing principles and practice*, (2). (pp. 93–112). Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia.
- 