

Bridging the divide: A study of cross-cultural collaboration in the development and delivery of cancer services with and for Aboriginal people



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Presentation outline

Research context – Working Together project

Research question and process

Research participants

Research findings

Aboriginal Health & Cancer Services – Working Together (2008-2014)

Aim: Develop accessible, culturally appropriate & secure health services for Aboriginal people who have cancer (rural/regional NSW)

Funding: Cancer Institute, NSW; Cancer Australia

Project activities:

- ongoing community consultation and feedback
- cross-cultural training for cancer staff
- education about cancer for Aboriginal staff
- cross-cultural peer group discussions and working groups established

Aboriginal Health & Cancer Services – Working Together (2008-2014)

Outcomes - snapshot

- Numbers of eligible Aboriginal woman attending breast screening has increased exponentially
- People attending screening have become strong advocates for screening.
- Larger project have seeded local ideas and initiatives more broadly.
 - Aboriginal Men's DVD
 - Out in the Open (women)
 - Cancer Camp
 - Yuin Yarning
 - Yarning along the Murray

Research Question

How did the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal health staff who participated in the Aboriginal Health and Cancer Services - Working Together project understand and experience collaboration?

Research Process

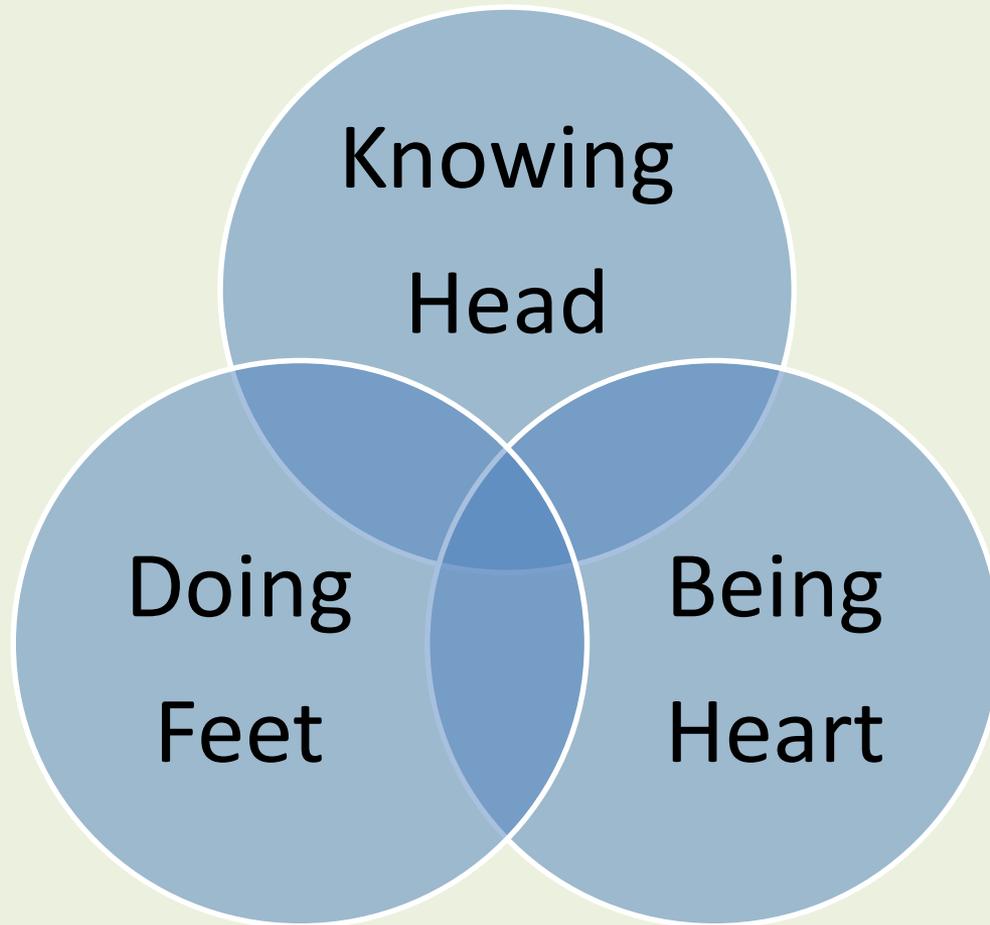
- Qualitative study
- Sampling - purposive and inclusive
- Individual and focus group interviews
- Thematic data analysis
- Aboriginal reference group
- Ethics approval

Research Participants

Participants – 41 TOTAL	Agencies	Roles	Interview locations
20 Aboriginal workers	M&SNSW LHDs Aboriginal Health AMS services Medicare Local Lands Council	Elder Managers/Team Leaders AHO/AHEOs Bringing them Home Worker CEO	Albury Wodonga Goulburn Griffith Gundagai Moruya Narrandera Queanbeyan Wagga Wagga Wallaga Lake
21 Non-Indigenous workers	M&SNSW LHDs AWH Cancer Council	OSWs BCNs CCCs Managers Doctor	Albury Wodonga Bega Goulburn Griffith Moruya Narrandera Wagga Wagga

Conceptual Framework

Creating spaces for new relationships



“Did we ever talk?”

Collaboration is: not coming to the table with your own agenda

“Some people might say that collaboration is if you wrote half a paper and I wrote half a paper, and we married them up, that we collaborated on that paper. But did we ever talk?”

“Knowing whose house you are in”

(Knowing - Head)

Well okay, you're saying that you want to engage with us as Indigenous peoples. Then who are 'us' in your mind and what have you done to - in the coming half-way to meet us? Do you know who 'we' are as a people in this local community, in this region, our language group?

“Knowing whose house you are in”

(Knowing - Head)

“Being Aboriginal doesn’t make it right for you to go and tell other people in their country what they should be doing. You do the same stuff. You get introduced; you do the same work with Elders backwards and forwards. Having a presence there and gaining respect and trust and talking to people” (Aboriginal worker)

“Knowing whose house you are in”



“Knowing whose house you are in”



“Sowing the seeds”

(Knowing - Head)

“Who they are, where they come from, and what they do in life, what their family does, same as what’s in our culture, I would like to know their history” (Aboriginal Elder)

“Knowing whose house you are in”

(Head)

“To be able to put my strengths forward ... responsibility and pressure for me to do the right thing. Layers of consultation, layers of responsibility” (Aboriginal worker)

“Providing evidence is a non-Indigenous thing. It would be expected in the dominant society to see that evidence” (Aboriginal worker)

Listening



“Coming to the table”

(Doing - Feet)

“Consultation is tokenism. With this project there are equal partners, information is available there is honesty about the work being undertaken” (Aboriginal worker)

“Getting runs on the board is really important in terms of just showing up to things” (non-Aboriginal worker)

“Find someone that will hold the door open” (Aboriginal worker)

You “need to link in with them, but you need to somehow make that happen yourself” (non-Aboriginal worker)

“Slowly, slowly, gently, gently”

(Doing - Feet)

Time – 6 months to 3-4 years

- Fishing – *“we’re also sussing you out”*
- Silence – *“is them finding out what you’re like. Getting a little bite every now and again ... reeling in ... it’s that body language and what you’re saying or not saying anything but we’re taking it in”*
- *“You’re in the boat by yourself and waiting for people to come along and say “hey let’s continue where we stopped off””*
- *“Here they come again”*

“Getting over fear”

(Being - Heart)

We “have to be brave enough to take on something different too” (Aboriginal worker)

“Saying to a non-Aboriginal colleague “we’re here, we’re right by your side” (Aboriginal worker)

“step outside your comfort zone and have a bit of a go” (non-Aboriginal worker)

‘Find someone who will hold the door open” (Aboriginal worker)

“admitting that your’re lost...its made it OK to not necessarily always get the squeaky clean outcome that everyone wants” (non-Aboriginal worker)

Getting over fear



“Breaking down hierarchies and barriers”

(Being – heart)

- **Respect:** *“In the spirit of collaboration around that table everybody is equal” (Aboriginal worker)*
- **Listening:** *“You’ve got 2 ears and 1 mouth” (Aboriginal worker)*
- **Transparency:** *If you can’t do what you’d hoped or planned to do, “explain it” ... “it empowers people and they can see that they are integral to the project, that they’re important in what they have to say” (Aboriginal worker)*

“The hat gets bigger”

(Head, Feet, Heart)

“The more you build the relationship, the expectations of community increase, and not something you can walk away from”

Relationship building

- Willingness to learn from and through collaboration
- Developmental - ideas and solutions and capacity can only evolve through collaborative process and relationships
- Not knowing what this is going to look like until we get together and find out what 'this' can be

Engaging in Cross-Cultural Collaboration

Requires workers & managers to:

Advocate effectiveness of this way of working

- Managerial support is critical - *“It’s very, very handy to have a high level person in the meeting ... they (workers) see there’s this big brick wall, whereas we can just cut straight through that”*
- *“Its about bringing the executive along – need to get out into the community with some of our team”*

Collaboration

“Non-Aboriginal organisations often say “ we want to work with you, are you in or out” instead of we want to work with you, how can we do that?” (Aboriginal worker)

“This acknowledges that community has skills. It opens the door for some influence at the very beginning. It happened in the Working Together project.” (Aboriginal worker)

Collaboration

(Aboriginal & non-Aboriginal, managerial, multi-disciplinary, government & non-government, public & private)



Tensions in Collaboration

- To collaborate is to invite argument – *“you have to have those arguments to get to the next step”*
- A new way of delivering services
- Lack of confidence
- People have to support one another
- Role-modelling
- Recognise territorial tensions
- Takes different ways of working on both sides – making available the space to evolve

Outcome=Transformative Practices

Integration of cross-cultural collaboration into service delivery means families are more likely to access services- leading to improved health outcomes

2 steps forward, 1 step backwards – being in it for the long haul makes the difference

Creation of new overlapping spaces (head, feet, heart) builds knowledge and skills for Aboriginal & non-Aboriginal workers

Forever changes our world view and professional practice

“There is no end date”

Outcome=Transformative Practices

“I stood in the car park and patted dogs and you know talked to a few people. But it ‘s all part of the visibility and for people to kind of get used to you.....and out of that my contact with (S – Aboriginal community worker) arose, but for us it is such a different way of working” (Non-Aboriginal worker)

“Professionally it’s made me feel more at peace that I can’t always – I won’t always – that it’s okay to say ‘I don’t know’ with other professionals and its okay to go back to the real basics with the Aboriginal liaison officers and saying “What’s the best way to approach this?”(Non-Aboriginal worker)

“No matter the weight of history, you need to allow the simple heart based stuff of relating”

