

# Matung Kunarr

## Matung Wannay Practice Framework

Matung Wannay means “Courageous Children” in local Wonnarua language, the traditional land owners of the Hunter Valley.



**Matung  
Kunarr**

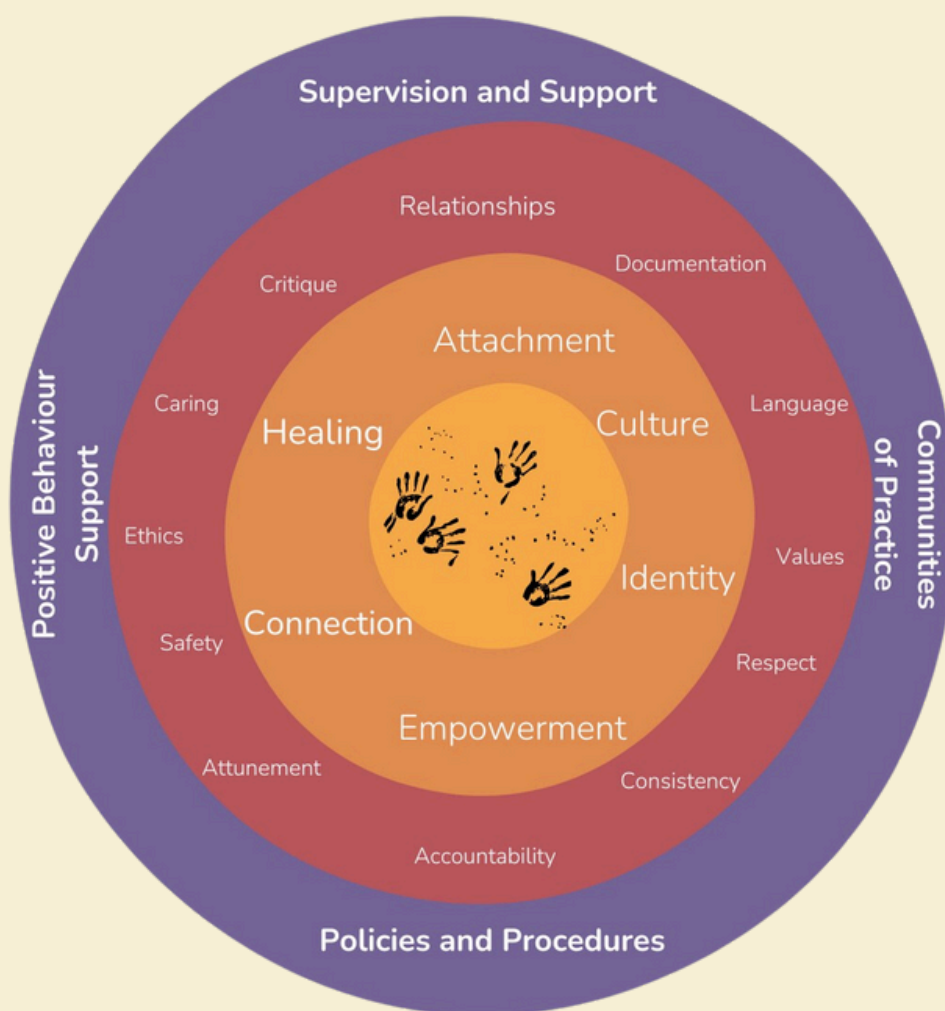
# Matung Wannay Practice Framework

## An Introduction

The Matung Wannay model of care is based on building trusting and safe attachments and connections that are trauma informed, culturally safe, evidence-based and strongly align with our values and mission statement, policies, procedures, and practices. The model is committed to supporting our 'courageous children' to be strong in self, community, culture, and country. Matung Kunarr Therapeutic programs aims to respond effectively to supporting the individuals' needs and complexities and ensuring that we remain person centred across their care journey and achieve their goals into the future.

The Matung Wannay model of care places the child or young person, their family and kin at the centre of the decision-making process which aims to empower them to have input over decisions affecting and impacting their lives. The Matung Wannay model of care is founded in the knowledge that family is culture, and families, kinship groups and communities are integral to healing from trauma for current and future generations.

Matung Kunarr acknowledges that there are important familial, communal and cultural roles that are required to support children and young people in our care. The Matung Wannay practice framework works closely with individuals, their family and communities to develop an understanding of their specific needs and wants and to develop culturally appropriate relationships within community to provide lifelong, safe and empowering relationships to contribute to a sense of connection, community and identity.



# Matung Wannay Practice Framework

The five essential components

## Our core pillars

which underpin  
all of our  
practice

## Our values, beliefs & practice foundations

which guide why we  
practice in this way

## Our phases of care

including how we  
build relationships for  
healing and achieving  
future goals

## Our systems & processes

which guide how we  
practice in this way

## Our evidence based practice approaches & tools

which allow us to  
bring this to  
everyday practice

## Background of the Pillar:

Attachment is essential to all relationships, interactions and engagement. When we don't feel safe or feel like there are people around us that can't care for us or meet our needs, it impacts on our ability to learn new things and develop new skills. When we have people around us that we know care for us, that love us, and that meet all our needs, we are able to focus our energy on healing, learning new skills and achieving our future goals.

Matung Wannay's foundation of attachment is centred in the evidence-based practice of building trusting, safe, positive and culturally appropriate attachments with those that we support and their extended networks. This includes matching each individual person we support with a consistent (family like) care team that meets their needs, they feel safe and comfortable with, and that promotes their health and wellbeing.

To build on positive attachment, there are 3 main areas:

**Consistency:** Consistency, routine and structure allow for individuals to feel a sense of predictability and control over their lives, environment and relationships. For individuals who have experienced many changes in their life, including enduring adverse stress, being provided with a consistent routine, structure and care team allows the ability to feel more secure, knowing what to expect in their everyday environment.

For many children living in out of home care programs, they have experienced many different living environments and many different people that may have come into their lives and left their lives. The Matung Wannay practice framework focuses on having consistent, stable teams of people that support the children that we support. This allows the individuals we support and their families to build a relationship over time with the workers, including developing a sense of trust, comfort and safety. It also means that the individuals we support, and their families do not have to continue re-telling their story, and can focus on future goals, rather than past experience.

**Attunement:** Attunement is how we react to another person. It is the process of learning and understanding the emotions, thoughts and feelings of another, while being able to produce a response in a way that aligns with connection.

Dr. Dan Siegel says, "When we attune with others we allow our own internal state to shift, to come to resonate with the inner world of another. This resonance is at the heart of the important sense of "feeling felt" that emerges in close relationships. Children need attunement to feel secure and to develop well, and throughout our lives we need attunement to feel close and connected."

Attunement is important under the Matung Wannay framework. When we can build attunement to those we support, we are able to develop trusting supportive relationships where we understand their needs and can respond to this in a way which makes them feel loved, supported, cared for, and understood. Through attunement, we can begin to heal from past experiences.

**Trauma informed care:** Trauma informed care is understanding a person's past experience and their needs and wants, providing care that aligns with meeting these needs and wants and supporting them to heal through their past experiences. Through Matung Wannay, trauma informed care is provided through our positive behaviour support framework, where individual support plans are provided to care teams around the best way to support individuals for their needs. This also includes regular and ongoing training on positive behaviour support strategies and evidence-based trauma informed care practice.

## How will this be evidenced in practice:

- Individualised placement matching based on the needs of the child or young person
- Adherence to the Placement Principles
- Stable and consistent care teams matched to the child or young person, including maximising stable and ongoing rosters, and limiting new people or changes into established care teams
- Ensuring care teams reflect the child or young person's culture and kinships systems through the inclusion of support staff connected to their community of origin (where possible) and incorporating aunty and uncle positions in the care teams
- Individualised case plans, cultural plans and positive behaviour support plans available for each program to ensure consistency of care for the child or young person
- Allocation of a key support person (not connected to the child/young person's day to day care) that supports the child to communicate their specific needs to the care team and to provide feedback on their care experience
- Ongoing training and development in trauma informed care, attachment and attunement for Matung Kunarr staff members
- Children and young people will report feeling safe, supported and cared for
- Access to family genograms and eco-maps of people that are important to them
- Regular time spent with people they love and are attached too

## Background of the Pillar:

Culture is ever present and is who we are. Matung Wannay is centred in the foundation that family, community and Country is culture.

Our culture is everything, who we are, who is around us, and how we interact with the world we live in. When we are disconnected from our culture, it has impact on our identity and all aspects of life.

Through the Matung Wannay framework it is identified that at the centre of our practice is family, community and extended networks to ensure that culture is part of our practice. While at times we may work with children and young people who are not living with their family, community or kinship groups, it is our responsibility to ensure that they are inherently connected to these people. It is important, where safe, that these people are involved in all decisions for the individual to ensure that they are living their culture.

This is completed through shared decision making with family, kin and community. This includes case, cultural and behaviour support planning, goal setting, family time and everyday activities. This is also embedded in our practice through a commitment to complete family finding, undertaking family time and working with families and kinship groups where possible to promote safe, lifelong connections to the children we support.

Through our framework our work extends beyond the individual we are supporting and includes the entire community around that individual to ensure lifelong connection to their people, who they are, their values, beliefs and ways of life. This ensures that they hold the knowledge of their community and their ancestors, and that they can pass this information on to their future generations. This commitment extends to ensuring that the home and living environment actively reflects the culture and customs of the child or young person by mirroring the cultural aspects of their family home environment in their current home and living environment. For example, through inclusion of familiar foods, daily rhythms, home furnishings and the people they share their environment with.

It is important to acknowledge that we are not the experts in culture, it is the family and extended networks of a child or young person whose role it is to provide this knowledge and connection. It is our responsibility to facilitate this.

Matung Wannay also takes into consideration the importance of gender roles in different cultures, specifically the role of Men's and Women's business in Aboriginal communities. Matung Wannay seeks to ensure that culturally appropriate relationships are formed, allowing for appropriate information and knowledge to be shared with those we support in a way that is customary and specific to the needs of the individual, their family and their community.



Connection is a further central element to our practice framework. It speaks of the connection with our body, our environment, our family, kin, and community, our land and water on Country, our views and beliefs, and our biological, psychological and social health. When we are connected to ourselves, our health and our environment, we experience holistic well-being and have networks of support that can be drawn on for the future. We aim to set all those we support up with this connection across their lives.

Matung Wannay practices through the Social and Emotional Wellbeing Wheel as a guide to the importance of connection to wellbeing.



© Gee, Dudgeon, Schultz, Hart and Kelly, 2013

[The National Strategic Framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' Mental Health and Social and Emotional Wellbeing 2017-23](#)

## How will this be evidenced in practice:

- Children of Aboriginal or Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds have a meaningful cultural plan developed with family, which is reviewed regularly with family
- Family and significant others are invited and supported to attend all relevant care team meetings and have input into decision making
- Children and young people are connected to culturally appropriate people to learn about their history, heritage, and culture to ensure meaningful implementation of their cultural plan
- There will be consideration of culture in everyday care, including the home environment and care planning
- Every child or young person will have a formal plan for seeing their family, friends and significant others on a regular basis in a way that supports the building of natural positive relationships with family and kin. The plan will be implemented in the least restrictive, yet safe manner

## Background to the pillar:

The Matung Wannay framework is built on the foundational value of empowerment of those we support and their families and community. At the centre of our practice is the voice and needs of the individuals we support. This engagement is enacted at every level of the organisation, where the individual's voice should always be considered. Children and young people should always be part of decision making and discussions that involve them or have an impact on their life.

When we centre empowerment of those that we support, we also support and encourage self-determination for individuals that align with their own views, wants and needs, and allows the opportunity to support them to make decisions on what is important to them.

For those that have experienced control being taken from them in the past particularly through a traumatic experience, being handed power to make decisions and be involved in decision making processes about themselves is an empowering process. The process brings with it the ability to have their voice heard but also aligns with their right to self-determination and creates feelings of safety, control and comfort.

The Matung Wannay practice framework also acknowledges that many families that are engaged in the child protection and community services sector feel that they have lost their voice and have lost a level of power and control over decisions that impact on their lives. The Matung Wannay approach to empowerment encapsulates the entire family, community and individual in providing input and assisting in decision making in all that impacts their life.

This is embedded in practice through, where appropriate, the individual being at the centre of case and cultural plan meetings; house and care team meetings; and behaviour support processes. Their views, beliefs, needs and wants will be paramount to the service that they receive, and to the decisions that are made.

## How will this be evidenced in practice:

- The child or young person will always be involved in decision making or discussions about things that impact on them
- Documentation will always be written in a way that is child-focused, and seeks to share the views, wishes and wants of the child and their best interest
- All family members, extended kinship groups, and relevant community members that care for the child or young person will be invited to meetings and discussions about the child or young person, and their input will be gathered for all decision making
- The views of the child or young person will always be discussed during home visits, safety planning, case planning, cultural planning or decision making
- All family, kin and significant others will be identified in the section 149b-assessment and will be provided section 163 progress updates



### Background of the Pillar:

The questions 'who am I' and 'where do I belong' are big, important questions. For those that have experienced a number of adverse circumstances in life these questions are further compounded by breakdowns in relationships; intergenerational trauma and conflict; and changes to their living environment and the people caring for them.

The Matung Wannay framework focuses on identity, connection and belonging as essential elements of the support that we provide to those in our care. This relates to both identity and connection to family, culture and community, as well as friendship groups, hobbies, sports and other areas of interest. Ensuring that those we support have extensive networks of support in the community and have a strong sense of who they are, what they like, what they believe in, and their goals is integral to the pillar of identity.

The Matung Wannay practice framework aims to set up those we support with lifelong connections of people around them that are able to provide natural support, care, love and assistance into the future. This is done by connecting those we support with their community, family, friends and those involved in their areas of interest. Matung Kunarr seeks to work alongside those we support to develop a strong sense of self, a positive self-image, and a strong connection to who they are, where they came from, their ancestors, their history and their future.

This is achieved by listening to their voice, and ensuring that they are provided with a broad range of learning experiences, new environments and social groups to try new things in. It is also achieved by ensuring that they are living on and connected to their community of belonging, and have knowledge of their family history, culture and heritage.

### How will this be evidenced in practice:

- Children and young people will have an active 'Shared Stories' resource to ensure their story is held and protected by the adults around them. This resource is actively built on over their care and support journey
- Children and young people will have meaningful plans that include actions allowing them to maintain important connections, explore new things, meet new people, and learn more of their likes and dislikes
- Children and young people will be supported to experience friendships and activities, such as sleepovers with friends, excursions, and days out with peers and friends
- All children and young people will have a weekly activity and menu plan that they develop based on their needs and wants. This will be followed by each member of the care team each week
- During the regular home visits with young people, they will have the opportunity to talk 1:1 with their caseworker about their likes and dislikes, what is working well, and what they think could be better. The responses will be recorded in the home visit documentation
- Children set their room and house up as they like it, making the environment feel like home

# Practice Foundations

## Culture

is ever-present. Culture impacts on every interaction that we have, and our own culture impacts the way we see the world and interpret information. Self-reflect on your own views, beliefs and attitudes, and be mindful of the impact of culture on practice.

## Language

impacts on practice. The way we communicate, both verbally and non-verbally has an impact. Communication should be strengths based, articulate, and used as a tool that brings respect and dignity. Conversations should be clear and direct, allowing people to understand what is being communicated and supports the sharing of responsibility and problem solving.

## Critique

leads to improved practice. Welcome critique, and openly seek feedback and critical analysis from colleagues, those we work with, and from yourself. By welcoming feedback and critique, we allow ourselves and others to grow, learn and develop for the future.

## Relationships

create change and restore dignity. Relationships are built on shared understanding, respect and trust. Develop relationships where we can be transparent, kind and solutions focused for the future.

## Documentation

is pivotal to practice. We have the responsibility of documenting the stories and life of those we support, and all of their experiences. Write documentation with the knowledge that the young person and their family will be reading this in the future to make sense of their life, the decisions that were made and why those decisions were made. Write truthfully, but in a strength's based way. Document all practice in an accurate and timely way so that there are not gaps in an individual's life story.

## Communities of Practice

are essential for continuous improvement. Communities of practice allow for teams to come together to learn from each other and strive to continue learning and growing for the benefit of themselves and those they support now and into the future.

## Ethics & Values

are integral to good practice. Living through our values and having professional courage to stand up for what is right and in the best interests of those we support is at the centre of quality practice.

## Positive Behaviour Support

is organisation wide, and is part of everyday practice. Focus is always on working with those we support to encourage and support positive behaviour and self-regulation in a way that reduces harm, and promotes future ability for the individual. Positive behaviour support is built into all we do, and takes into account trauma-informed practice to supporting the independent skills of children and young people in regulating their emotion and behaviour in the future.

## Supervision & Support

is part of regular practice, providing the opportunity for support, professional development, and practice improvement through structured supervision and support mechanisms. That there are not gaps in an individual's life story.

## Policy & Procedure

is in place to ensure that the rights of all individuals are upheld, and consistent quality service provision is provided.

# Our Values



## Caring

Caring is listening to others without judgement. We show that We Care with thoughtful acts, kind words and always acting in a culturally respectful way. We look out for each other and notice how others feel and what they need. When We Care for ourselves and others, we act in ways that support our safety, health and wellbeing. When We Care for ourselves, we have more to give to others.



## Accountability

Accountability is delivering on what we say we will do and taking responsibility for the outcomes of our choices, even when we make a mistake. With accountability people can rely on and trust us, because we deliver on our word and are answerable for our actions. We give our best to whatever we undertake.



## Respect

Respect is an attitude of honouring ourselves and others as people of value. We Care for each person's dignity and all individuals right to feel valued. Everyone has the right to expect respect. We show respect in the courtesy of our words, the tone of our voice and through our actions. When we treat others as we would like to be treated, we raise the level of trust and peace in our relationships.



## Empowerment

Honouring voice, choice and identity enables people to be leaders in their own story.

We support empowerment when we listen without judgment so others can speak up about what is important to them, voice their ideas and concerns and participate as equal partners in decisions that affect them. We assist others to see and access options available to them. When we enable choice for others we support their right to pursue their goals and determine what is in their own best interest. When we appreciate each individual, we honour and respect their unique identity.



## Safety

Safety is recognising and acting on our individual and collective responsibility to care for our participants, each other and ourselves. We pay full attention to the safe delivery of our services and strive for excellence in delivering best practice care at all times. We are thorough and careful. We give 100% to creating and maintaining a safe environment that supports the physical and psychological wellbeing of all. We welcome feedback and respond quickly and effectively to maintain our safety culture. We apply our individual and collective learning to living the principle, of I Care, You Care We Care.

# Phases of Care

At Matung Kunarr our goal is to match our participants with a staff member that will meet the four fundamental elements of our Model of Care:

## Relationship Building

centres on trust and safe and meaningful connection. These are the main components required to build any relationships and are vital for participants' positive growth and development.

## Connection

we all know how it feels when we really connect with someone, that feeling that they see and get the real 'us'.

Connection with others makes change and growth easier as you can be who you are without fear of judgement.

## Engagement

we all feel safe, supported and confident in working towards goals which are individual and based on the life our participants want to live. Participants, their friends and family, and those that support them are actively involved in their care and goal setting.

## Therapeutic Care

comes from a place that understands how traumas impacts us. It recognises that trauma is the impression of an experience on a person, rather than the event itself. Providing Therapeutic Care is holistic, individual, and promotes personal change in thoughts, emotional functioning and behaviour.

The height of importance at Matung Kunarr, being an Aboriginal owned, operated and dedicated supplier of care, is to be culturally sensitive and responsive. All while recognising the trauma of separation, addressing intergenerational trauma and promoting healing.

To strengthen our Model of Care we provide three areas of training to our staff:

- Therapeutic Crisis Intervention (TCI) - is evidence-based and trauma-informed. TCI is responding effectively to crisis situations and establishing a safe environment that promotes growth and development.
- Cultural Respect – recognition, protection and continued advancement of inherent rights, cultures and traditions. It is treating all people with respect, inclusion and putting in place transparent management and safety and health practices.
- Positive Behaviour Support – is strongly focused on understanding, choice and improving the quality of life. Our programs and plans are as individual as you are.

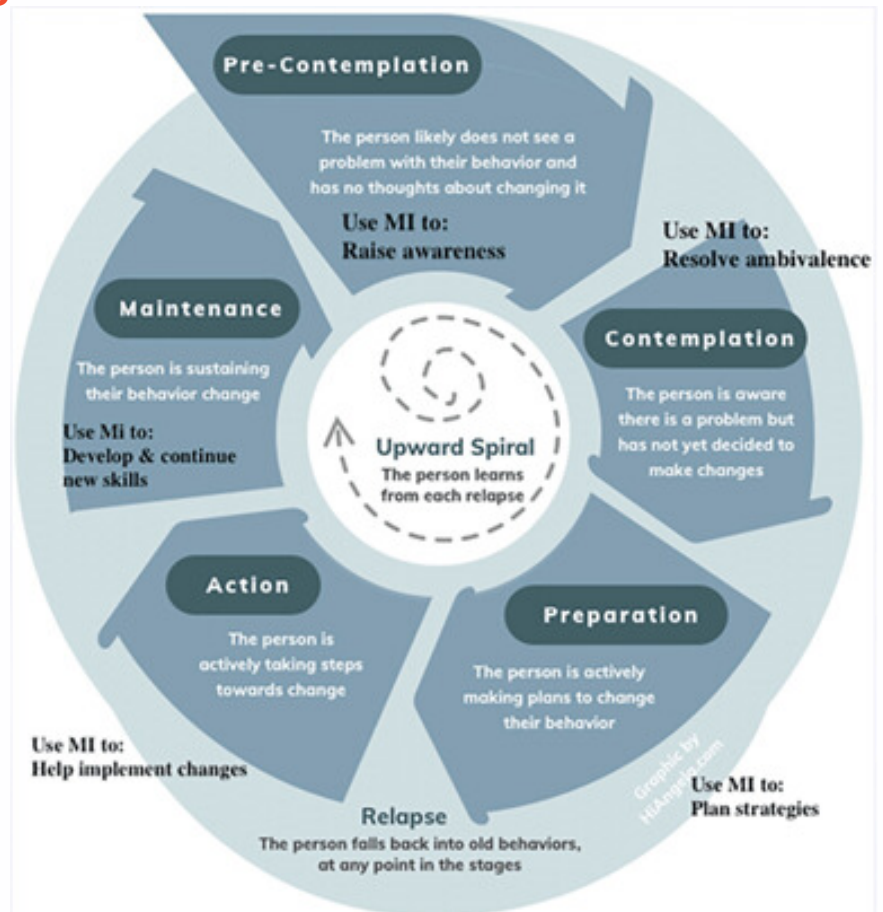


# Practice Tools

## Motivational Interviewing

Motivational interviewing is an approach to working with individuals, families and communities who are at different stages of changing patterns of behaviour. Motivational interviewing is used to support individuals to find positive motivation that drives positive change in their life, and has positive impacts for their being. Motivational interviewing is about finding the innate reasons that people want to make change in their life, and drawing on this to support positive change.

The first step in Motivational Interviewing is understanding where people are on the change cycle, in accordance with the diagram on the right.



Beckwith, Vickie & Beckwith, Jennifer. (2020). Motivational Interviewing: A Communication Tool to Promote Positive Behavior Change and Optimal Health Outcomes. NASN School Nurse. 35.

<b>O</b>	<b>OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS</b> Start by asking questions to which a simple "yes" or "no" answer is unlikely.
<b>A</b>	<b>AFFIRMATION</b> Respond with positive commentary on what they're saying or proposing.
<b>R</b>	<b>REFLECTION</b> Confirm the emotion they're expressing to help engage with it.
<b>S</b>	<b>SUMMARIZING</b> Gather positive aspects of what they're saying and summarize back to them — "So here's what I'm hearing." Move on to another open-ended question.

Motivational Interviewing also includes the way we communicate with those we support to elicit change, using the OARS method:

- Open-ended questions
- Affirmation
- Reflection
- Summarising

# Practice Tools

## Strengths-based practice

Strengths-based practice focuses on individuals right to self-determination and a focus on their strengths and resilience as motivators for empowering positive change and action. Strengths-based approach focuses on collaborative relationships, rather than practitioner led relationships, where the practice is led by the individual to share what their goals and challenges are, and are empowered to draw on their strengths to problem solve and achieve these goals.

Supporting individuals who may have experienced adverse childhood experiences or complex stress, it is central to our work to focus on the strengths, resilience and experience of those we support to ensure that we are identifying and acknowledging the strength and knowledge that are intrinsic to their identity and experience.

Under the Matung Wannay practice framework, we are encouraged to express the pride, care and acknowledgement we have for the strengths and courage that those we support hold, and their actions that have led them through life.

For example: If a young person is to experience big emotions, which leads to them throwing their phone and damaging a wall, but then is to come back later and apologise for the situation, a strengths-based approach would be to share how proud and happy we are that they have come and apologised and expressed their feelings in a verbal way. We could then use this strength to start a conversation about how we may be able to use this strength to regulate our emotions without throwing our phone in the future. This may look like a statement such as 'Hey I know how good you are at managing your emotions and speaking to them, what do you think we can do next time when you are feeling upset?'

## Shared decision making

The child protection and disability sector can be a complex space to work in. Often there is complex risk, individual needs and a certain level of support that needs to be provided to ensure that the needs and wants of those we support are met in ways that ensure their safety, health and the achievements of set goals are met.

Shared-decision making is integral in this space, as it allows for collaboration from relevant stakeholders around input into and assistance with problem solving. It involves sharing risk in a way that allows for challenges and decisions to be reflected on and considered from many different perspectives, therefore be more likely to have a positive impact in the future. The Matung Wannay practice framework acknowledges that multiple perspectives and input into decision making often means more considered and thorough decisions being made for individuals. It also means that all stakeholders, including professionals, family, and the individual themselves have input into decisions that impact on their life.

Ensuring openness and transparency about the progress of decisions with children and young people about the progress of decisions is essential. Regardless of whether it is possible or unfeasible to support the wishes of the child or young person it is important to honour their voice through our actions and follow through with decisions made.



# Practice Tools

## Family-centred practice

In our practice, we often work with children and young people who are not currently living with family, kin or loved ones. While this may be the case, family will always be family, and play an integral role in decision making, identity, culture, and connection for those we support.

In out of home care specifically, we have learnt from past practice as outlined in the 'Bringing Them Home Report', and the 'Family is Culture Review' which clearly highlights the significant negative impact of the separation of children from families, and systematic disconnection of families and communities in the past. Under the Matung Wannay practice framework we acknowledge that family must be at the centre of decision making and be involved in all discussions that impact on their loved one's life. While they may not care for their family members on a day-to-day basis, they hold the knowledge, history, culture, values and beliefs of that individual, and must be empowered to allow their continued relationship and role into the future.

This practice occurs both through regular communication with families and kinship groups, but also involves making sure that they are always at the table for all discussions, decisions, and their voice is heard in terms of their own experience, beliefs, goals and values.

Maintaining enduring positive regard for the child or young person's birth family is an important component of family-centred practice and has significant potential benefits to promoting positive wellbeing for children and young people in an OOHC living option. In caring for a child and young person consistent with this practice area looks like acknowledging some of the difficulties that the child or young person may have experience whilst maintaining empathy and positive regard at all times for the child or young person's parent/carer and showing compassion for their lived experience and expressing the notion that we all try our best with the tools, knowledge and support that we have.

## Holistic assessment

Holistic assessment is the awareness and understanding that when assessing any situation, behaviour or concern, that the assessment must consider the entire context and function of that situation. This may include an understanding of what need and function the situation, behaviour or concern is currently meeting and when this first started. It also includes consideration as to the social, cultural, environmental, psychological and biological context of the situation, and the impact that time may have had on the situation, behaviour or concern, both in the future and in the past.

Holistic assessment seeks to view the situation, behaviour or concern from all perspectives, including the strengths, challenges and opportunities that arise in the future. It includes the acknowledgement that individuals hold bias based on their own experience, values, beliefs and attitudes. For holistic assessment to be achieved this bias must be reflected on, and the assessment be considered from a multitude of perspectives.

Active multi-stakeholder engagement in case planning, monitoring and review meetings is essential to the principle of holistic assessment and planning for a child or young person. The principle acknowledges that where systems of support do not work collaboratively and openly this may have direct negative effects on the wellbeing or safety of the child or young person.

## Behaviour support planning

Central to the Matung Wannay practice framework is a whole of organisation approach to positive behaviour support planning. Positive behaviour support is the ideology of supporting those we work alongside to develop positive ways to manage and regulate their emotions and behaviour that increase their quality of life, relationships and assist them to achieve their goals. It is also the understanding that all behaviour has a function, and that at times we are supporting individuals who have experienced significant trauma or adverse circumstances in the past which has meant that they may have developed behaviours or actions that have allowed them to survive through these past experiences. These behaviours or actions may also bring a risk of harm to them or may impact on their relationships and ability to meet their goals. In this space, positive behaviour support seeks to understand the function of the behaviour and the need that the behaviour or action is communicating, and identify ways that this need can be met in a way that supports the development of alternative ways of communicating needs, positive and healthy regulation, and decreases risk, feelings of shame and regret, and allows for the individual to develop ways to regulate their emotions independently in the future.

All staff that work with, support, or interact with those that we support will be trained in positive behaviour support. This includes the use and reporting of authorised or unauthorised restrictive practices, including tools, approaches, and general evidence-based practices that promote positive behaviour and prevent the development of behaviours that challenge or harm. It is the organisations approach to focus training, upskilling and staff capability to have a culture of promoting positive behaviour management and regulation, and the prevention of behaviours that challenge.

In addition to this, all children and young people that we support in residential programs will have a positive behaviour support plan that is personalised to their past experience, likes, dislikes and their individual needs. This plan will be formulated to capture specific ways to support the individual that promote healthy and positive behaviour and actions and focus on developing skills in regulation of emotions and behaviour for their future. All staff and stakeholders that work with that individual will receive regular, ongoing training in the behaviour support plan to ensure that we are consistent and informed by evidence in the best way to support each individual to achieve their goals into the future. All positive behaviour support plans that are developed by We Care NSW will be reviewed by the services Specialist Behaviour Support Practitioner and where the positive behaviour support plans include the use of a restrictive practice will be reviewed by the Matung Kunar restrictive practices panel and where required relevant State and Federal RPA approval panels connected to the NDIS.

In foster care and clients that we support in community, behaviour support plans will be required if there are behaviours that challenge, or if there is a restrictive practice in place.

## Individualised care planning

All children that are supported by Matung Kunarr will have individualised care planning that they are involved in, as well as their family, kin, and care teams in their life. This individualised care planning will be guided by the individual themselves, and their voice will be captured in terms of their wants, needs, goals, and worries. Individualised care plans will be used to develop key goals, as well activities set that will be completed to reach these goals in a specific timeframe.

It is an expectation that all care planning will involve the individual, their loved ones, and all professionals, and that this will be regularly monitored together to ensure that it is effective, by meeting the needs of the individual and completing actions in appropriate timeframes.

Care planning will include domains of future planning, health, wellbeing, family and identity, culture, education and vocation, and legal planning where appropriate. Care planning will also include information about the individual's history, experiences, likes and dislikes, and their future aspirations and goals. Individual care plans will be based in self-determination and in collaboration to achieve goals that are important to the individual themselves.

Individual care plans are developed at least annually or as there is a change in the care environment, and are reviewed at least quarterly to ensure actions are occurring.

## Cultural planning

Cultural is integral to being, and is all that we are, we do, and how we interact with the world and those in it. Under the Matung Wannay practice framework, the core pillar is culture. All children and young people from an Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander or South Sea Islander OR CALD, background that are supported by Matung Kunarr will have an individualised cultural plan. This cultural plan will be developed with family, by family and kin to ensure that it is meaningful and carries with it the specific knowledge of the culture, identity and history of that family, for the purposes of making sure that individuals we support are connected to their culture, know who they are and where they come from, and can pass this knowledge on to their future generations. This also makes sure that individuals are supported in culturally appropriate ways.

Cultural plans are developed annually and reviewed with family and relevant stakeholders quarterly to ensure that they are meaningful and having a positive impact relevant to the individual.

For children that are not Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander, South Sea Islander or CALD, their cultural heritage and identity is as important. They will have their cultural planning explored within their individual care plan in the family and culture section. This too will be led by family, with clear actions and timeframes for ensuring that all children know of their culture, live their culture, and have connection to their culture, beliefs, values, and ways of life.

# Practice Tools

## P.A.C.E – Playfulness, Acceptance, Curiosity and Empathy

PACE was developed by Dr Dan Hughes with the aim of supporting adults to build safe, trusting and meaningful relationships with children and young people who have experienced trauma. The principles offer a useful framework from which we can develop attunement and strengthen our relationships with the children and young people we work with. In tricky moments it allows us to stay emotionally regulated and guide the child through their heightened emotions, thoughts and behaviours. In turn, PACE helps children and young people to feel more connected to, and understood by, important adults in their life and ultimately, to slow down their own responses

### Playfulness

This is about creating a fun, light and playful atmosphere when communicating with the child. It is about having fun and expressing a sense of joy. Relating with a playful attitude keeps the interaction light and upbeat. It can help diffuse a difficult or tense situation. Children are less likely to respond with anger and defensiveness when the adult has a touch of playfulness in their communication. Being playful could mean having fun with shared games or a shared activity that involves you both. While such a response may not be appropriate at the time of risky or distressed behaviours, when applied to low level behaviours, playfulness can help keep it all in perspective.

### Acceptance

This is about accepting that whatever the child (or you) are feeling right now is ok. You are accepting their thoughts, feelings and perceptions without judgement. You may not agree with their interpretation, but you accept their feelings about it. It is their experience and this is important. Don't minimise or invalidate it. Show them it's ok to feel the way they do – actively communicate to the child that you accept their feelings and thoughts underneath the observable behaviour. Acceptance does not mean you have to accept the behaviour if this is harmful to themselves or to another person. You can limit the behaviour while at the same time understanding and accepting the motives for the behaviour.

### Curiosity

This is about approaching children with an air of curiosity. Seek to understand what it is that drives them. What is important in their life? How can you get to the core of who they are and bring out the best in them? Curiosity means you don't judge them so quickly. You can ask more questions of them, as you are curious to know more about them. With curiosity we are trying to show we simply wish to understand why. We hope to convey that our intentions are to truly understand and help the child, not to lecture.

### Empathy

Empathy is about putting yourself in someone else's shoes and allowing yourself to feel what they must be feeling. It gives us a sense of compassion for the child and their feelings. This is essential in helping a child feel understood. When someone really understands you, it can make a big difference to how you cope. Being empathic is not about reassuring the child (which tries to make the problem go away) but about being with them in the moment, carrying and containing their big emotions. This lays the foundation for connection. We demonstrate that we know how difficult an experience is for them. We are telling them that they will not have to deal with the distress alone. Together we will get through this.

More information can be sourced from Dan Hughe's model from [P.A.C.E. \(danielhughes.org\)](https://www.danielhughes.org).

## Therapeutic Crisis Intervention

Therapeutic Crisis Intervention is a specific training program that seeks to:

- Create a trauma-sensitive environment where children and adults are safe and feel safe
- Pro-actively prevent and/or de-escalate potential crisis situations with children
- Manage a crisis situation in a therapeutic manner, and, if necessary, intervene physically in a manner that reduces the risk of harm to children and staff
- Process the crisis event with children to help improve their coping strategies
- Effectively deliver in-house TCI training

Matung Kunarr are committed to having all staff that work on the front line with staff having completed Therapeutic Crisis Intervention training as a tool to assist in their ability to proactively prevent and de-escalate crisis in service delivery.

## Supervision

Matung Kunarr has a supervision framework for all staff that work in the organisation. Supervision is a mechanism for ongoing professional development, reflection on practice, and the access and provision of support. Matung Kunarr's supervision framework is that the line manager provides 1:1 supervision on a minimum six weekly basis with all staff.

Supervision is a space where staff can explore future goals, areas for development and growth, reflect on practice and focus on continual improvement. It is also the mechanisms for supervisees to provide robust and meaningful feedback to staff to reflect on and improve practice that aligns with organisation goals and values.

Under the supervision framework there is also ability to access group supervision on a need's basis. Group supervision is facilitated with a core team or group of individuals with the aim to reflect on practice and critically analyse what is working well and what may be improved on in the future to have better outcomes for those we support.

In addition to the supervision framework, Matung Kunarr also has the 'Yarnin' for Growth' program, which is a discussion had each year to reflect on how each individual staff member's progress towards their goals and completion of task and functions for that period.

## Trauma informed practice

Trauma is an experience that impacts negatively on the wellbeing of an individual and that can cause a wide range of physical, emotional and social symptoms. Trauma can be caused by a one-off event, or a series of interconnecting and ongoing experiences.

Trauma can be intergenerational, meaning that trauma that impacts on an individual can have impact on their children, and their children's children through the impact the trauma has on their wellbeing, and on their interactions with the world around them.

As a specialist provider for Aboriginal children and young people, Matung Kunarr acknowledges the prevalence of significant trauma across generations for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from past government legislation, policy and procedure, colonisation, and the separation and removal of Aboriginal children from Aboriginal families and communities over time. This trauma has led to significant over representation in the rates of incarceration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, as well as extreme over representation of Aboriginal children in the child protection and out of home care sector. It has also had an impact on life expectancy, health outcomes, and quality of life for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

The phrase 'trauma informed' is used widely in the community services sector. Within the Matung Wannay practice framework, being trauma informed is brought to practice by using all of the practice tools identified in the framework, including positive behaviour support, individual planning, holistic assessment, and building strong relationships with family and community.

Further to this, it is also the whole of organisation approach to being able to reflect on and consider how the past experience of individuals over time impacts on their presentation, and how we can partner together to build relationships that allow the healing of past experience, and provide hope, care and empowerment to achieve future goals.

Being trauma informed is not about having the answers to problems. It is about having the ability to listen, reflect on and understand that our experiences impact on us, and that to heal from past pain and trauma we need people that believe in us, have unconditional love for us, and will walk alongside us into the future while protecting us from harm. It is about seeking to understand the way people interact with the world around them through their experiences, and not blaming, shaming or having a punitive approach to the way people have learnt to manage over time, but rather walking alongside them in their healing journey and providing safety, compassion and respect.

Trauma informed practice is also ensuring that all of our services are provided in ways that are safe, comfortable, and that listen to the voice and the individual needs of those we support to prevent any further harm or triggering of past trauma.



# Practice Tools

## Reflective Practice

Under the Matung Wannay Practice Framework, the ability to reflect on practice for the purpose of continual improvement and providing the highest quality of service and care to those we support, and our community is priority.

Reflective practice occurs monthly across the Matung Kunarr Child and Family services. Reflective Practice involves all of the care team, and relevant stakeholders and seeks too:

- Review how the service is currently being implemented, including strengths, challenges and opportunities for improvement
- Check in with how the team are feeling and what support they require
- Reflect on how we are currently working through organisational frameworks, values and structures
- Reflect on the use of individual case plans and individual behaviour support plans, and how these are being implemented consistently and the impact that these are having on outcomes for those we support
- Receive feedback and data for the impact and implementation of the behaviour support plan to ensure that this remains focused on the individual needs of those we support.
- Ensure that all staff are comfortable and confident in implementation of the behaviour support plan and individualised care plans, and are feeling supported in the work we do
- Debrief about any incidents that have occurred, follow up required, reflect on what we learn from the incident, and how this can improve service to prevent incidents in the future

## Communities of Practice

Shared learning through experience, discussion and training is integral to development of successful teams and quality service provision.

Under the Matung Wannay practice framework, Matung Kunarr provide communities of practice to all relevant streams and teams across the Child and Family services, at minimum, every six weeks. There is a 12-month agenda for communities of practice that focuses on training and learning in evidence-informed and up to date best practice, that also aligns with the Office of the Children's Guardian Practice Standards for Permanent Care.

Communities of practice is also a platform that develops key professional relationships within teams of similar disciplines and service types to provide support and education in everyday service delivery through peer support and collaboration.

# Matung Kunarr

