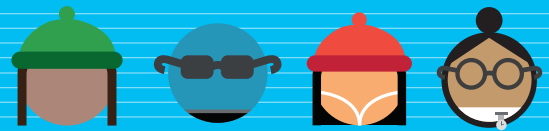


FACT SHEET



SEXUAL HEALTH PROMOTION WITH ABORIGINAL YOUNG PEOPLE



We need to be highly proactive and aware of cultural requirements when working with Aboriginal young people.

These young people can face many barriers in accessing sexual health services and education, including a lack of access to culturally appropriate resources and services.

This is also a culturally diverse group. Materials or approaches that are appropriate for one person or community may not be appropriate for others.

Aboriginal young people are a priority population group in the NSW Health STI Strategy.

The following tips may assist you when working with Aboriginal young people around sexual health:

- **Contact a local Aboriginal Health Worker (AHW) or Aboriginal Liaison Officer (ALO).** They can provide valuable advice about the community you are working with. Consultation is essential when working with Aboriginal communities. It can take time to build trusting relationships – remember to be patient.

- **Be conscious of 'men's business' and 'women's business'.** For some Aboriginal people, certain topics are only discussed within their own gender group. Check their level of comfort and ask permission first. A local AHW or ALO can provide guidance in this area.

- **Consider using visual activities, storytelling, diagrams and interactive activities.** English literacy may be an issue for some Aboriginal young people. If you can, try to assess English literacy levels before your session. Check that participants understand the meaning of words and acronyms. Aboriginal-specific resources may be useful.

- **Be conscious that some Aboriginal young people may feel shame about their sexual health.** The concept of shame is very powerful for some Aboriginal people, and is associated with feelings of inadequacy and disempowerment. It is important to create a relaxed and safe environment. Try to avoid the teacher/student relationship. For example, try taking the session outside or sitting together on the floor. Never push people to participate if they seem uncomfortable. Depersonalising an issue can also help – rather than asking personal questions, try asking about young people in general.

- **Use inclusive language when talking about families and relationships.** As with any group of young people, some Aboriginal young people live with their aunts, uncles, grandparents, cousins or friends. Use the term 'carer' instead of mum, dad or parent.

- **Ensure a 'Welcome to Country' or 'Acknowledgement of Country' is conducted at the start of workshops or sessions.** It is also a good idea to invite an Aboriginal youth worker or nurse, or an AHW or ALO to join in on your activity.

MORE INFORMATION

The information above was sourced from DOIN 'IT' RIGHT! – an Aboriginal sexual and reproductive health resource kit. You can see the full resource or order a hard copy on the Aboriginal Health and Medical Research Council website, www.ahmrc.org.au.

Visit Take Blaktion on the Play Safe website (www.playsafe.health.nsw.gov.au/takeblaktion) for culturally appropriate content for young Aboriginal people.