

Listening to what Aboriginal Young People want and need



weave.org.au

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Acknowledgement to country
Darruk People

How it all started

1976 – a group of local residents were concerned about young people out on the street late at night getting into trouble



Weaves Building in Waterloo



Our Reach



- 10 programs
- 35 staff
- We reach 7000 people a year
- 2500 of these are intensive one-on-one support
- 70% Indigenous



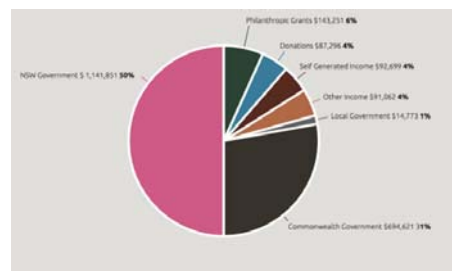
Our Mission

To help build a strong, connected community supporting disadvantaged children and young people to lead a happier, healthier life



Service Funding

Annual budget estimated \$2.2 million



Youth Advocates



Our Programs

- Women and Children's Centre – child centered
- SHLV empowerment and safety
- KKC and leadership model
- Community Capacity Building
- [Speak Out Dual Diagnosis Treatment program](#)
- Specialist Homelessness Partnership
- Streetbeat
- Tutoring program
- Aboriginal Information and referral
- Community Development
- QIP accredited



Our Personal Story and its impact on the work

- My cultural background and why it's important to understand your own cultural heritage
- What it means to be a member of the dominant culture
- How it is harder to identify what your cultural influence is,
- Understanding where you sit and what power and influence you have is important.
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- Having an understanding of your own culture and what it contributes to your life gives you the capacity to appreciate other cultures.
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- Past work with young people around combating racism has focused on understanding what your own culture means to you.
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Who we work with

- Marginalised and socially excluded people in our society
- Focus on children and young people, but in order to support them we have a holistic approach – families, communities, women
- Client-centred, collaborative, respectful, long-term, complex work
 - Meaningful engagement, meaningful change



Making a commitment to working in partnership with the Aboriginal community

- Making a conscious decision to understand the needs of Indigenous clients by getting cultural awareness training
- Understanding some Australian Indigenous history Aboriginal people don't get citizenship until 1967
- Putting that cultural training into action with a plan
- Adding targets for what you will do
- Have Aboriginal representatives on your Board
- Not turning Aboriginal clients away because you say you're not skilled to work with these people
- Not deciding to work with this group without consulting with Aboriginal organisations about whether its appropriate
- Partnering with Aboriginal workers to deliver services

- The biggest complaint I get from Aboriginal families is that agencies don't talk with parents about their kids, don't share ways of dealing with difficult or traumatic issues and don't refocus to provide family help when necessary.
- Aboriginal families have requested better education about mental health services and ways to improve mental wellness
- There are a significantly higher percentage of Aboriginal people who suffer from mental health problems due to trauma / grief and loss and the impacts of institutionalized racism
- If services are too specialised then young people aren't going to hang around. Story about someone who comes in for shelter and is offered counselling.





Employing Aboriginal staff

- Make a commitment to employing Aboriginal staff
- Support those staff by giving opportunities for them to meet regularly
- Give Aboriginal workers the opportunity to share their way of working with the rest of the staff.
- Do an acknowledgement to Country at staff meetings
- Employ Aboriginal staff to work in non identified positions
- Understand the needs and commitments of Aboriginal workers outside of the work environment.

Working with Aboriginal young people

- We favor a narrative approach and use a term we call therapeutic casework
- Don't make assumptions about what someone needs
- Make sure that your environment acknowledges Indigenous culture with images, posters.
- Don't be prescriptive about dealing with what someone wants
- Listen carefully
- Be decentered and influential
- Aboriginal young people and their families have extremely poor experiences of past welfare practices.
- Being told what to do and being treated paternalistically were the norm. This kind of racism is a legacy of previous welfare practice
- support their journey.
- individuals need to make their own choices and decisions and some are good others bad



- Be Respectful
- Understand that trust is earned
- Ensure confidentiality
- Respect Culture
- Provide an environment with food and a good cup of tea

What informs staff practice and sustains people in the work

- Shared hope
- Social justice
- Equity
- Belief that as humans we are all good
- Realistic
- Responding to injustice
- Applying a "person centred" approach to our work, i.e. empowering the client to make decisions and take control of their own life
- Authenticity
- Flexible
- Understanding the impact and importance of peoples lived experiences
- Sense of humour
- Passion
- Awareness and acknowledgement of power relations
- Integrity
- Persistence and consistency
- Sustainability
- Respect
- Compassion

Practice Theory

Weave utilises practice theory which is a theory of how social beings, with their diverse motives and varied intentions, interact and influence their environment and world.

- Strengths based
- Client directed
- Narrative Approach (see below)
- Therapeutic Casework model (see below)
- Empowerment
- Trauma informed practice
- Whole of family approach
- Developmental model
- Social model of service delivery



Narrative Approach

The Narrative Approach is informed by the politics of social justice. It deconstructs dominant discourses and taken for granted truths. Genuine curiosity is the driving factor behind the Narrative Approach. This involves being genuinely curious about:

- The relationship people have with the problems in their life
- Tracing the history of the problem
- Situating the problem in context
- Exploring unique outcomes (times when the problem has had lesser or no influence)
- Exploring the alternative story and preferred sense of identity clients have
- Identify the strengths, resources, competencies, skills, expertise, knowledge and abilities that can be used to engage in re-authoring conversations
- Other tools that can be useful in the Narrative Approach include-
- Therapeutic documentation, remembering conversations, outsider witness ceremony and definitional ceremonies.

Therapeutic Casework

Every interaction with a client is an opportunity for therapeutic work to occur.

Therapeutic casework involves taking all opportunities to weave therapeutic conversations into everyday practical casework support we provide. This involves:

- Being curious about the clients values, beliefs, hopes and aspirations
- Deconstructing taken for granted ideologies
- Role modeling different ways of being and behaving

Advocacy from staff serves a number of therapeutic purposes.

It validates client's stories and allows workers to stand alongside the client in supporting and giving voice to their needs and promoting change. The process of advocacy also often provides opportunities for clients to connect to the broader socio-political issues. Casework also attends to mental and emotional wellbeing.

Outcomes

Clients have access to the right services, at the right time and at the right place. Strong working relationships between services users and their families, carers, supporters, peers and communities, workers, service provider agencies, funders and policy makers. Clients are able to, and/or are supported by Weave to, easily identify, access and use services, which support their journey.

Weave is part of an integrated network / service system which:

- Provides person-directed and centred, systematic, responsive, supportive and integrated services that meet client needs.
- Encourages team-work, shared knowledge and expertise, interdisciplinary practice and integrated responses.

Collaborative casework

In order to ensure a collaborative approach to casework, Weave caseworkers will:

- Keep up to date with what services are available in the community
 - Be clear of the purpose
 - Establish who is already involved in the client's life
 - Who else needs to be involved to support the client's action plan?
 - "Pick a support team", talking with the client about who might be of support to them
 - Communicate with the support team
 - Convene/ organise a meeting for all the key support people with the client present
 - Map out an understanding of roles of support people and direction to avoid duplication and misunderstanding
 - Transparency openness and honesty are the intention of this process
 - Maximise support for the client
 - Acknowledge the importance of other people
- (weaving a network of support and connectedness is an important goal in itself)



This process also models functional negotiation, as well as cooperation, realistic levels of support actions and outcomes.

Publications

These Publications can be found on the weave website

Anti Racism Peer Education Program

Our Place stories about youth work practice with Aboriginal Young People

Speakout Stories from young people about living with mental health issues

How we do what we do A guide to client work (available with this presentation)

Lost Conversations Finding new ways for black and white Australians to lead together

