



ABORIGINAL PRACTICE LEADERSHIP

FRAMEWORK

SIGNS OF SAFETY PRINCIPLES

WORKING RELATIONSHIPS

THINKING CRITICALLY, FOSTERING
A STANCE OF INQUIRY

LANDING GRAND ASPIRATIONS
IN EVERYDAY PRACTICE



Territory Families
WE CARE



ABORIGINAL PRACTICE LEADERSHIP

FRAMEWORK

The Aboriginal leadership framework spells out what Territory Families commitment to “Aboriginal staff being at the centre of the Signs of Safety implementation” and “Aboriginal community engagement in the Signs of Safety implementation” will look like.

In doing so, this framework operationalises the Territory Families Aboriginal Cultural Security Framework for the Signs of Safety implementation and casework roles.

Both the Aboriginal Cultural Security Framework and the Signs of Safety approach support building inclusive and collaborative practice, for more culturally responsive service delivery, in order to improve outcomes for the Aboriginal children, families, communities and organisations who come into contact with the child protection system.

The principles of Signs of Safety are important touchstones for the Aboriginal leadership framework:

WORKING RELATIONSHIPS

All leaders deliberately work on their relationships with colleagues and partners, and our relationships will grow.

THINKING CRITICALLY, FOSTERING A STANCE OF INQUIRY

We are curious and open to new ways of doing things, and our leadership and partnerships will evolve.

LANDING GRAND ASPIRATIONS IN EVERYDAY PRACTICE

We focus on what works on the ground, for the purpose we are seeking, better practice and outcomes with children and families.

ABORIGINAL STAFF BEING AT THE CENTRE OF THE IMPLEMENTATION

This is about participative leadership with Aboriginal staff. While there are clear tasks and roles specified, to make the leadership concrete and practical, the spirit of Aboriginal leadership needs to be embraced and enabled to develop.

All Aboriginal staff will have access to Signs of Safety training and learning events and have time for reflection on their practice and leadership. A large contingent of Aboriginal staff will attend the quarterly Signs of Safety leadership days.

Cases

Aboriginal field staff provide cultural competency and value add to case management through their knowledge of family, knowledge of community, Aboriginal protocols and ways of working. Aboriginal staff contribution is about supporting the whole of the case management, covering all issues affecting the wellbeing of the child(ren) and functioning of the family, and is not confined to adding cultural knowledge alone.

Aboriginal field staff will be part of assessment and decision making at key stages and every decision point in cases (as part of a team with the case manager, team leader and service manager): intake, worker allocation, initial mapping (in house), finding family and network, key family network meetings, removal, court action, reunification, case closure.

Case consultation at these key points, cultural competency and value adding can be viewed as co-working the cases. This may include hands on work, with the extent of involvement varying with the needs of the case and the caseworker and the capacity of the Aboriginal staff. It does not displace the delegated case management decision making responsibilities of the caseworker and their line management. Where consultation advice and case decisions differ, the rationale for decisions should be transparent and shared, in the spirit of teamwork.

Leadership and Partnership

Aboriginal leadership in Territory Families works in partnership with Aboriginal people to strengthen the capacity of Aboriginal families, organisations and communities in ways that that are respectful and inclusive of Aboriginal culture.

Specifically, Aboriginal staff's leadership in Territory Families will encompass:

- senior Aboriginal staff being in management meetings and regional leadership groups,
- participating in staff recruitment,
- mentoring Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal staff,
- participating in policy and process development, and
- being alongside managers in their day to day leadership.

There is a mix of Aboriginal staff in Territory Families and regions need to be smart about how they deploy their staff – using the people who they have to best advantage at the same time as building recruitment of Aboriginal staff. Roles need to balance enough consistency, not a crippling consistency, with enough flexibility, not anything goes.

Aboriginal practice leaders will have additional support for learning through the Signs of Safety practice leader / learning and development team development trajectory and will be sharing that learning with all staff through workplace learning events.

ENGAGEMENT WITH ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY AND NGO LEADERS

Connections need to be established and nurtured at Territory, regional and local levels with existing Aboriginal representative groups and NGOs. These will vary with regions and locations.

These groups need to be introduced to how Territory Families is intending to work with Signs of Safety through briefings, written material and individuals participating as part of family network meetings for their own families or when NGOs are working with families.

Cases

Local government councils in remote areas and Aboriginal representative bodies can provide direct advice on family and community connections for:

- family and network members who could be part of the safety plan around the children,
- family to provide temporary or long-term kin care, and/or
- family connections for children in care.

Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations will increasingly be providing out of home care through collaborative partnerships with Territory Families.

Leadership and Partnership

Engagement in leadership needs to occur through regular meetings. (eg Territory Families being a regular agenda item at remote local government councils and Aboriginal body meetings).

Remote local government councils, Aboriginal bodies and NGOs can provide advice on how well Territory Families and their local Aboriginal community and Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation partners are working together, by looking at:

- what is working well?
- what people are worried about?
- what needs to happen?

Issues that become clear through regular communication can give direction locally, regionally and across the Territory to build the evolving partnerships.

KEY INTER-RELATED TERRITORY FAMILIES DOCUMENTS

Aboriginal Cultural Security Framework

This framework underpins the work of Territory Families with Aboriginal people and communities and is a key driver for aligning law reform, practice reform and redevelopment of the information system.

Signs of Safety Pre-implementation Plan (October 2018) and **Signs of Safety Implementation Plan** (draft December 2018 for final March 2019)