Editorial

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Editorial

The papers in this edition address a variety of ways that researchers and practitioners can engage in culturally respectful, safe decolonising practice. In the spirit of principled practice, they illustrate that what we do does not matter as much as how we do it. If we adhere to a commitment to principles including cultural safety and responsiveness, there are many ways that this can find expression at community and individual levels. The impact of national policies and programs is not always positive for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Barney et al. highlight how communication barriers can impact participation across many life domains. In their analysis of hearing loss and the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), they note that the NDIS is almost silent on this crucial issue. As a result, access to the NDIS is inaccessible for many. Their research exemplifies the co-design of a yarning approach to hearing the voices of those disenfranchised by the NDIS processes and offers recommendations based on the lived experience of those intersecting with the NDIS. Their yarning stories bring to life the frustration of many of their participants as they try to navigate the complex NDIS systems, but importantly they also point the way towards culturally appropriate, responsive and safe community-led solutions and service delivery.

In a similar vein, Gidgup et al. report on the development of a physical activity program for older Aboriginal people. Their commitment to listening, learning and knowing highlights a best practice approach to the co-design of community-led programs with relationships at the heart of their approach, guided by respectful engagement with Elders. Importantly, they have taken the time to reflect on their practice to share what they have learned across the domains of establishing the program, practice, and ways of working with Elders grounded in decolonising methodologies. They offer practical strategies for working across these domains.

Kairuz Santos et al. report on a central and foundational construct in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health: cultural safety. They describe a pilot program to deliver cultural safety and capability training at a burns unit in a paediatric hospital. This was developed in the context that many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people report experiences of

racism and discrimination in healthcare systems. The program was developed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers in collaboration with line managers of the burns unit. The high levels of satisfaction outcomes indicated from the training contrasted with time constraints and competing priorities in a time poor workplace. While the authors acknowledge that this was a small-scale study, the article builds on the research evidence base of cultural safety training where formal evaluations are not yet routinely conducted.

Kelly et al. present a thoughtful and innovative approach to qualitative data analysis known as Thought Ritual. Thought Ritual was developed by Australian Indigenous researchers to counter the dominance of Western data analysis methods and practices. It privileges Indigenous cultural practices and knowledge. The tool is comprised of four stages of connection, diversity, interaction and adaptation grounded in the values of respect, reciprocity and responsibility. To illustrate this emerging methodology, the authors provide a practical example in its application. This is a very important addition to the literature as too often researchers and practitioners are provided the theoretical underpinning but not practical examples of how it may be applied.

In the final paper in this issue, Murphy and Roberts describe the outcome of a community mental health assessment and treatment service for Aboriginal young people that adapts a model of care incorporating the lived experience of participants and their families. Their model of care adapted mainstream services with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander understanding of social and emotional wellbeing. This brief report provides an example of how practitioners have worked to ensure that their work is underpinned by practical and pragmatic commitments to adhering to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of knowing, being and doing. The authors acknowledge that the program is in its early stages and will evolve over time. Its inclusion in this issue reflects our editorial policy to encourage practitioner stories and their lived experience of working at the complex, time poor and constantly changing coalface of service provision.