

Social Work Focus

WINTER 2024 — VOLUME 9, ISSUE 2

ISSN 2209-0045 (PRINT) | ISSN 2209-0053 (ONLINE)

SOCIAL WORK PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY:

AASW MEMBERS SUPPORTING
COMMUNITIES, EVERY DAY.

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Supercharging access to support services | [PAGE 6](#)

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THE DV WEST CHILDREN'S DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE
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AND MORE



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• Indigenous theory, First Nations child welfare and human rights



Dr Michael Ungar
Director, Resilience Research Centre, Canada
• Child Family and Community Resilience



A/Professor Heather Boetto
Associate Professor, Charles Sturt University, Australia
• Global Challenges and environmental social work



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Australian Association
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Focus**

ISSN 2209-0045 (PRINT) | ISSN 2209-0053 (ONLINE)

Published quarterly, *Social Work Focus* belongs to the membership of the Australian Association of Social Workers. We welcome a diverse range of articles relating to social work practice, social workers and research. We also accept paid advertisements and industry news.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Cover: Shutterstock

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NEXT EDITION

Contributions for the editorial content of the Spring 2024 issue will be accepted until 9 August 2024, with a publication date of 4 October 2024.

AASW Members whose articles are published in *Social Work Focus* can claim time spent to research and prepare them towards CPD requirements, specifically Category 3.

MANAGING EDITOR: Dr Matt Loads**COPY EDITOR:** Ann Philpott**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY**

We respectfully acknowledge the past and present Traditional Owners and ongoing Custodians of the land. We pay our respects to their Elders past and present, their ancestors and their families.

Join us on social media:

From the AASW National President

Linda Ford

Welcome to the latest edition of *Social Work Focus*, where we're diving deep into a number of crucial topics.

Defining the professional identity of social workers is not only crucial for understanding who we are but also for determining where we are needed most. Currently, there is a pressing need for social workers in rural and regional communities, a fact that cannot be overlooked.

The lack of social work services in regional and rural Australia is a challenge for our profession. As National President of the Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW), I have witnessed firsthand the repercussions of this shortage during my experiences in various rural and remote centres. The existing fly-in, fly-out arrangements and transient staffing exacerbate the disconnect between practitioners and the communities they serve, denying individuals consistent and reliable support systems. This lack of accessibility to social work services is not confined to rural areas but is a nationwide issue, with demand far outstripping supply in both regional and urban settings.

The demand for social workers is on the rise due to multiple factors, such as an aging population, heightened mental health needs post-COVID, and increased attention to issues like family violence, loneliness and disability support. Reports from Jobs and Skills Australia put social workers in the top twenty of professions in demand.¹

Consequences of the shortage are dire, with families in rural areas grappling with complex mental health issues in their children and enduring long waiting periods for assistance. Government data reveals stark disparities in health outcomes between rural and urban residents, with those in rural areas facing



lower life expectancies and higher rates of hospitalisations, diseases, and injuries. Despite 28%² of Australians residing in rural areas, the distribution of social workers fails to match this demographic reality, with glaring disparities in service provision across inner regional, outer regional, and remote areas.

Recent initiatives by the federal government to fund paid placements for social work students are a welcome step. While addressing the financial barriers to education is crucial, it is important to recognise that more substantial investments are needed to address the root causes of the shortage.

Bridging the gap in social work services across regional and rural Australia requires us to rethink how individuals access our profession. As National President of AASW, I call on governments to prioritise resource allocation to enhance social work services in these communities. At AASW, we believe that professional identity includes advocating for social justice, it binds us together and draws people to the profession. So, we must ensure that people in all areas can connect with these essential services. Every Australian deserves equitable access to social support regardless of location.

Warm regards,

Linda Ford

Linda Ford



LINDA FORD

AASW National President

¹ <https://www.jobsandskills.gov.au/publications/towards-national-jobs-and-skills-roadmap-summary/current-skills-shortages>

² <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/rural-remote-australians/rural-and-remote-health>

AASW: building professional identity in social work

Welcome to the Winter edition of *Social Work Focus*

Professional identity encapsulates the attitudes, values, knowledge, beliefs, and skills shared among professional group members. It is a dynamic idea that builds upon improvements in practice, education, professional status and collaboration. Professional identity serves as a linchpin, defining practice boundaries, easing role confusion, and bringing confidence in advocating for professional opinions.

Professional identity is fundamental to how practitioners perceive themselves and are perceived by others. For social workers in Australia, this identity extends beyond merely cultivating a sense of belonging within their professional community. It is equally about taking meaningful actions that fortify this identity. The AASW is actively advancing these efforts, and I'd like to highlight a few initiatives that are making significant strides in this direction.

From April to September each year, the AASW Mentoring Program offers a formally structured opportunity for members to engage in mentor-mentee relationships. This program is designed for social workers to engage in regular meetings and discussions at any stage of their careers, providing a supportive environment to address professional or personal challenges.

Our online platform, MyAASW, features a Community Hub—a peer chat forum—and an extensive collection of practice resources. They are a first for our Association; we've invested in their development and their ongoing evaluation and we are making sure they are available to members in areas of practice to share information and, in many areas, tools to support the work.

The AASW National Excellence Awards annually recognise social workers, researchers, and students who embody the profession's highest values and achievements. These awards celebrate members at the forefront of

tackling society's most critical issues. Nominations open in August and close on 19 September, with the awards being presented on 21 November at the International Conference. I encourage you to nominate deserving colleagues or self-nominate for all categories (with the exception of the Social Work Student of the Year). This is an excellent opportunity to acknowledge the outstanding contributions within our profession.

We are also excited to introduce our new campaign targeting the public and GPs, "We're Here for You—Don't Wait". This initiative aims to elevate the profile of social workers, advocate for them, increase public awareness of their vital contributions to our communities and highlight how to access the support of social workers. You might have already encountered some of our campaign materials on social media or websites, you will see more over the coming weeks.

Something that I am looking forward to is hosting the International Conference on Social Work in Health and Mental Health in November. This event is a significant opportunity for social workers to gather, share insights, showcase research and practice, and forge valuable connections, all of which are integral to building our professional identity. The conference will cover various topics, including mental health, private practice, child and family services, disability management, leadership, domestic violence,



CINDY SMITH

Chief Executive Officer

therapy, aged care, child protection, social justice, climate change, and sustainability.

Your attendance at this year's conference is not just encouraged—it's essential. I'll be there, and I'm looking forward to connecting with each of you as we together shape the future of social work.

Finally, professional identity is now firmly embedded as a core component in our AASW Practice Standards and the Australian Social Work Education and Accreditation Standards (ASWEAS). Practice groups are also an important element as they provide crucial support and networking opportunities, bolstering our professional development and identity.

As we delve into this issue and reflect on the complexities of professional identity, we embark on a journey of discovery and collective empowerment. I hope you find this edition helpful and inspiring.

Warm regards,

Cindy Smith

Highlights from the latest issue of *Australian Social Work*

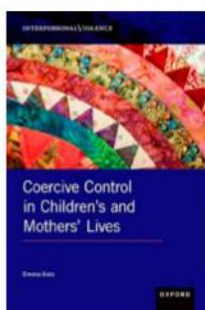
The latest issue of *Australian Social Work*, Vol. 77(3), discusses social work education through the lens of professional identity and the efforts to help shape this in higher education.

It argues social work education should prepare students to be lifelong learners who can meet current standards by applying their skills, values, and knowledge. Going further, it states that it should also teach them to think critically about new issues, modern practices, research, and evidence. The way we teach both

field education and social work, in general, is crucial to shaping our professional identity.

AASW members get [free access to this journal](#). Take advantage of this today.

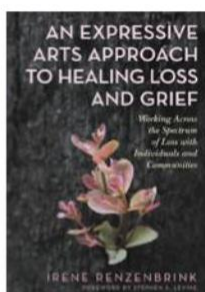
Recent reviews for your consideration are:



SOCIAL WORKERS AND COMPASSION

Coercive Control in Children's and Mothers' Lives by Emma Katz, New York, Oxford University Press, 2022, 338 pp., \$122.40 (hardback), ISBN 9780190922214

This book is valuable for readers wanting to better understand the many ways perpetrators' coercive control impacts the lives of women and children.



HOMELESSNESS

An Expressive Arts Approach to Healing Loss and Grief: Working Across the Spectrum of Loss with Individuals and Communities by Irene Renzenbrink, London and Philadelphia, Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2021, 262 pp., \$71.99 (paperback), ISBN 9781787752788

In this book the author brings to life the principles of an expressive arts approach, outlining theoretical shifts in understanding grief and loss and offering a rich description of its practical applications to support healing.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Susan Gair is the current Editor of *Australian Social Work*, and Adjunct Associate Professor at James Cook University, Townsville, Queensland.

Campaign highlights social work to the public and GPs

The Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW) has launched an innovative new campaign “Don’t Wait” aimed at redefining and elevating awareness of the work that social workers do, and highlighting that if you’re looking for counselling, advocacy, therapy or support, social workers are here for you – don’t wait.

This initiative is designed to advocate for the profession and inform the public, general practitioners (GPs) and administrators of compensable schemes about the vital services that social workers provide. The messaging encourages viewers to connect with a social worker via AASW’s Find a Social Worker online directory, or by speaking to their GP.

In June - July 2024 you’ll see a series of short videos on LinkedIn, Facebook and on AASW’s social media channels, and digital ads on AASW’s website and on general news and health related websites. The aim of the campaign is to increase the visibility of social workers and promote easy access and referrals.

ENGAGING THE PUBLIC AND HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS

The campaign targets the general public and healthcare providers who may not be fully aware of social workers’ critical role in delivering support and care. It positions social workers as a universally accessible, qualified and holistic-approach option for diverse types of support, including advocacy, therapy and mental health services. The campaign addresses barriers and myths that often prevent individuals from accessing the help they need.

counselling
advocacy
therapy
support

we're here for you **don't wait**

Find a Social Worker at
aasw.asn.au/dontwait
or ask your GP for a referral

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Find a Social Worker
aasw.asn.au/dontwait **don't wait**

AASW
Australian Association of Social Workers

BRINGING THE CAMPAIGN TO LIFE

In May 2024, the AASW produced the videos in Sydney, capturing the essence of the social work profession in a unique setting—a converted shipping container. This intimate backdrop added a distinctive touch to the videos, which are designed to convey the transformative power and accessibility of social work and the sense of community among AASW members.



MEET THE MEMBERS - SPOTLIGHT ON FEATURED SOCIAL WORKERS



Nathan Ryan: Social Worker, Aboriginal Mental Health Officer

Nathan Ryan, a full-time mental health worker at the NSW Aboriginal Legal Service, plays a crucial role in advocating for the mental wellbeing of the Aboriginal community in Sydney. With a background in social work and a master's degree from Charles Sturt University, Nathan's work is deeply rooted in community-led initiatives and the pursuit of self-determination.



Dr Meaghan Katrak Harris: Social Worker, Academic, and Writer

Dr Meaghan Katrak Harris is a multifaceted professional who works across various sectors, including academia and the arts. Her first book, "Memories and Elephants: The Art of Casual Racism", has been widely praised. Meaghan's work emphasises social work's broad and impactful scope, from counselling to advocacy.



John Hristoforidis: Accredited Mental Health Social Worker

John Hristoforidis is a specialist in mental health with over a decade of clinical experience. He provides holistic, compassionate, and trauma-informed services tailored to individuals and

families. John's commitment to making mental health support accessible is a testament to his dedication to the profession.



Grace Leotta: Social Worker, Development and Training Consultant

Grace Leotta, an organisational and community development consultant, values her AASW membership for the supportive community it offers. She brings expertise in training, change management, and community engagement and has taught at the tertiary level.

ENHANCING ACCESS WITH THE "FIND A SOCIAL WORKER" DIRECTORY

The "Find a Social Worker" online directory has new features that make it easier for the public and health service providers to locate and connect with social workers. This tool allows users to search by name, location, or services offered. [Check it out here](#). To list yourself in the directory, head to MyAASW and log in.

HOW YOU CAN GET INVOLVED

The success of this campaign lies in the sharing of the messages of the great work that social workers offer to communities across Australia. We encourage you to download and share the campaign videos, social media tile or poster on your social media platforms and websites, using the hashtags #AASW, #swdontwait and #findasocialworker.

Watch the videos and learn more at aasw.asn.au/dontwait

AASW celebrates World Social Work Day

Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW) members actively participated in the events and activities surrounding this significant occasion, embodying the profession's commitment to empowering individuals and communities to thrive.

Making connections and celebrating our profession is an important part of affirming our professional identity.

World Social Work Day, observed annually on the third Tuesday of March, serves as a global platform to celebrate the contributions of social workers and advocate for social justice and human rights. On this day, practitioners, policymakers, and communities come together to raise awareness about the

importance of social work in addressing societal challenges and promoting wellbeing for all.

Chief Executive Officer Cindy Smith launched the excellent new book by Dr Jane Miller *For Social Betterment: Social Work Education in Australia 1900-1960*. At the event, pictured here, she stated, "Throughout her career, Jane has touched countless lives and left

an indelible mark on social work. Her contributions extend far and wide."

Also pictured are some events in Adelaide, Melbourne, Canberra, Perth and Cairns. Many speakers, including Simone Dewar, David Keegan, The Hon. Katrine Hildyard, and Prof. Sarah Wendt, tackled topics from registration to artificial intelligence and made the day super special.

•



Social Work Advisory Service



This service is a free support line, accessible via phone or by submitting an enquiry through the My Benefits section on MyAASW.

It's worth up to \$297 over the course of the membership year and is tailored to offer personalised guidance and support in your social work practice.

Most popular topics:

- General support and social work practice
- Medicare and NDIS/NDIA
- Supervision
- Insurance
- Private practice matters
- Career advice

The benefits of the service:

- Guidance from experienced social workers
- Expert advice on the scope of practice
- A guaranteed response time of two business days



Photos left to right: World Social Work Day event breakfast in Perth, Adelaide, and guest Prof. Sarah Wendt, Director of the SA Social Work Registration Board, being introduced to speak at the Adelaide event.

Your Member Benefits

With the AASW, you see real value. If you participate in or use these AASW services, this is the value on offer:



Complimentary CPD

Curated titles are available for members (value up to \$1,000).



Social Work Advisory Service

Get advice from professionals (value \$297).



Ethics Consultation Service

Advice regarding ethics or practice standards (value \$297).



Career and Practice Resources

Resources to accelerate your professional success (value \$595).



Australian Social Work Journal

International peer-reviewed journal (value \$301).



Social Work Journals

Access to research resources (value \$1,500).



Legal Advice

Speak to Maurice Blackburn at no cost (value \$338).



Insurance

Public and product liability and indemnity insurance (value \$1,500).



Member Discounts

Access a range of discounts from selected organisations.



Mentor Program

Regular sessions to support and encourage your growth (value \$304).



Social Work Focus Magazine

Engage with issues affecting social work (value \$44).



Horizon Career Centre

Free job listing in our portal connecting you with the community (value \$990).

With the AASW, you're part of an active and vibrant community of more than 17,000 social work professionals.

Excitement builds for the 10th International Conference on Social Work in Health and Mental Health

Set to take place from Tuesday 19 November to Friday 22 November 2024, in Melbourne, this eagerly anticipated event is poised to bring together over 600 national and international delegates from across the globe.



Potential speakers submitted 550 abstracts for this year's program, and we are working hard to offer a wide range of discussions and presentations. Book now to take advantage of this event. This conference promises to foster connections among social workers and professional associations worldwide.

We're thrilled to feature Associate Prof. Heather Boetto from Charles Sturt University, a leading authority in Environmental Social Work. Heather will explore global systemic shifts and the transformative potential of social work through dialogical, localised, collective, and decolonised solutions.

Dr Michael Ungar, Director of the Resilience Research Centre, will

also grace our stage. His session, "Diagnosing Resilience Across Cultures and Contexts, promises fresh insights into resilience among young people, emphasising strengths even in the face of significant challenges.

We will also discuss a wide range of subject areas, delving into critical issues such as mental health; private practice; child, youth, and family services; disability management; leadership; family dynamics; domestic and gendered violence; counselling and therapy; aged care; child protection; addiction; alcohol; social justice; human rights and equality; climate change; and sustainability; among others.

Don't miss this opportunity for professional growth, networking, and celebrating the impactful role of social work in global health and mental health. Secure your place today and be part of shaping the future of our profession.

Join us in Melbourne this November; book your place today.

REGISTER NOW



AASW
Australian Association
of Social Workers

counselling
advocacy
therapy
support

we're here
for you

don't wait

Find a Social Worker at
aasw.asn.au/dontwait

or ask your GP for a referral



AASW continues to celebrate the legacy of Lyra Taylor:

The Lyra Taylor Grant

As you may remember from the last issue, in March 2024, Melbourne witnessed a gathering of hearts and minds to honour a remarkable figure in Australian social work history. Organised by the Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW), the event commemorated the unveiling of Lyra Taylor's headstone, a poignant and joyous occasion celebrating her enduring impact on social work in Australia, and internationally.

Lyra Taylor's legacy is not just a story of the past, it continues to shape the present and inspire the future. Known for her groundbreaking contributions, Lyra was the first social worker appointed to the Commonwealth Department of Social Services in 1944. Her pioneering efforts extended to her role as Director of the National Old People's Welfare Council of Victoria and as a foundational committee member of the Australian Association of Social Workers. Lyra's work laid the foundation for modern social work practices in Australia: she advocated tirelessly for the profession and the communities it serves.

Upon her death in 1979, Lyra Taylor bequeathed her estate to the Victorian Branch of the AASW, which established the Lyra Taylor Account, now a sub-fund of the Equity Trustees Charitable Foundation. This fund continues to advance education and foster innovation in social work through grants and financial support for special projects that benefit the community. The Lyra Taylor Committee, passionate custodians of her legacy, administers the fund, ensuring her vision lives on.

Each year, the Lyra Taylor Grant is awarded to Victorian members of the AASW who are dedicated to enhancing social work practices and outcomes.

This year's recipients are Alison Hocking and Professor Lynette Joubert, whose commitment to advancing social work education and research embodies the spirit of Lyra Taylor's enduring legacy.

THE IMPACT OF THE LYRA TAYLOR FUND

The Lyra Taylor Fund serves a dual purpose: advancing social work education and supporting innovative projects within the community.

The fund supports:

- **Promoting, Improving, and Maintaining Professional Standards:** The fund elevates the social work profession by fostering high standards in practice, education, and research, ensuring practitioners are well-equipped to meet the needs of those they serve
- **Continuing Professional Education:** The fund provides ongoing learning and development opportunities, helping social workers stay current with best practices and emerging trends
- **Public Education and Advocacy:** By educating and informing the public and community institutions

about the goals and objectives of professional social work, the fund helps raise awareness and support for the vital work social workers do

- **Supporting Projects That Are Beneficial to the Community:** The fund encourages and finances special projects that significantly positively impact the community, fostering innovation and practical solutions to social challenges.

HONOURING A LEGACY: SHAPING THE FUTURE

We're excited to announce that the next round of funding is set for 2025! Applications will be open until the end of February, and we encourage you to check our website for more details later in 2024. Decisions are usually made about three months after the application period closes. We hope you'll consider applying next year.

[VISIT THE FUND PAGE](#)

Continuing Professional Development enhancements: responding to your feedback

At the Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW), we prioritise the development of our members' professional capabilities. With this commitment in mind, here are the newest initiatives:

- **Affordable learning:** We've significantly reduced the cost associated with our webinars, ensuring that investing in your professional growth remains within reach
- **Complimentary webinars:** Over the past six months, we've curated two complimentary webinars each month exclusively for our valued members, underscoring our commitment to providing valuable learning opportunities at no additional expense. There are a range of free webinars online the latest addition is When Disaster Strikes- A Mental Health Social Work Response to the NSW 2020 Bushfires on 1 August
- **On-demand learning:** We've created a complementary learning program centred on Professional Identity for our members. Additionally, we have reviewed and updated 10 on-demand learning courses so you can rest assured information is current and up-to-date. This commitment to review on-demand content for quality will remain a focal point annually
- **Revised workshop fees:** We've re-evaluated and adjusted the member fees for our live, online workshops, guaranteeing that you can participate in high-quality learning experiences.

Keep your eyes peeled for upcoming CPD on Disaster Management, Social Work in Schools Series, Older Persons Series, AI Integration into Social Work Practice, Technology and Social Work Practice, and Supervision Training Programs. Given the popularity of CPD events, we encourage you to secure your spot.

•

Earn
20 CPD
hours

Advanced Supervision Program



AASW's Advanced Supervision Program is an 8-week evidence-based program with self-paced eLearning, online collaborative workshops, facilitator-led Masterclasses, and Coaching Circles.

AASW's Advanced Supervision Program meets the urgent call for quality frontline social work supervision.

Join us to:

- Master supervision functions and ethical dilemmas
- Tailor approaches to meet supervisee needs
- Foster growth through balanced, supportive relationships.

It is ideal for experienced supervisors seeking deeper knowledge.

Members: \$1375 | Non-Members: \$1964
Program: 6 August – 24 September 2024

ENROL NOW

for expert-led sessions and flexible learning.

FEATURE ARTICLES

ABOUT THE AUTHORS



AJ Williams-Tchen (Wiradjuri/Wotjobulak) is an award-winning social worker, nurse and youth worker. He graduated from social work studies in 1997, and currently is Director of Girraway Ganyi Consultancy. AJ has over 35 years' experience in health and community services, working with Aboriginal communities across the country. He was awarded the AASW 2021 Aboriginal Social Worker of the Year, and the Allied Health Awards 2023 Social Worker of the Year. In 2024 he was a nominee for Australian of the Year for Victoria.



Associate Professor Liz Dale (Worimi) is a practising clinical psychologist and a senior lecturer and health researcher in Indigenous health for the faculty of science, medicine and health at the University of Wollongong. Liz has over 17 years of clinical experience working with a range of mental health conditions and specialises in Indigenous health and wellbeing, intergenerational trauma, and treating anxiety, stress, depression and substance use disorders.

But we don't want to offend them:

White Anxiety and its impacts on the occupational, social, and emotional wellbeing of the Aboriginal workforce

AJ WILLIAMS-TCHEN AND ASSOC. PROF. LIZ DALE

This article explains how the emotions and actions that arise as a result of White Anxiety can harm the well-being of Aboriginal colleagues and contribute unnecessarily to an often already burdensome cultural workload.

In our roles as health workers and cultural supervisors providing mentoring, supervision, and cultural training to non-Aboriginal professionals, we as Aboriginal clinicians have encountered a precarious phenomenon that we call "White Anxiety". Emotions and actions that arise as a result of White Anxiety can harm the occupational, social, and emotional well-being of Aboriginal colleagues and contribute unnecessarily to an often already burdensome cultural workload.

Like the psychological conceptualisation of anxiety (American Psychiatric Association, 2013), White Anxiety, as we have observed, is a stress response involving an interplay of unhelpful thoughts, emotions, and behaviours most often triggered during performative encounters with Aboriginal people and/or around discussions about cultural issues and contexts.

Typical scenarios when White Anxiety is triggered include:

- (a) during meetings with Aboriginal people
- (b) within one-on-one non-Aboriginal (supervisor) to Aboriginal (supervisee) meetings
- (c) throughout non-Aboriginal to Aboriginal client contact or service provision situations.

Thoughts that non-Aboriginal colleagues have reported to us are:

- "I don't want to offend them"
- "I don't want to get it wrong"
- "I don't want to upset them"



Emerging emotions can include guilt, denial, anger, grief, shame, and pity.

- *"I don't think it is my role/place to say anything about culture".*

These thoughts are commonly associated with feelings of worry, guilt, nervousness, and most frequently fear they will be labelled a "racist" for saying or doing "the wrong things". The resulting behaviours are often in the form of inactions or over-actions/reactions. An example of an inaction is when a non-Aboriginal colleague avoids asking or talking about culture with an Aboriginal client or colleague or refrains from participating in a cultural activity such as offering to say an acknowledgement to country at the start of a meeting: "I don't want to get this wrong. Debbie, you're Aboriginal, would you mind doing the acknowledgement?"

Forms of over-actions can look like a non-Aboriginal colleague sharing everything they know about Aboriginal culture, or it can also be constantly referring to previous work that they have undertaken in other Aboriginal communities and making comparisons. For example, "When I was working with real Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory, this Uncle stated...". Another line of thinking that triggers White Anxiety comes when non-Aboriginal people learn for the first time of the atrocious reality of colonisation and become aware of its ongoing impacts on Aboriginal people. Many times, we have been present when a non-Aboriginal person first learns about the violence that was afflicted on Aboriginal people, or the traumatic policies and practices underpinning the stolen generation, resulting in the knowledge that Aboriginal people were and are continually subjected to multiple forms of social and systemic racial discrimination. Typical thoughts that accompany these situations include:

- *"I feel so responsible for this"*

- *"This was in my lifetime"*
- *"I feel ashamed of my settler heritage"*
- *"I feel so bad for them".*

Commonly, non-Aboriginal people then feel that they need to apologise to any Aboriginal person in the room: "I am so sorry that this happened to you and your family".

Emerging emotions can include guilt, denial, anger, grief, shame, and pity. These emotions often cause non-Aboriginal individuals to become so consumed by their own emotional states that they lose the ability to be sensitive to the needs or experiences of the Aboriginal people around them. When these emotions are evoked, we have seen non-Aboriginal colleagues react in a range of ways such as:

- Becoming conflictual during cultural training sessions
- Reluctance to implement cultural process or protocols
- Seeking consolation at the emotional expense of their Aboriginal co-worker.

In our work, we have also supported Aboriginal colleagues affected by this White Anxiety and have learnt that it cannot only cause significant distress for Aboriginal people but heighten an often already burdensome cultural load (Williams-Tchen, 2023). Aboriginal colleagues tell us that they often feel obligated to educate their colleagues about Aboriginal history or act as mediator, advocate, or counsellor, which all takes an emotional toll on the Aboriginal person. Further, we have been told that being present when non-Aboriginal people challenge cultural knowledge or refuse to participate in cultural protocols is upsetting, destroys relationships, and contributes to feeling unsafe in that workplace environment.

White Anxiety is different from "White fragility". White fragility refers to the discomfort a non-Aboriginal person experiences when they witness discussions around racial inequality (DiAngelo, 2018). Our use of the term White Anxiety is also different from the way it has been used previously in social media, as a reference to the fear of a white person losing their social or political power to people of colour (Metzl, 2020). Our term differs again from the way essayist Slater (2019) used it to call out the discomfort that non-Aboriginal people experience when faced with Aboriginal political agendas.

Our intention for this paper is to offer cross-cultural workplaces a shared term and a series of useful tips to help mitigate the negative impacts of White Anxiety for both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal colleagues.

TIPS FOR NON-ABORIGINAL PEOPLE TO MANAGE WHITE ANXIETY

- Adopt a regular practice of critical reflection to allow a person to bring the unconscious to the conscious to understand why they think, feel or act the way they do in certain situations so they can establish new ways of responding and relating.
- An essential reflective focus for non-Aboriginal Australians would be a purposeful consideration of power imbalances on account of the automatic positioning of power and privilege inherited as a member of the dominant society. Knowledge of how power is held and distributed enables you to speak and act in ways that ensure power is equally distributed in all areas in which you have influence. Regardless of the work context, arrangement of work roles or the frequency of contact with Aboriginal people,

all non-Aboriginal people need to be aware that they each hold unconscious biases about Aboriginal peoples and culture that are developed over time via a range of unique biopsychosocial and cultural experiences (Shirodkar, 2019). These deep-seated biases form beliefs, opinions or attitudes about Aboriginality that are often revealed in thoughts, feelings or action forms when triggered during encounters with Aboriginal people such as the situations mentioned above.

- It is better to do an Acknowledgement to Country than not to. It is better to ask an Aboriginal person about their culture than not to. Many times, we have to remind non-Aboriginal people that Aboriginal people are resilient, empathic, and humorous and can weather a less than perfect Acknowledgement to Country or an awkward conversation about culture.
- Undertake self-led learning about Aboriginality and Aboriginal issues. Unhelpful thoughts about Aboriginal people can be challenged by learning about Aboriginality, specifically from Aboriginal authors, creators, and artists. Educating yourself about Aboriginality will help you reframe any negative impressions you may have, break down racial stereotypes and make talking and asking about culture less anxious provoking.



- Don't rely on Aboriginal colleagues to be your unpaid expert. It can be easy to fall into the habit of relying on your Aboriginal work colleague to be your "go to" for all things Aboriginal. Reliance on them often means you won't develop skills or confidence to act independently, and it can also place an unnecessary burden on them, adding to their cultural load (Williams-Tchen, 2023). Remember that Aboriginal peoples of Australia are not a homogenous cultural group; therefore, learning the ways of one or a few Aboriginal colleagues does not equip you with skills or knowledge to work with all Aboriginal people and within all First Nations places and contexts.
- Allow Aboriginal people time and space to voice concerns and have these validated and not challenged.

TIPS FOR ABORIGINAL WORKERS TO MANAGE WHITE ANXIETY

- Know your boundaries and your level of tolerance. By this, we mean know both your personal boundaries in terms of how much culture you are willing and able to share and the boundaries that contain what is expected of you within your employed position.
- Don't go beyond your work role but also know you have the right to choose who you do want to help, to help those people you do feel comfortable helping and only working in spaces and places you feel culturally safe.
- Regularly check your emotional state and energy levels to know if you are at risk of burnout.
- Seek cultural supervision and support from other Aboriginal colleagues.
- Don't feel like you need to console or regulate your White co-workers'



Don't rely on Aboriginal colleagues to be your unpaid expert.

anxiety. You are not responsible for another person's feelings, and you are certainly not employed to counsel your work colleagues.

- Respectfully encourage your colleague to seek professional support or walk away if you are feeling affected by your colleagues' words, actions or emotions.
- Continue to draw on your cultural strengths, especially your sense of humour, to cope with distressing feelings.
- It is important as a non-Aboriginal worker to recognise what and when White Anxiety may be present and practise ways to deal with this in healthy, culturally safe ways. It is also essential that Aboriginal workers learn trauma-informed, culturally safe ways to recognise White Anxiety and develop practical tools to be able to continue working in environments where White Anxiety moments happen as more truth-telling around history and recognition of Australia's history is taught, unlearned, and at times re-learned.

NOTES ON TERMINOLOGY

- The term Aboriginal is used as both Authors are of Aboriginal descent and speak mostly from experiences drawn from working within Aboriginal contexts. Torres Strait Islander people's experiences and situations may differ.
- In this article, the term non-Aboriginal refers to people of Caucasian descent, specifically those who openly identify with having a white settler ancestral lineage or who were born overseas.

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Beyond self-care:

shifting the gaze to organisational prevention of vicarious trauma

AMY NICHOLAS

This article asks us to collectively reconsider how we view vicarious trauma in our workplaces. Employers now must ensure that reasonable steps are taken to eliminate or minimise exposure to psychosocial risk.

Consider a workplace where employees frequently encounter hazardous chemicals with known cumulative and potentially severe health impacts. What should take place to prevent harm? Is it solely the worker's responsibility or should the organisation take the lead? The answers to these questions in the context of chemicals may seem quite obvious. Hazardous substances should be labelled appropriately and securely stored, staff should be educated about the nature of the hazard, and work systems should be structured to avoid unnecessary exposure. These actions align with the fundamental principles of a risk management approach, undertaken in acknowledgment of an employer's duty of care to provide a safe working environment.

Now, let us shift the gaze to the known hazard of being exposed to indirect trauma (also known as *vicarious trauma*) in the workplace. Let us consider what should take place to prevent harm? Is it solely the worker's responsibility or should the organisation take the lead?

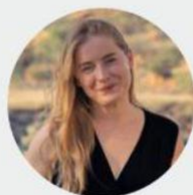
If you are thinking that self-care, supervision, and employee assistance programs (EAP) are the answer for social work, you would not be alone. Research has observed the tendency for social work organisations to engage in strategies that encourage workers

to mitigate the impact of their work through self-care. It is common for the provision of supervision and EAP to be viewed as a reasonably sufficient organisational response. However, these strategies respond to the individual rather than the work system that creates and potentially moderates that individual's exposure to the hazard.

Can we draw a parallel between a physical hazard, such as chemical exposure, and a psychosocial hazard, such as trauma exposure? Recent changes to work health and safety regulations across Australia clarify that the responsibilities for managing physical and psychosocial hazards are no longer all that different. These changes have defined the role of employers as having the primary duty of care to manage psychosocial hazards.

These regulatory changes represent a critical turning point for social work as a profession. We are being called on to shift our focus from individual mitigation strategies to the possibilities of preventing harm by using a risk management approach and adapting our work systems to prevent harm. This requires a collective acknowledgement that the details of trauma are known to have a cumulative impact on workers. The idea that one should become

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desensitised to client trauma over time must now be retired.

As a profession, social workers are exceptionally well placed to respond to this challenge. Together, we are bolstered by our knowledge of trauma and guided by an ethical principle of respect for persons. It is time to consider how we may uphold our duty of care to one another by embedding primary prevention of vicarious trauma within our organisations.

Returning now to the question of what should take place to prevent harm? Our work health and safety regulations provide an obvious answer. At an organisational level, we now must begin to consider:

- How are we storing & labelling traumatic materials in our workplaces?

- Have we ensured social workers adequately understand the nature of vicarious trauma as a hazard?
- Are we doing all we can to prevent unnecessary exposure to traumatic content?

As we look forward together at the possibilities of a strengthened social work workforce, the words of Nakita Valerio echo to us: "Shouting 'self-care' at people who actually need community care is how we fail people."

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Can we draw a parallel between a physical hazard, such as chemical exposure, and a psychosocial hazard, such as trauma exposure?

Professional identity: my second skin

DEIRDRE FLYNN

In this article, a former social worker writes about how her social work training and the values of the profession have shaped the type of leader she is now and her professional identity. Even though she doesn't work directly as a social worker anymore, the experience of being a social worker is still intrinsically bound up with her professional and personal identity – they cannot be separated out.

I remember very clearly, when I separated from my husband of 23 years and removed the rings received over the course of our relationship. It was a challenging experience to consider who I was now, having married at an absurdly young age. I was no longer a wife, though still a mother of two. The empty ring finger had taken away an intrinsic part of my identity, one I had felt proud of and hoped would be part of my future. Over time, we realise life events reshape the always evolving you.

I remember vividly a class towards the end of our course:

we had sets of debate teams and were about to toss around the proposition that you cannot separate the role of a social worker from the person. I strongly defended the view that the values of the profession – service, social justice, dignity and worth of the person, importance of human relationship, integrity and competence – were foundational to my very core. Should I not live my life by these, I would be letting myself and the social work profession down. Over time, I found great comfort and pride in this knowing.

It mattered not; there was no immediate showing of these to the world because I knew as I moved around in it, among people I worked with and supported, these would become seen, visible and recognised. I would not have to speak about them; they would shine through.

My career opened up leadership positions within the organisation I worked for. It would also put me in contact with thousands of women who used their services. These women, I would learn, had experienced adverse child and adult life circumstances, their

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Deidre Flynn is the manager of Client Services at Catherine House. Deidre has been able to influence the standards and ethos of service delivery, creating an aspirational and compassionate culture, where clients are able to understand their past in ways that reveal their strengths, skills and a purpose for their future, enabling new meaning to be made of their lives. Catherine House supports women experiencing homelessness in South Australia.



trust, safety and personal boundaries violated by those meant to care for them. I became acutely aware of my responsibility to set a tone of practice that always embodied a deep regard for them, as inherently worthy. It enabled tangible compassion and respect for their lived experience,

New practice resources for the DfV sector

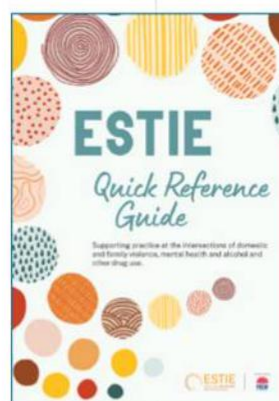
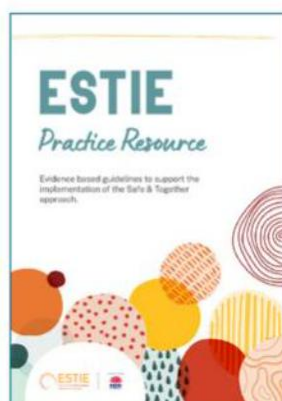
to receive them just as they were. What was reflected back in my many exchanges was an acknowledgement of the professionalism, genuineness and authenticity in which they felt they had been seen, heard and valued – a feeling they would explain as profoundly meaningful, not often experienced. For me, these ways of being were not a choice. I saw them as mandatory requirements for working with people who have been harmed or neglected by people and systems.

When I have been asked what I do, and still even now, I always say my profession is social work followed by describing my role. In thinking “why do I do this”, perhaps it’s to give advance warning that I move through the world in both my social, family and work sphere, guided by the ethics, principles and values of this noble profession. Perhaps it’s giving notice to others that if you are going to act in ways that are immoral, unjust and show disregard for people who have suffered, then I am going to be curious and seek to hear why you have landed in such a place.

My professional identity has also helped me resolutely accountable and helped me garner the courage to do some really hard things – like addressing inappropriate behaviour in the workplace, strongly advocating for women, even making a complaint to the Board about a CEO’s behaviour and riding the wave that came from this.

I have come to understand that my professional identity is equal to my personal integrity; it’s like gold and has valuable currency. It also serves as my armour, shielding and protecting me from being swept up in dishonourable conduct, injustices or uncompassionate views of people who deserve so much more. I believe I will feel like this long after my work life ends, as it is intrinsically me, my second skin.

The ESTIE Project has developed two hands-on practice resources for social workers and other health professionals to use in their domestic and family violence practice. These resources provide detailed guidance, examples, and tips, and are intended to support workers in their foundational knowledge and understanding for practice.



and organisational capacity to drive improvements in collaborative and holistic service provision for children and families living with domestic and family violence, alcohol and drug use and/or mental health issues.

A particular interest area included where perpetrators use these issues as part of their coercive control. A key

output of the project was the development of the following practice resources:

- ESTIE Practice Resource: Evidence based guidelines to support the implementation of the Safe & Together approach
- ESTIE Quick Reference Guide: A worker’s guide to support practice at the intersections.

The ESTIE Project (Evidence to Support Safe & Together Implementation and Evaluation) was a research project run by the University of Melbourne in collaboration with the Safe & Together™ Institute and the NSW Ministry of Health. The project employed a Community of Practice (CoP) model to build the capacity of workers and generate research evidence about effective practice with families affected by domestic and family violence (DFV). The project focused on a range of NSW Health services, including local non-government organisations, with a focus on services responding to mental health, drugs and alcohol, and violence abuse and neglect.

The ESTIE Project used action research methodology to simultaneously investigate and develop worker

Both of these resources are designed for use by any worker practising at the intersections of domestic and family violence, mental health, and alcohol and other drug use, with families who are challenged by any or all of these issues. It applies to those working in acute as well as longer-term therapeutic settings, community organisations and the broader health sector. The resources can be used, for example, in training and supporting staff, or as a foundational reference for practice development, and continuous improvement. You can access the resources, and the accompanying Research Report [here](#).

For more information about the project or the resources, please contact [Dr Margaret Kertes](#) at the University of Melbourne.

How can services best respond to children and young people who experience domestic and family violence?

CHERIE TOIVONEN AND CATHERINE GANDER

ABOUT THE AUTHORS



Cherie Toivonen is an independent researcher and is the current Managing Director at CLT Byron Consulting. Cherie has over 20 years' experience working in research and evaluation across a range of projects and has spent many years teaching and providing supervision to social work students.



Catherine Gander (Cat) has nearly four decades of experience in the DFVS and social justice sector, at both an advocacy, policy and practice level. She is renowned for her long-held commitment to improving practice to assist children in their recovery from DFSV. The *CYP Framework* is a culmination of her work.

This article explores DV West's Children's Domestic and Family Violence Specialist Program and the key elements of practice responses that came out of it. The findings are important for the broader service provision for children and young people experiencing domestic and family violence.

Children and young people are affected by domestic and family violence differently – each child has their own unique experience and responds to survive or manage their situation in their own way (Toivonen et. al, 2022). Generally, interventions with these children and young people focus on the individual or on a single aspect of the child or young person's life such as housing or education. DV West's Children's Domestic and Family Violence Specialist Program, which uses a new framework for practice, provides an alternative approach to improve the lives of children and families' recovering from domestic and family violence.

THE DV WEST CHILDREN'S PROGRAM

The DV West Children's Domestic and Family Violence Specialist Program (the program) was developed to support children, young people and their families to recover from the impacts of domestic and family violence. The

program is unique in the NSW context as it is underpinned by an innovative framework for practice – the *Children and Young Person's Framework: Supporting families in domestic and family violence services (CYP Framework)*. The *CYP Framework* is ecological and wholistic in its approach and recognises that children and young people's recovery requires interventions that address the whole context of their lives: their experiences and developmental stage; their relationship with their mother/carer and with their wider family/kinship network; and the interconnection with broader social and community life. The program draws on the *CYP Framework* to underpin the work with families that aims to rebuild the relationship between the mother/carer and the child/ren through identifying strengths, increasing safety, reducing risks and building protective factors within the multiple areas of the family's life. The program also aligns with the Safe & Together model and principles.

THE PROGRAM EVALUATION

NSW Health provided funding to DV West to evaluate the program with a focus on how the *CYP Framework* underpins the service response. The evaluation methodology was co-designed to draw on the knowledge and expertise of staff and was underpinned by critical, feminist, and intersectional theory, whilst holding victim-survivor's voices at the centre. Using a mixed methodology, both qualitative and quantitative data was collected from multiple sources during February-June 2023 and triangulated to understand the complex nature of the work of the children's specialists and the outcomes and impacts of the program.

WHAT MAKES THE PROGRAM UNIQUE? KEY LEARNINGS FOR PRACTICE

The evaluation findings highlighted how the use of the *CYP Framework* alongside the Safe & Together model enhanced the work of the children's specialists to respond flexibly to the multifaceted needs of children/young people and their mothers/carers. Issues for children and young people that spanned across the microsystem, macrosystem, and ecosystem, were identified, assessed, and responded to by the children's specialists.

The evaluation drew out the *key elements* of the practice response that led to significant outcomes for families.

These included:

1. **Guiding principles** that provided the foundation of the approach to children and their families.
2. **A range of practice responses** that spanned across the breadth of practice.
3. **Working across multiple domains** to ensure that the child/young person was responded to holistically and in the context of their family relationships.
4. **Flexible and creative responses** to support the mother/carer-child relationship and negate the negative impacts of the perpetrator's violence and control.

Guiding principles

Listening to children and young people's voices
 Child-centred approaches
 Drawing from the developmental-ecological model through the *CYP Framework*
 Partnering with the mother/carer to support children and young people
 Re-building the mother/carer-child relationship
 A focus on client-led responses using violence- and trauma-informed practices
 Prioritising cultural safety and culturally appropriate responses
 Collaborative practices

A range of practice responses

Counselling and Therapeutic Support – Advocacy and Service Navigation – Information and Referral – Safety Planning – Practical Support – Psychosocial Education – Group Work – Brokerage – Cultural Support

Working across multiple domains

Safety and Risk – Health and Development – Financial – Housing – Culture – Parenting – Family relationships/Kinship – Police and Legal – Education – Child Protection – Social Connections

Flexible, creative, and non-judgemental responses to support the mother/carer-child relationship

Significantly, the program prioritised:

- **Working collaboratively with mothers/carers** as part of the strategy to support them to develop capacity to support their children and improve parenting skills and confidence that had been eroded by the actions of the perpetrator
- **Keeping the perpetrator's pattern of behavior visible and central in the work** by using documentation practices informed by the Safe & Together Model. This ensured the perpetrator, and their patterns of coercive control were "visible" and explicitly named throughout the documented risk and protective factors in all case files
- **Identifying the protective actions and strategies that mothers/carers have used** to keep themselves and their children safe from violence and coercive control
- **Providing environments where children can make healthy and happy relationship connections** and have experiences that build positive new memories to facilitate healing from past trauma
- **Working collaboratively with community partners** across the domestic and family violence service system to promote access to services and resources and address injustices.

HOW THE DV WEST APPROACH IMPACTED CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE, AND THEIR FAMILIES

The evaluation data highlighted that there was a significant *reduction in risk factors* and an increase in *protective factors* across the multiple contexts of the families' lives due to their engagement with the DV West Program. The figures are outlined in the evaluation report but of note:

- Most significantly, of the 32 families who were current clients of the Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) and had been assessed at Risk of Significant Harm, not one child was removed into Out-of-Home Care whilst they were engaged with DV West.
- There was increased/improved access to services with 100% of the mothers/carers reported improved access to, and engagement with, services across the sector to support them and their children with the ongoing impacts of domestic and family violence. This is compared to limited access to services and service mistrust identified for 100% of mothers/carers at in-take to the service.
- There were increased levels of and improved safety for mothers/carers and their children with 71% of clients having a reduction in unsafe contact with the perpetrator - either through an ADVO, provision of secure housing or other interventions.
- A number of mothers/carers had improved skills in the area of parenting (64%). This was coupled with an improvement in other skills related to family functioning and an improved understanding of the impacts of domestic and family violence on their children.

When asked about how DV West had impacted their lives, the mothers/carers who were interviewed reported feeling safer; having space, time and support to redevelop their relationship with their children and broader family and kinship relations; experiencing a reduction in secondary victimisation from the system (due to support provided to navigate the complex welfare, child protection and justice systems); experiencing the improved health, mental health and wellbeing of their children; experiencing improved confidence levels around parenting and supporting their children (this highlighted a shift, moving from the messaging from the perpetrator that they were a bad or incompetent parent); experiencing the benefits of having a respite from the impacts of domestic and family violence through the activity and holiday program provided by DV West with the importance of shared positive experiences resulting in reconnecting as a family unit without the perpetrator; and experiencing a renewed connection to Country and culture for Aboriginal families and families from a culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) background.

When children were asked about what had changed for them during their engagement with DV West, they talked about the creation of new positive memories associated with their mother/carer and siblings; having learnt new skills; exposure to new experiences; and the creation of new positive memories.



BROADER LEARNINGS FOR THE SECTOR

The findings from this evaluation demonstrate that effective work with children and young people who have experienced domestic and family violence occurs in the context of supporting and strengthening the attachment between the child and their mother/carer, and strengthening relationships with siblings, kinship and social networks, as outlined in the *CYP Framework*. The evaluation also demonstrates a high number of children entering Domestic and Family Violence Refuges are at significant risk of harm and the important, but largely

unrecognised role of women's DV refuges in reducing risks, increasing protective factors and preventing child removal should be acknowledged and supported as an effective child protection early intervention strategy. The DV West approach using the *CYP Framework* alongside the Safe & Together Model should be considered an exemplar for work with children, young people and their families in future sector, and service development and training.

Access DV West resources and publications [here](#).

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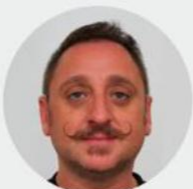
(Re)connecting with professional identity: drawing on First Nations wisdom and place-based approaches

Four AASW Branch Presidents offer insights into member perspectives and feedback, particularly on the theme of connection, encapsulating members' calls for embodied (in-person) opportunities to connect with peers and colleagues.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS



Elizabeth Little
TAS Branch President



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NT Branch President



Leonie Vela
QLD Branch President



Hala Abdelnour
NSW Branch President

Following experiences of the COVID-19 pandemic, which might be understood as fragmentation and dislocation, it seems apparent that our identities as social workers are intricately intertwined with our connections and interconnectedness – to community, to people and place, to our peers and colleagues, and to the broader world around us.

What, then, might this mean for AASW Branches?

In this article, we consider members' calls for genuine connection with reference to place-based approaches and First Nations wisdom and the role they can play in shaping our individual and collective social work professional identity.

Community development, in particular "place-based approaches", assert the importance of place, "the local" and community. Place-based approaches are tailored to the unique circumstances of a place and engage local people and communities as owners and active participants in programs and initiatives.

They seek to address a range of challenges and needs by "harnessing the vision, resources and opportunities in each community" (QCOSS, 2019). Place-based approaches are rooted in the recognition of the significance of local contexts and embody an ethos of empowerment and collaboration. Place-based approaches give primacy

to the voices and aspirations of those directly impacted and harness the collective wisdom and resources within a particular place.

AASW Branches are based across Australia in jurisdictions with different laws, policies, and organisational contexts, and with different social and community needs and priorities. The learning from place-based approaches suggests AASW Branches have an important role to play in the provision of local opportunities for genuine connection and the strengthening of professional identity and advocacy capacity, and for a deeper and more relevant connection of social workers in their communities.

Moreover, the place-based approaches described above find resonance with First Nations ways of knowing, doing, and being, particularly in the profound connection to land and country. In Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, the notion of Country extends beyond a physical place, encompassing spiritual, cultural, and ancestral dimensions.

Professor Mick Dodson explains:

When we talk about traditional 'Country' ... we mean something beyond the dictionary definition of the word ... we might mean homeland, or tribal or clan area and we might mean more than just a place on the map. For us,



Country is a word for all the values, places, resources, stories and cultural obligations associated with that area and its features. It describes the entirety of our ancestral domains. While they may all no longer necessarily be the titleholders to land, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians are still connected to the Country of their ancestors and most consider themselves the custodians or caretakers of their land. (Reconciliation Australia, 2024)

There is a need to integrate this profound understanding of place into social work practice, recognising the interconnectedness of individuals, communities, and their environments, and the intrinsic links between cultural identity, wellbeing and the land. Going further, these insights can also illuminate and help give meaning to one's own sense of disconnection and fragmentation and name a deep need for connection and interconnectedness with the people social workers work with and for.

In the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, the yearning for connection reverberates with renewed force. As social workers, our professional identity is rooted in connection with our peers and colleagues, more so now as we re-engage with an embodied experience, rooted in a physical location and not as pixels behind a computer screen.

While digital platforms can provide a range of tools for professional and personal use, echoing the long-held

wisdom of First Nations people, there is increasingly recognition of, and more demand for, "genuine" connection. By genuine it seems what is meant is the capacity to develop a shared awareness of each other's perspectives that starts and continues a conversation about what we can do in the here and now and how we can collectively move towards a better future - this is praxis. Social workers are asking for more authentic or more real connections, which suggests that time-limited digital, screen-based connections can be experienced as unreal, inauthentic and, it seems at times, unsatisfying.

The imperative to cultivate authentic relationships, to facilitate connections and to recognise the value of interconnectedness is the essence of our profession. We need to heed the call to (re)connect and chart a way forward that draws on the wisdom of First Nations Australians and embraces place-based approaches. Social work needs connectedness to grow our understanding of, and engagement with, what is happening around us, and to allow us to work with our colleagues, clients and communities to identify new and innovative ways to respond to local issues by harnessing local lore, effort and resources.

AASW Branches have a positive role to play co-creating together this future for social work. Join us by getting involved in your local Branch, connect with your peers and, in so doing, *strengthen your professional identity whilst shaping your profession's identity.*

-

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Medical Injuries



Work-Related Injuries

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Bendigo	Greensborough	Sunshine
Craigieburn	Mildura	Traralgon
Dandenong	Reservoir	Wangaratta
Frankston		

New South Wales

Sydney
Parramatta

Western Australia

Perth
Hamilton Hill

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Get in touch with us today. We take calls 24/7.

1800 111 222
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Legal help:

Ashanti is back in the game in Adelaide thanks to AASW

Meet Ashanti Jones, a dedicated youth outreach social worker based in Adelaide. Recently, Ashanti encountered an unexpected hurdle after visiting a client in the Adelaide hills. Initially brushing off the injury as minor, she's now realising it might be a longer-term issue, particularly concerning her back.



Ashanti, 38 years old and a divorced mother of two teenagers, Ashanti's an avid golfer, a passionate supporter of the Adelaide Crows, and has been in government and government-adjacent roles for 15 years. As a proud member of the Australian Association of Social Workers, she understands the importance of having a support network in both her personal and professional life.

The Australian Association of Social Workers has collaborated with Maurice Blackburn Lawyers, Australia's leading

social justice law firm, to provide a free legal consultation service for all members and their families. This partnership aims to offer a comprehensive solution to the diverse legal issues members may encounter. It is useful for Ashanti, in this situation.

Maurice Blackburn offers a range of services covering various legal matters, including court cases, consent issues, mandatory reporting, complaints and personal injury claims. Each member or their family is entitled to one complimentary 30-minute consultation per financial year within

Maurice Blackburn's area of expertise.* Additionally, for queries outside their expertise, Maurice Blackburn will facilitate a referral to another law firm for consultation where possible.

For Ashanti, accessing this service was a game-changer. Through the Australian Association of Social Workers, she reached out to member services and connected with Maurice Blackburn. She received clear legal advice on how to navigate her injury with her employer and determine the best course of action moving forward.

Reflecting on her experience, Ashanti remarked:



I'm grateful for the free help and support I received from Maurice Blackburn. It made a world of difference knowing I had expert legal guidance to address my concerns. I feel satisfied and relieved that I can now confidently take the necessary steps towards resolving my injury.

If you're facing legal challenges or need guidance on any legal matter, don't hesitate to reach out for support. Visit the link below to learn more about the services offered by the Australian Association of Social Workers in partnership with Maurice Blackburn Lawyers.

Remember, help is just a call away.



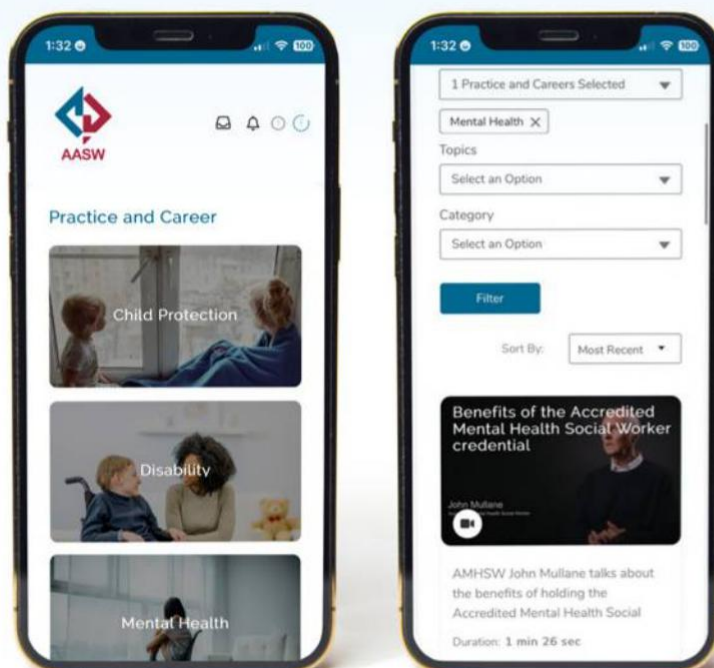
* Excluding employment law.

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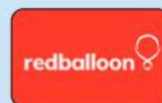
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