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Important Dates

- **29th July to 3rd August**
check out our presentation at the International Childhood trauma conference
<http://www.childhoodtrauma.org.au/2018/june/healing-the-past-by-nurturing-the-future>
- **Mon 10th September:**
Investigator meeting and film showing 'After the apology' (5pm). B
- **Tues 11th September:** Key stakeholder workshop 2

Where: Mercure Resort, Alice Springs

RSVP: hpnf@latrobe.edu.au

Opportunities

- **PhD scholarship**
Healing the Past by Nurturing the Future project
<https://www.latrobe.edu.au/research/future/costs-scholarships/specialist-scholarships>

Contact Us

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Perinatal support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents who have experienced complex childhood trauma



Investigator's report

Welcome to the first project newsletter

It's been an exciting first six months since we received funding for this four-year co-design project with many partners and collaborators. We aim to circulate three newsletters a year to provide regular updates. In this first newsletter, we give a brief introduction to the project and team, what's happening and next steps.

What is this project about?

Healing the Past by Nurturing the Future (HPNF) is a Community Based Participatory Action Research (CBPAR) project which aims to co-design culturally acceptable and feasible perinatal (pregnancy to 2 years after birth) strategies to identify and enable healing and recovery of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (Aboriginal) parents who have experienced complex childhood trauma.

Why?

Complex trauma can have profound and ongoing impact on development, and physical, social and emotional wellbeing. Long-lasting relational effects may be triggered during parenthood, causing emotional distress and impeding the capacity of parents to nurture their children. On the flip side, the transition to parenthood offers a unique life-course opportunity for healing and preventing intergenerational transmission, even after severe trauma. Yet, despite these opportunities for healing, particularly during the large number of appointments parents have with health care providers; and the potential for triggering during these appointments due to the intimate nature of perinatal care - there are currently no systematic perinatal strategies for identifying and supporting parents who have experienced complex trauma themselves.



the
Lowitja
Institute

Australia's National
Institute for Aboriginal
and Torres Strait Islander
Health Research



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Our Team



L-R Melissa Morgan, Cath Chamberlain, Naomi Ralph, Yvonne Clark reaching the top of the Darebin Spiritual Healing Trail for our first operational team planning day!



Project Staff & Investigators

Dr Catherine Chamberlain, midwife/Senior Research Fellow, La Trobe University is a descendant of the Trawlwoolway People (Tasmania), with over 25 years' experience in reproductive and child health, including program and hospital service management, policy implementation, guideline development, evidence-based practice and research.

Dr Yvonne Clark, Clinical Psychologist, Research Fellow at La Trobe University and South Australian Medical Research Institute is a Kokatha and Wirangu Aboriginal woman from South Australia. Yvonne's experience spans clinical, community, social and academic psychology, predominately with Aboriginal people (in particular with families, children and young people).

Dr Naomi Ralph, Research Fellow with La Trobe University and the University of Melbourne grew up on Gunditjmara country and lived for several years in the Kimberley before returning to Melbourne, her home. Naomi's experience is in trauma, PTSD, healing and recovery for populations effected by trauma including Aboriginal people, Veterans, first responders, and disaster affected communities.

Ms Melissa Morgan, Project Administration Officer, La Trobe University.

Melissa is a Yorta Yorta/Wemba Wemba woman with over 20 + years' experience in Administration working for various Victorian Aboriginal organisations, government departments and 5 years in tertiary education.

Investigators

Dr Graham Gee, Registered psychologist, Victorian Aboriginal Health Service Specialises in Aboriginal mental health and social and emotional wellbeing, particularly resilience and recovery from trauma among Aboriginal people.

Prof Stephanie Brown, Head of healthy Mothers Healthy Families Research Group, Murdoch Children's Research Institute is a maternal and social epidemiologist with extensive experience leading large mother and child studies, including studies with Aboriginal women and children, and families of refugee background.

Prof Kerry Arabena, Chair for Indigenous Health and Director of the Indigenous Health Equity Unit, University of Melbourne is a Torres Strait Islander woman and social worker whose work has made significant contributions to gender issues, social justice, human rights, access and equity, service provision and harm minimisation.

Prof Judy Atkinson, Southern Cross University & Patron We-Alli Trust is a Jiman / Bundjalung woman. Judy is a national leader in intergenerational and relational trauma, and healing or recovery for Indigenous, and indeed all peoples. Though nominally retired, she continues working with communities.

Prof Jan Nicholson, Inaugural Roberta Holmes Professor at La Trobe University. Jan has made significant contributions to understanding parenting and family factors influencing the provision of effective preventive and early intervention, including approaches to protecting and promoting parent mental health and parenting.

Investigators



Dr Deirdre Gartland, Senior Research Fellow, Murdoch Childrens Research Institute is co-leader of the research program focusing on Health, Wellbeing and Resilience across the Life Course. She has a particular focus on social adversity and building the evidence needed to better support vulnerable families.



Prof Helen Herrman, Professor of Psychiatry, Orygen, National Centre of Excellence in Youth Mental Health and Centre for Youth Mental Health, The University of Melbourne is currently President of the World Psychiatric Association. Her work focuses on community mental health care and promoting mental health, in particular with marginalised groups, including homeless people, prisoners, & youth living in out-of-home care.



Ms Karen Glover, South Australian Medical Research Institute is a Mein:tnk and Wotjobaluk woman with over 30+ years' experience working in the government and non-government Aboriginal health and community services sectors, including policy, planning, service development, management and advocacy.



Dr Fiona Mensah, biostatistician, Murdoch Childrens' Research Institute Fiona's research focuses on child development and family resilience. She has worked with Aboriginal families and children, families of Refugee background, and families experiencing psychosocial adversities.



Dr Caroline Atkinson, Program Director, We Al-li is an Aboriginal social worker and leader in the area of intergenerational trauma in Indigenous Australia. She developed the first culturally sensitive, reliable and valid psychometric measure in Australia that determines PTSD in Australian Aboriginal peoples.



Ms Shawana Andrews, University of Melbourne is an Aboriginal Palawa woman with a background in social work and public health, including Aboriginal and paediatric health. She lectures in Indigenous Health, and an Aboriginal Fathering Project, examining the experiences of parenting in the context of family violence.



Dr Sue Brennan is a Research Fellow at Cochrane Australia, Monash University, where she produces and facilitates the use of systematic reviews in health policy decision-making.



Professor Helen McLachlan, La Trobe University is a midwifery leader with expertise in research translation and collaborations. She is the lead investigator on a partnership project with VACCHO and four Victorian maternity services aimed at improving maternity care and health outcomes for Aboriginal mothers and babies.



Miss Tanja Hirvonen, Flinders University, is a Jaru and Bunuba woman, and grew up in North West Queensland, Mount Isa. Tanja is a clinical psychologist who specialises in social and emotional wellbeing, health professionals' self-care and transgenerational trauma.



Dr Sandra Campbell, midwife/research fellow, James Cook University Apunipima Cape York Health Council is an Aboriginal researcher with a professional background in nursing and midwifery in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in Queensland, the Northern Territory and Victoria.

1. Key stakeholder mapping

We know there are so many people doing amazing work to support families experiencing complex trauma. We have been trying to contact and communicate with you all and more than 150 people are on our email list. We hope to meet more of you so please circulate and encourage people to join via email or the website.

2. Key stakeholder co-design workshops 1 & 2

The first key stakeholder workshop was hosted by the South Australian Health and Medical Research Institute on March 27 2018. This was attended by more than 40 people who contributed to rich and productive discussions about the evidence, what people want to see happen in the project, establishing protocols for fostering a culturally and emotionally safe project environment, and what's currently happening with regards to screening and support strategies. A detailed workshop report will be available on the project website soon. The second key stakeholder workshop is scheduled for **Tuesday 11th September 2018** at the Mercure Resort, Alice Springs.



First HPNF team meeting with the SAMHRI Indigenous Collective

3. Pilot discussion groups with Elders

We have received ethics approval in June 2018 to pilot creative discussion groups with Elders in South Australia about complex trauma in the perinatal period. We are looking forward to having these discussions in late July and sharing the wisdom at the second key stakeholder workshop in Alice Springs.

4. Evidence Reviews

A broad *scoping review and map of evidence* related to complex trauma in the perinatal period has been completed and submitted for publication. A draft is available on request. A full systematic review of parents views is underway.

5. Assessment process scoping

We understand concerns that identifying parents experiencing complex trauma has inherent risk of triggering inappropriate responses from the child protection system and labelling parents 'at risk'. We are developing a framework to minimise these risks and contextualise co-design of awareness (trauma-informed perinatal care), recognition, assessment and support strategies.



Self-care tip ☺

Take the time to look after yourself, when working in the area of trauma. Spending time in nature is particularly nurturing. We can highly recommend the Darebin Spiritual Healing Trail for those of you living in Melbourne.

