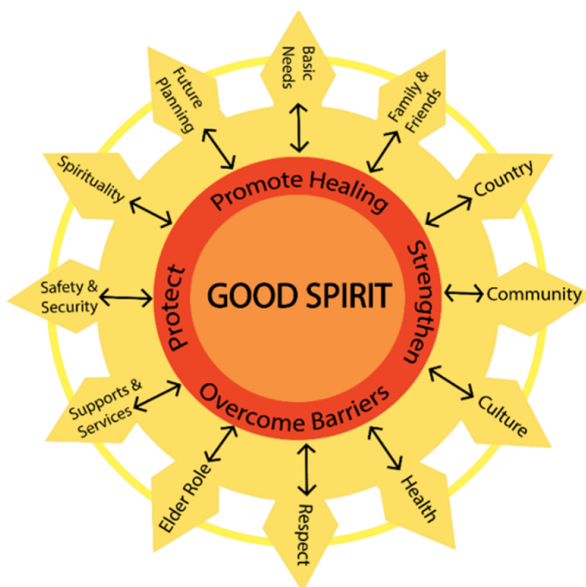




Good Spirit Good Life Package

Recommendations and Strategies



The development and validation of the Good Spirit Good Life tool was funded by a NHMRC-ARC Dementia Development Fellowship for Dr Kate Smith (Centre for Aboriginal Medical and Dental Health, University of Western Australia), and the validation in Victoria was funded by a Poche Indigenous Health Network Grant.

PRINCIPAL AUTHORS

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Good Spirit Good Life assessment and recommendations package was co-developed with older Aboriginal participants and our Nyoongar Elders Governance Group in Perth, Western Australia. We would like to acknowledge the contribution of the following Elders and senior community members: Doris Getta, Charles Kickett, Helen Kickett, Doreen Nelson, Vonita Walley, Yvonne Winmar, Carmel Kickett, Marie Walley, Rose Walley and Teresa Walley. We would also like to acknowledge the contribution of our service partners in Perth and Melbourne -Hall and Prior, People Who Care, Rise Network, Moorditj Koort and the Victorian Aboriginal Health Service and thank our Perth based Service Providers Advisory group members: Jennifer Grieves, Carmel Kickett, Debbie Armstead, Alison White, David Bell, and Violet Bacon. We would like to acknowledge the assistance of University of WA students Ciara Donohoe and Morgan Bowen in compiling the recommendations from the interview data.

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The below recommendations and strategies aim to assist service providers to improve the wellbeing of older Aboriginal people.

If the person’s response is ‘**never, not much**’ or ‘**sometimes**’ for any of following the questions, with their approval, service providers may implement the following strategies:

Family and Friends

Do you get to have a yarn and spend time with family or friends?

1. Identify the persons existing supports and who the person would like to spend more time with.
2. Liaise with the person and identified family and/or friends to determine ways to enhance social engagement.
3. Support the person in engaging with social groups based on the person’s interests e.g. attend Elders groups, Men’s Sheds or other community-based groups. This can provide the person with opportunities for social engagement. The person may need support with:
 - An accompanying staff member/family member/companion
 - Arranging transport
 - Dietary requirements
 - Managing medical needs
4. Support the person in connecting and spending time with family. This can be through facilitating:
 - Family to come and visit the person.
 - Regular Family Days, with food and activities.
 - Assisting the person to visit family outside of the residential facility (e.g. meal sharing, family events and visiting Country).
 - Assisting the person to communicate via various communication platforms.
5. Support the person in connecting or reconnecting with friends and community.
6. Encourage yarnning and reminiscing about the old days with family and friends.
7. Support the person in attending funerals or visiting graves of family members.

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Country

Do you spend enough time connecting to Country?

1. If the person expresses the need to return to Country, investigate options to facilitate this (contacting regional or remote services that may be able to assist).
2. Honour the person's end of life wishes, which may include wanting to die on Country. Sensitive explore options to facilitate returning to country (as above).
3. Support the person to spend time on Country. Service providers may be able to liaise with other health services (e.g. dialysis) to provide short term care while the person is visiting Country.
4. Engage in activities that promote connection and caring for the land e.g. land management, painting/art, gardening, yarning sessions and others.
5. Encourage the person and their service provider to develop and create tranquil garden areas incorporating native plants and bush tucker.
6. Facilitate yarning sessions by inviting people to speak and share stories about Country. Consider inviting outside speakers/gathering around the fire/using photos or artwork to prompt discussions, inviting younger children to listen and learn from the elders and promote respect.
7. Consider regular day trips to national parks, country towns, cultural centres, etc.
8. Assist with transport to Country, consider any access issues and support/manage medical needs.
9. Assist with transport, access, and medical management for attending native title, land, council or land management meetings as required.
10. Simple activities such as removing shoes and walking outside can allow persons to feel more connected to the land.
11. Use of available technology to connect to Country, such as mobile phone, 360 degree camera and virtual reality experiences.

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Community

Do you feel connected to your community?

1. Service providers could link in with Aboriginal volunteer groups that visit elderly Aboriginal people in residential facilities to yarn with people.
2. Encourage 'intergenerational exchange', where the person can share knowledge and stories about their life/culture with younger people.
3. Promote community events, such as NAIDOC Week, Reconciliation Week and Sorry Day.
4. Link in with local community groups. This can provide the person with opportunities for social engagement and inclusion. The person may need support with:
 - An accompanying staff member/ family member/ companion (if the person is not comfortable going alone)
 - Arranging transport
 - Dietary requirements
 - Managing medical needs

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Culture

Do you feel connected to culture? (Prompt with examples e.g. attending Aboriginal events and meetings, sharing traditional foods, caring for Country)

1. Ensure staff have a respect and understanding of the need to follow local cultural protocols, whilst understanding the person may come from a different area with different protocols.
2. Staff members to complete cultural competency training with local Elders.
3. Support the person to engage in women's or men's business as indicated by the person. Allocate staff appropriately to ensure these gender based cultural protocols and practices are respected and valued.
4. Assist the person in accessing/preparing traditional foods if wanted. This could range from cooking dampers and stews, to hunting for bush tucker.
5. Assist the person to participate in caring for country activities including land management, planting, sustainable practices, gardening, sharing knowledge of caring for country.
6. Encourage the person to attend cultural days and activities (plays, dances, art exhibitions, festivals and celebrations, commemorations) and link in with local cultural groups/community centres.
7. Assist the person in accessing bush medicine and Traditional Healers (only if indicated, and you will need an Aboriginal person to organise this with the family).
8. Assist the person in finding opportunities to speak and listen to language if appropriate. Needs to be sensitively addressed; services must remain mindful of the continuing impact of past policies prohibiting speaking Aboriginal languages and the grief/trauma caused.
9. Support persons in engaging with social groups, family and community members. This can be through art, dance, attending events, and even watching NITV.
10. Services to have a calendar of significant events, contributing to celebrations and demonstrating sensitivity to commemorative events e.g. Sorry Day, NAIDOC week, Reconciliation Week.
11. Support the person to attend funerals or pay their respect in other ways. For example, visiting the family members of those who have passed on, or making phone calls.
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Health

Do you do things to take care of your health?

1. Provide access to Aboriginal led/operated and/or culturally appropriate health services to meet medical/health needs.
2. Provide culturally safe service delivery by:
 - Assisting the person to easily make and attend appointments (e.g. transport, accompanying support person, preparing documentation e.g. referrals/medication lists/scans, offering reminder phone calls if needed).
 - Having a more social environment, where the person can yarn with other members of community and feel comfortable.
 - Supporting and accommodating family members.
 - Consider the physical environment of your health service - additional seating for family members in appointments/waiting rooms, welcoming environment with Acknowledgement of Country, Aboriginal paintings/handicrafts/flag on display).
 - Provide access to traditional healing options and bush medicines (through an Aboriginal family or community member)
3. Support the person in understanding, feeling comfortable and complying with treatment plans and medications. This can be done through:
 - Explaining medical conditions and treatment options in a culturally appropriate manner (yarning, respecting non-verbal communication such as reduced eye contact and the use of silence).
 - Creating a medications list.
 - Running health groups for community members with similar medical conditions so they can yarn and share ideas, or providing information on these groups.
 - Helping the person to access health information on communication platforms.
 - Helping the person with dietary changes to manage health needs. Potentially creating sample diets with bush tucker, budgeting ideas.
 - Keeping in contact with the person to provide ongoing support if required.
4. Make the person aware of free/subsidised health and personal care services they can access for themselves or family (e.g. equipment/aids, exercise programs).
5. Assist the person in seeking emotional support for chronic illnesses and changes to independence (e.g. counselling services, yarning groups and/or healing workshops).
6. Encourage the person to develop or continue personal interests or hobbies, either through group activities or independently.
7. Encourage healthy lifestyle choices such as exercise and healthy eating.
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Note: Improving health requires a holistic approach and therefore, recommendations from all other questions should be employed in conjunction with the recommendations outlined in this section.



Respect

Do you feel respected and valued as an Elder/older person?

1. Ensure staff have completed appropriate cultural competency training and demonstrate respect for cultural values, protocols and ways of doing business.
2. Facilitate open communication with Elders through active listening, responsiveness and sensitivity.
3. Adopt a person-centred and relationship-centred approach to care - ensuring the Elder and their key support person/s are involved in decisions.
4. Address the Elder appropriately and according to their personal wishes. For example, refer to an Elder or leader as Aunty or Uncle only if you have determined they are comfortable with this.
5. Allow time and space for Elders and their family to conduct sorry business when there is a family loss. Be guided by the person and their family, it may be considered disrespectful to mention the deceased person's name.
6. Provide a safe and welcoming environment for the Elder and their families to gather.
7. Avoid displaying or broadcasting images of deceased people, unless given permission.
8. Support persons in sharing stories through recording or writing down history (determine if family are okay and interested in helping with this).

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Elder Role

Do you feel you can share your knowledge and stories with the younger mob?

1. Support the person in sharing knowledge and culture with younger generations. Service providers can assist the person in recording their knowledge and/or organising yarning sessions/events. Be aware of the correct cultural protocols surrounding this, and seek permission from family members.
2. Assist the person in taking younger family members to Country to show them where they grew up and to learn about the history of other important or sacred sites.
3. Set up the environment to facilitate inter-generational exchange and story-telling, for example, sitting around the fire and sharing stories/artefacts, music sessions, etc.
4. Encourage intergenerational activities through community engagement e.g. visiting community centres and schools or encouraging younger people to visit the older person/people in their homes or residential facility.

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Supports and Services

Do you feel the services you use are respectful and support your needs? (In residential care ask: Do you feel this place is respectful and supports your needs?)

1. Adopt a family-centred approach to service provision. Support the person's family to continue to provide informal care where possible.
2. Support the person to maintain or improve their current level of independence through facilitating access to services and supports as required. This may involve attending exercise programs or social groups, accessing transport to go shopping or receiving cleaning and gardening services.
3. Enquire about the services the person uses - identify any problems and request feedback for improvements. Reach out to service providers to discuss problems and potential solutions.
4. Ensure staff have completed appropriate cultural awareness training.
5. Have an Aboriginal staff member/liaison to identify improvement recommendations for the service.
6. If unable to meet the cultural needs of the person, assist them to transition to a culturally appropriate service.
7. Form partnerships with other organisations in order to appropriately meet the needs of the person.
8. Ensure cultural security in service access and service delivery at all times (employment of Aboriginal staff, cultural training, follow local cultural protocols, build partnerships with Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations).
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Safety and Security

Do you feel you have a safe place to live?

1. Identify safety concerns and ensure timely response to urgent issues.
2. For health related housing needs, a GP letter of support may be required.
3. Service providers can connect persons with culturally appropriate housing or advocacy services that meet their needs.
4. Assist the person to access services that enable them to resolve housing issues relating to eviction, rent troubles, safety or discrimination concerns.
5. Understand that the person's concerns may extend to the safety and security of family members.

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Spirituality

Do you feel safe and supported in your spiritual beliefs? (Prompt: yarning about culture, going to church, sharing traditional stories).

1. Assist the person in finding opportunities to engage in traditional practices. For example, opportunities to safely gather around a fire to share stories and spend time together, visiting or talking about Country and visiting sacred sites.
2. Provide culturally safe and supportive opportunities for the person to share traditional stories and teach others through yarning, art, song, music and dance.
3. Support the person to engage in spiritual practices such as smoking ceremonies and traditional healers, and involve family and community as indicated by the person.
4. Assist the person in attending preferred religious events and services and spending time with their religious community.
5. Assist the person to engage in their preferred religious practices e.g. saying grace at meals, prayer/reflection times.
6. Link in to relevant pastoral care services (visiting religious personnel).
7. Provide equipment required and opportunities to listen to and play music to enhance spiritual connection.
8. Provide materials to engage in art related activities that promote spiritual wellbeing.

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Be aware that some activities such as playing religious songs may bring back painful memories of mission life. This response will differ between people, and it is necessary to have a yarn with the older person to identify their preferred spiritual practices.



Future Planning

Do you feel you have things in place as you grow older? (e.g. your future health and care, funeral wishes, family looked after).

1. Support the person in accessing the most up to date information and linking them to the right services e.g. advocacy services.
2. Connect the person with culturally appropriate services such as:
 - Funeral services or assistance with developing a funeral plan.
 - Financial services for assistance (e.g. funeral fund, inheritance, debt/mortgage payments).
 - Legal services for assistance with wills, power of attorney, guardianship for dependent family members and appointing a public trustee to avoid family conflicts.
 - Medical support and end-of-life care services for assistance with location of palliative care, DNR decisions and returning to Country to die.
3. Assist the person and their loved ones in preparing emotionally for future events. Putting the person and their family in contact with support groups.
4. Support the person to connect with family members/loved ones to make peace or resolve conflicts where appropriate.

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Basic Needs

Do you feel you have enough money to get by? (e.g. for food, housing, clothing).

1. Demonstrate sensitivity and empathy when raising these issues of hardship with the person you are working with.
2. Determine the person's most pressing needs and refer to appropriate local community services or supports for food, financial support and clothing, such as Centrelink, Foodbank, Salvos.
3. Consider referring to a social worker to discuss support options.
4. If the person has debts, overdue bills, trouble making ends meet, legal troubles relating to finances, support the person to access financial counselling. This should be a free service involving information, support and advocacy. For example, explaining rights and options, advocating by phone or through letters of support.
5. Support the person to access emergency food relief e.g. Foodbank, OzHarvest.
6. If you suspect or if the person reports signs of Elder abuse, approach this with sensitivity and with the person's informed consent. Contact culturally appropriate support and advocacy services that understand Aboriginal culture and family dynamics e.g. Advocare. Determine the urgency of the matter, and consider following the Advocare Elder Abuse Protocol when consent is given.
7. The older person may need transport assistance and company/support to buy food, clothing, or pay bills.
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