

Reducing harm

- It's best not to use any gunja.
- The more you use the more harm you get.
- Have healthy food around so you don't eat junk food when stoned. If you have got the munchies make sure you leave some food for your family.
- If your friend becomes very paranoid (suspicious and fearful) or sad when stoned, tell them these feelings will pass and try to keep them calm.
- Never leave them alone when they are feeling like this.** If necessary get some help from a family member or health worker.
- If you get very fearful, anxious, depressed or paranoid when you are stoned, it shows that gunja is causing you problems and your body doesn't like it.
- Never drive or operate machinery if you are stoned.
- You shouldn't get stoned in dangerous places.
- You shouldn't use getting stoned as an excuse to break the law (Aboriginal Law or non-Aboriginal Law).
- Always have safer sex and always use a condom.
- Think about how your gunja use could be affecting your family and community.



Reducing your use

Sometimes if you have been using for a long time or using a lot, you can get some uncomfortable feelings when you cut down or cut gunja out. This is because your body is used to the chemicals in gunja.

You may find you crave gunja, think about it a lot, feel angry, anxious or sad, or have very strange dreams. These feelings and effects will stop after a while as your body becomes gunja free.



Getting help and information



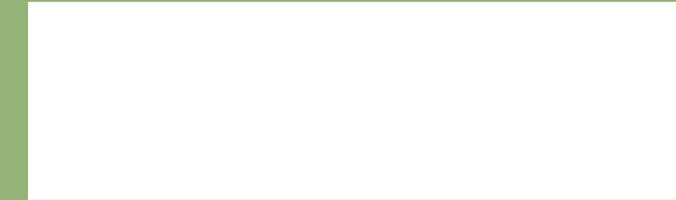
If you are thinking about changing your gunja use, perhaps you could use some help or information. Sometimes people don't get help because they feel shame talking about their drug use. Aboriginal Alcohol and Other Drug Workers, Aboriginal Health Workers or other health professionals are there to help you. They will not put you down. They can help you to stop or reduce your use and support you while you make changes. It may not be easy to reduce your use but your friends and family and other people in your community can also help you by supporting your decision.

ABORIGINAL SUPPORT SYSTEM



For more information and help

Local Contact



Alcohol & Drug Support Line

The Alcohol and Drug Support Line can provide information about culturally secure alcohol and drug services in your area. They are a confidential, 24 hour, statewide telephone counselling, information and referral service for anyone concerned about their own or another person's alcohol or other drug use. Call backs are available.

Phone: 9442 5000 or 1800 198 024 (country callers)
E-mail: alcoholdrugsupport@mhc.wa.gov.au
Website: alcoholdrugsupport.mhc.wa.gov.au

Parent & Family Drug Support Line

Confidential, 24 hour, statewide telephone counselling, information and referral service for anyone concerned about a loved one's alcohol or other drug use. Parent callers can speak to a Parent Peer Volunteer with a lived experience of their own son or daughter's alcohol or other drug use. Call backs are available.

Phone: 9442 5050 or 1800 653 203 (country callers)
E-mail: alcoholdrugsupport@mhc.wa.gov.au
Website: alcoholdrugsupport.mhc.wa.gov.au

Produced by Strong Spirit Strong Mind™
Aboriginal Programs



Government of Western Australia
Mental Health Commission

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The Aboriginal Inner Spirit Model (Ngarlu Assessment Model) was developed by Joseph 'Nipper' Roe, who belonged to the Karajarri and Yawuru people.
Illustrations: Patrick Bayly, Workspace Design.
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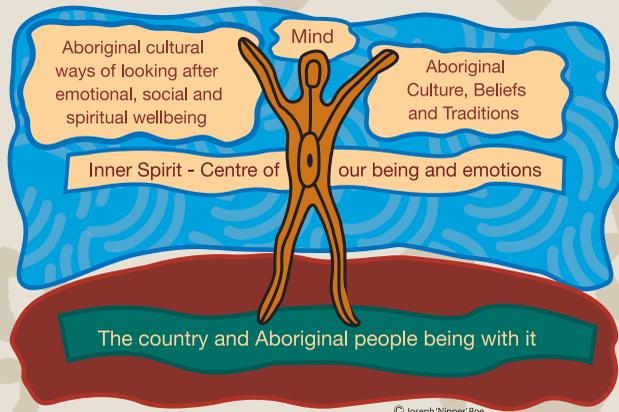
STRONG SPIRIT STRONG MIND

Aboriginal Ways of Reducing Harm
From Alcohol and Other Drugs

Gunja



ABORIGINAL INNER SPIRIT MODEL



Our Inner Spirit is the centre of our being and emotions.

When our spirit feels strong our mind feels strong.

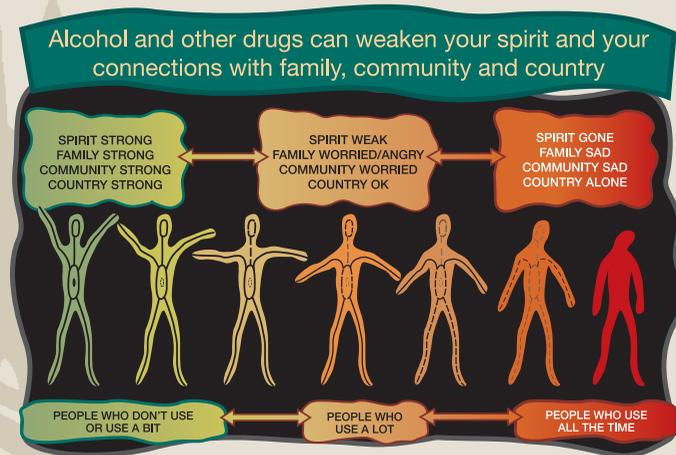
When our spirit feels tangled our mind feels tangled.

Strong Inner Spirit is what keeps people healthy and keeps them connected together.

Strong Inner Spirit keeps our family strong, our community strong and our country alive.

Alcohol and other drugs can weaken your spirit and your connections with family, community and country

Our way of being healthy is to look after ourselves by making good choices, and to care for our family, community and country. Alcohol and other drugs can tangle and weaken our spirit and mind. This can affect our emotional, social, spiritual and physical well-being. This can weaken our connection to family, community and country.



Gunja, marijuana, cannabis, mull, yarndi, pot, cones, hydro, dope, weed



What it is

Gunja is an illegal drug containing THC (tetrahydrocannabinol) which affects the way you think, feel and behave. It also affects your body. You usually feel the effects for a few hours but gunja can stay in your body for up to a month.



Short-term effects

- Gunja can change your mood – make you feel very relaxed and sleepy or even make you laugh a lot.
- You may get ‘the munchies’ and become very hungry.
- It makes your heart go faster, eyes get red, mouth gets dry and breathing becomes harder.
- It slows you down, you can’t concentrate very well, and you start thinking differently.
- Some people, when they smoke can get paranoid (fearful and suspicious), worried or restless. When someone gets paranoid they may think people are after them. Some people may see or hear things that aren’t there. This can last a few hours or more.
- If you drive when you’re ‘stoned’ you can have an accident because your reaction time is slowed down and you can’t concentrate very well.
- Some people have unsafe sex when they are stoned. This puts them at risk of
 - A sexually transmitted infection (STI)
 - Blood-borne viruses (BBV’s), and
 - Unwanted pregnancy



Long-term effects

- Gunja can make you feel very lazy. You can stop looking after yourself.
- You can become forgetful which can affect your work or school.
- Gunja puts pressure on families. It can cost a lot of money.
- Relationship problems, family and domestic violence.
- Some people feel they have to be stoned all the time and can’t live without it.
- You’re more likely to get in trouble with the law because gunja is illegal and sometimes you do silly things when you’re stoned.
- Antisocial behaviour including stealing money and lying.
- It can also cause respiratory problems like chest infections or other health problems like cancers.

