

## Signs and symptoms in a friend

If someone you care about doesn't seem like themselves, how can you tell if they're having a bad day or if it is something more serious? The following are some signs and symptoms to look for:



- feeling tired a lot of the time
- not enjoying things they used to love
- having trouble sleeping
- spending lots of time on their own
- finding it hard to think or concentrate
- feeling sad most of the time
- a major change in eating habits
- lack of energy
- a noticeable change in behaviour or appearance
- an increase in use of alcohol or other drugs

These signs and symptoms should only be used as a guide to check-in on someone you care about and to support them to get professional help. They should not be used to diagnose a mental health illness.

## The Seven Areas

When your SEWB has become a problem it can affect you, your family and your community in one or more of the following areas.



## Yarning about your social and emotional wellbeing

If you are feeling sad and need help, it is important to yarn to someone you trust. It can be hard to reach out to someone and talk about how you are feeling, but it is important to know that there is no shame in yarning about your SEWB when you are not feeling like yourself.

It can be even harder to ask for help. We often think that if we take one day at a time, that things might get better soon and our feelings will improve, but sometimes they don't.

You may also feel shame about asking for help, but there is always someone to talk to, even if you don't realise straight away. Think about who that might be; someone that you trust, that makes you feel safe and someone that won't judge you. This might be:

- your partner
- a family member
- an Elder in your community
- a close friend
- a work colleague
- a school teacher/counsellor
- your doctor
- a mental health counsellor/psychologist
- health worker

There is no shame in yarning about how you are feeling and/or seeking professional support.



## Getting help and information

If you are feeling down or want to improve your social and emotional wellbeing, perhaps you could use some help or information. Sometimes people don't get help because they feel shame talking about their feelings. Aboriginal Health Workers or other health professionals are there to help you. They will not put you down. They can help and support you to make changes. Your friends, family and other people in your community can help you by supporting your decision.

## Aboriginal Support System

- Siblings** (Brothers, Sisters, Cousins, Nephews and Nieces)  
**Parents** (Includes Aunties and Uncles)  
**Elders** (Includes Grandparents)  
**Partner** (and Children)  
**Aboriginal health worker or support worker**



## For more information and help

Local Contact

## Helpful contact numbers

- Lifeline – 13 11 14  
Beyond Blue / Youth Beyond Blue – 1300 224 636  
Headspace – 1800 650 890  
Kids Helpline – 1800 55 1800  
Rurallink – 1800 552 002  
MensLine Australia – 1300 789 978  
SANE Australia Helpline – 1800 18 7263  
Wellways Helpline – 1300 111 400  
QLife – 1800 184 527  
Alcohol and Drug Support Line (ADSL) – 08 9442 5000 / 1800 198 024  
Mental Health Emergency Response Line (MHERL) – 1300 555 788  
Child Protection and Family Support Crisis Helpline (Crisis Care) – 08 9223 1111 / 1800 199 008  
13YARN – 13 92 76  
1800Respect – 1800 737 732

## If there is an emergency call 000

For more information please go to our Strong Spirit Strong Mind Website [www.strongspiritstrongmind.com.au](http://www.strongspiritstrongmind.com.au)

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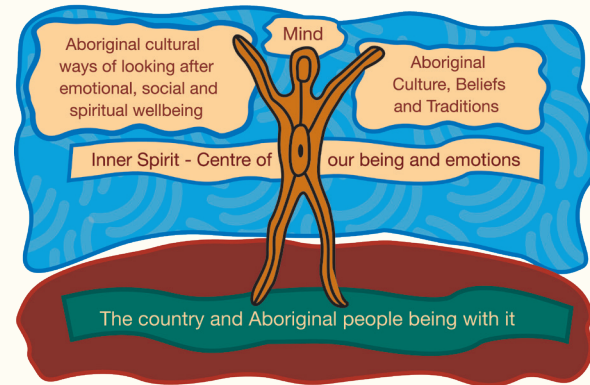
Brochure design by Nani Creative  
The Aboriginal Inner Spirit Model (Ngarlu Assessment Model) was developed by Joseph 'Nipper' Roe, who belonged to the Karajarri and Yawuru people.  
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# Social and Emotional Wellbeing (SEWB)

Aboriginal ways of improving social and emotional wellbeing

## 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.**

## What is social and emotional wellbeing?

Social and emotional wellbeing (SEWB), mental health and mental illness within an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander setting is very complex. SEWB recognises that connection to country, culture, spirit, family and community are very important and can impact on a person's wellbeing significantly.

Aboriginal culture is the oldest living culture in the world. Despite the impact of colonisation, Aboriginal people demonstrate strength, survival, coping skills and resilience.

For this reason, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples prefer the holistic term of social and emotional wellbeing over the term 'mental health' as it is more focused on the strengths of a person.



## What you can do to improve your social and emotional wellbeing?

It is really important that we take care of ourselves, so we can look after our families and communities. Think about some things that you can do that help you to relax, improve your wellbeing and help reduce your stress. Some suggestions to improve your SEWB are:

### Family

- go fishing or camping
- have a cup of tea or a glass of water in a quiet place
- practice culture – cultural identity
- have a BBQ at the park

### Community

- join a women or men's group
- give back to community/help others
- get involved in community social sports or clubs
- volunteer with community programs/events
- learn your local language

### Self

- connect with others – family, friends and community
- avoid alcohol and other drugs
- go back to country
- have a full health check/assessment
- get a good night's sleep
- maintain a healthy diet and exercise regularly
- spend time with your pets
- get creative – listen to your favourite music, dance or do some painting
- have a yarn and ask for help – it's ok to ask for help from family, friends, a support or advocacy service, your doctor, a counsellor or helpline

## Supporting others

If someone you care about doesn't seem like themselves and you are worried, it is important to check-in with them.

**How? – You can do this by calling, texting or visiting them.**

Everyday activities can also provide an opportunity for a yarn; going for a walk or a drive, having a cuppa or preparing a meal together.

Be prepared, they may not want to talk to you straight away, but let them know that when they are ready that you'll be there to listen and support them. You can also check in on them regularly to show them that you genuinely care and want to support them.

Picking the right environment for yarning with your loved one can help in making them feel safe and supported.



## Risk factors

There are many risk factors that can affect our SEWB.

- grief and loss
- relationship/family breakdown
- physical health problems
- discrimination/racism
- impacts of the Stolen Generations
- removal of children
- economic and social disadvantage (e.g. homelessness, and unemployment)
- unresolved trauma
- separation from culture and identity issues
- jail
- violence
- alcohol and other drug use
- family history of mental health issues



## Protective factors

There are also many protective factors that can support and strengthen our SEWB.

- strong support systems and healthy relationships (e.g. family, friends, partner, children and colleagues)
- having somewhere safe to sleep and getting enough sleep
- connection to land, culture, spirituality and ancestry
- a strong cultural identity
- access to affordable basic needs (housing, power, water, food, education and health services)
- access to bush medicine and traditional healers