

# YARNING CIRCLE: Strengthening Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices

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**Queensland  
Government**

# HEALTH STANDARDS

□ Qld Government Cultural Capability Framework – Valuing Culture:

***“Recognising, respecting and valuing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures is fundamental to improving our services”.***

□ NSQHS Standards: Clinical Governance - **1.2; 1.4; 1.21;**

□ NSQHS Standards – Clinical Governance Standard 1.33

***“The health service organisation demonstrates a welcoming environment that recognises the importance of cultural beliefs and practices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people”***

□ QH Cultural Capability Framework – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander engagement and partnerships

***“Sustained, respectful and inclusive engagement is essential to gaining an understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples”***

# WHAT ARE WE TALKING ABOUT?

Yarning Circles, Dialogue Circles, A Yarn, Telling Stories, Discussion Circle, Information Sharing?

Aboriginal people had a ***Yarn***, whether it be with two people, many people, family member(s) etc., to discuss something important, share information, pass on knowledge or, just an informal meet and greet Yarn.

Examples: “*eeaah, look them two yarning up over there*”.

“*look that ‘ol one telling story over there*”

“*them mob Yarning to discuss that business*”

**NOT:** “*Them mob dialoguing*” or “*look them two discussing up over there*”

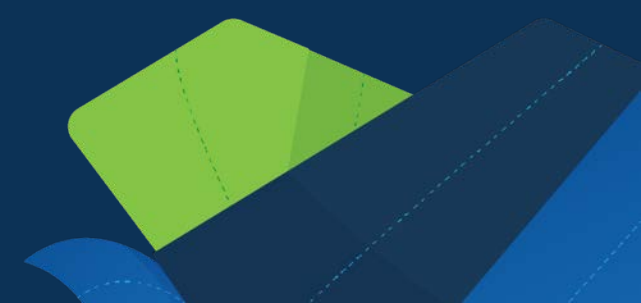
# SO, WHAT IS A YARNING CIRCLE?

- ❑ An effective ancient and traditional means of communication used by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- ❑ It is a harmonious and respectful communication strategy to preserve and share knowledge and to listen to and learn from the knowledge being shared



# WHY USE A YARNING CIRCLE?

- ❑ it is about learning to listen with respect for the story teller
- ❑ to build respectful relationships
- ❑ to work collaboratively with each other
- ❑ to engage in two-way conversations
- ❑ it is about harmony and cohesiveness within our family, clan and, tribal groups
- ❑ to maintain and sustain knowledge through our generations



# HOW DOES A YARNING CIRCLE WORK?

(a) ideally, everyone should know a bit about others in the circle. This determines how the listener should or should not respond

Examples : Men's/Women's business boundaries; Elder knowledge boundaries; Clan/Tribal boundaries

(b) Only one person talks at a time. They should not be interrupted (verbally or non-verbally); they should not be challenged; their story should not be questioned. It is their story, not yours!!

© You will have your turn to tell your story or your version of the same story

(d) Non-verbal acknowledgement that you are listening to the speaker telling his/her story is a nodding of the head

(e) It is usually the Elder, Senior Spokesperson or Knowledge Holder who speaks first

# YOUR RESPONSIBILITY AS A LISTENER

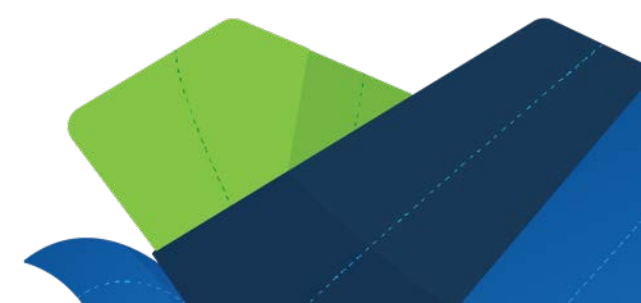
When the speaker has finished and before you respond, ask yourself these questions:

- Do I need clarification?
- Am I required to respond verbally?
- Is it necessary that I do respond?
- What should be my appropriate response eg. does it assist or discourage the speaker?
- Will my story/ what I have to say provide more knowledge for the Yarning group?

*SILENCE can be GOLDEN*

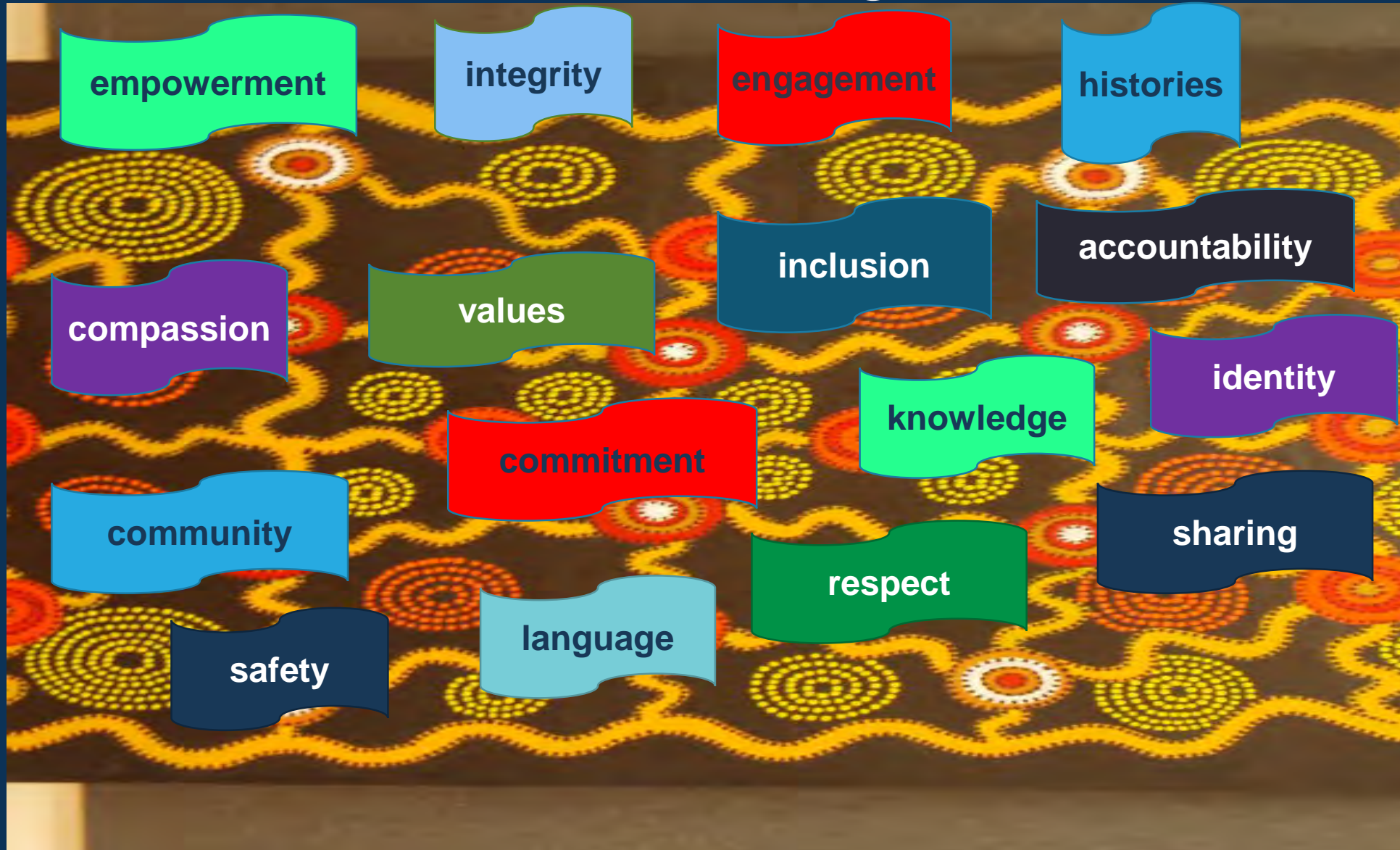
# RECORDING YARNING CIRCLE DISCUSSION TOPICS

STRATEGIES ON TRACK/WORKING	STRATEGIES NOT WORKING





# CONCLUSION: Yarning Circles are about:



# Keys to Effective Community Engagement

- 1. Identify key Stakeholders eg. ATSI Elders
- 2. Employ ATSI Health Worker
  - Link from your Service to ATSI Community
- 3. Establish Yarning Circles
- 4. Culturally Competent Staff
- 5. Create a welcoming place





THANK YOU