The ECHIDNA project: progress update on a collaborative project promoting self-determination in Indigenous communities

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This presentation is available at ePublications@SCU: http://epubs.scu.edu.au/educ_pubs/162
The E.C.H.I.D.N.A project: Progress Update on a collaborative approach promoting self-determination in Indigenous communities

Empowering Communities Holistically In Determining Needs of Aboriginal People

Anthony Franks Kimberlii Austen, Donna Lloyd, Sallie Newell, Laurel Rogers & Uta Dietrich

18th International Union for Health Promotion & Education Conference (April 2004)
Bundjalung Country – Is home to 13 different tribes
E.C.H.I.D.N.A

Empowering
Communities
Holistically
In
Determining
Needs of
Aboriginal People
Echidna

Self Determination Project

- Box Ridge Transition to School Program
- HEALInG Program
- Koori Fathering Program
Partnership
Box Ridge Transition to School Program.

- Coraki Public School
- Department of Community Services
- Echidna Team (NRAHS Health Promotion Unit)
Box Ridge Transition to School Program

- To assist with transition from home to school.
- To address the health needs before school.
- To address behavioural issues.
- To engage parents.
- To understand Aboriginal English.
Partnership

HEALInG Program (Pilot)

- **Rekindling The Spirit Program**
- **Echidna Team** *(NRAHS Health Promotion Unit)*

- New partnerships are been formed with the implementation of the program within the Northern Rivers.
HEALInG Program

Healthy Eating Activities and Lifestyles for Indigenous Groups

- Improvement in self esteem.
- Increase knowledge on healthy eating.
- Increase regular physical activity levels.
- Increase knowledge of lifestyle diseases and risk factors.
Partnership
Koori Fathering Program

- Rekindling The Spirit Program
- Department of Community Services
- Echidna Team (NRAHS Health Promotion Unit)

- New partnerships have been formed with the implementation of the program in other communities within the Northern Rivers, such as Namatjira Haven and Bugalwena Services, also in the near future with Dharah Gibinj (Casino AMS).
Koori Fathering Program

Rationale

- Why focus on Aboriginal parenting programs?
- Why focus on Aboriginal males?
- Culturally appropriate fathering programs.
- Barriers for men attending programs.
- Aboriginal fathers facing complex issues.
- Support of Aboriginal men.
- Benefits for Aboriginal children.
Koori Fathering Program
What is Different?

- Supportive, friendly and comfortable environment.
- Meeting the needs of the participants/community.
- Community ownership of Program.
- Participants set the Group Rules.
- Duration of the Program 15 weeks.
- Transport provided if required.
- Flexibility.
- Partnerships.
- Lunch provided each session.
Koori Fathering Program
Session Titles
- Pre & Post Video consultation with participants.
- What Is Communication?
- Communication Maintenance.
- What Is Discipline?
- Building Relationships.
- Self-Reflection & Connecting.
- Sharing Responsibility.
- Showing Affection.
- Child Development.
- Sex, Pregnancy And Babies.
- Hunters & Gatherers.
Koori Fathering Program
Each Session

Check in:
How has their week been and how are they feeling now?

The following is not a judgement but an exercise to help us reflect (looking back) on oneself and to help us to be more aware of our fathering (actions and feelings).

1. In the last week how would you rate your fathering on a scale 1 to 10 (1 for Poor – 10 for Great)?
2. How would you rate your relationship with your partner?
3. How would you rate your relationship(s) with your child/ren?
4. Ask participants if there are any issues from previous sessions they would like to revise and discuss?
Elements participants have identified regarding relationships

**You**
- Respect self.
- Love.
- Compassion.
- Support.
- Mutual attraction.
- Faith.
- Good foundation.
- Understanding each other

**Partner/Child-ren**
- Respect self.
- Love.
- Compassion.
- Support.
- Mutual attraction.
- Faith.
- Good foundation.
- Understanding each other

**Structure (holds relationship together)**
- Strength.
- Foundation.

**Team Work**
- Fun time.

**Equal**
- Commitment
- Loyalty
- Trust
- Time

**Perseverance**
- Communication
- Respect of others
- Honesty

**Tough times**
- Foundation
- Structure (holds relationship together)
- Equal
- Communication
- Respect of others
- Honesty
- Team Work
- Fun time

**Health Promotion Unit - Northern Rivers Area Health Service - Lismore NSW**
Koori Fathering Program

Outcomes

- **As individuals**
  - With giving up drink/drugs
  - Become more responsible
  - Improvement in their communication skill and understand better how other people communicate

- **As fathers**
  - Improvement in their parenting skills
  - Learnt alternative discipline techniques
  - Improvement in their relationships with their children
  - Understand better how their behaviour affects their children.
Koori Fathering Program
Participant’s Feedback

- Helps me to improve my relationship with my partner and children, also with grandkids.
- Inspired me with my fathering and not to give up.
- Greater understanding of my responsibility as a father.
- Greater understanding of the importance of showing and how to show affection.
Conclusion

➢ To understand Aboriginal health/issues it is paramount that service providers acknowledge the factors that have had an impact on Aboriginal communities and develop an understanding of Aboriginal culture.

➢ In order to comprehend Aboriginal poor health status, acknowledgment of the impact of colonisation must first take place.

➢ Working with Aboriginal people needs to come from the heart and not only be based on theoretical knowledge.
Any Questions

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