

Bunjilwarra – Cultural Healing Model of Care

Authors:

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Background: *Bunjilwarra Aboriginal AOD Youth Residential Rehabilitation*

Description of Model of Care/Intervention: *Bunjilwarra has undertaken a robust review of its effectiveness to provide holistic healing within an Aboriginal youth residential AOD treatment setting and out of this work it has identified a unique model of care. The model sits within a social and emotional framework that promotes cultural, developmental, vocational, physical and mental health support and seeks to address addictive behaviours, family violence, trauma and criminal behaviours. The model leans heavily on connections to land, culture, kinship and community acknowledging the impact of structural racism. Bunjilwarra was awarded the 2021 Regional Aboriginal Justice Award for Cultural Strengthening.*

Effectiveness/Acceptability/Implementation:

The 2021 review of Bunjilwarra's effectiveness found that the service is well regarded and trusted by Victorian Aboriginal service providers. Young people reported good outcomes with key program strengths including the holistic healing model that draws from traditional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Western derived trauma-informed approaches. All young people who participated in the review reported benefitting from their time at Bunjilwarra despite experiencing varied success with addressing goals. The primary social and emotional wellbeing outcomes achieved were a connection to body, mind and emotions, culture and social determinants such as employment and housing outcomes. Analysis of data captured using the Aboriginal Resilience and Recovery Questionnaire (ARRQ) developed by Dr Graham Gee indicated specifically marked increases for the Personal strength subscales of Self- esteem, Managing difficult emotions and Community connection and the Cultural strengths subscales of Safety and Social Support.

Conclusion and Next Steps:

Bunjilwarra is a reputable service with a unique model of care that is showing strong signs of making a difference in the lives of Aboriginal youth. Next steps include advocacy to adequately fund a staffing structure required to meet the care and safety needs of young people particularly relating to high rates of referrals coming from the justice system.

Disclosure of Interest Statement:

No pharmaceutical grants were received in the development of this study. The work being presented was supported by a small grant from St John of God Healthcare