

Be You Pilbara & Kimberley Cultural Actions Catalogue

Taking action to build two way learning between schools and communities

Rebecca Johnson (Rebecca.Johnson@puntuturnu.com)

Puntuturnu Aboriginal Medical Service, Newman

Social, Emotional Wellbeing Program Officer, Be You Pilbara & Kimberley Pilot Project (Pilbara Coordinator)

Introduction

Be You is a national initiative that equips educators to support the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people. It develops educators' mental health literacy, providing knowledge and skills to promote the mental health of children and young people, and supports early learning services and schools to develop a positive, inclusive and resilient learning community where every child, young person, educator and family can achieve their best possible mental health.

In 2019 Beyond Blue received Federal Funding from the Department of Health for the Be You Pilbara and Kimberley (BYPK) Pilot Project. The BYPK project saw Be You Consultants employed directly by Aboriginal Medical Services and Corporations across the Pilbara and Kimberley regions in positions funded by Beyond Blue. Following consultation from educators and community members about how the BYPK could best support inclusive, culturally responsive and respectful learning environments, the Be You Cultural Actions Catalogue was created. Aboriginal Islander Education Officers (AIEO), Aboriginal Teaching Assistants (ATA), educators, Elders, community members, local rangers, natural helpers, health care workers and chief executive officers shared their stories to create this resource.

The Be You Cultural Actions Catalogue identifies actions educators can take to create inclusive, culturally responsive and respectful learning environments that embrace the histories, and cultures, stories and traditions of their communities. Although developed as a place-based resource, the knowledge and actions in this resource can be adapted and used Australia wide.

Partners

Key project partners include:

Beyond Blue
Puntuturnu Aboriginal Medical Service
Kimberley Aboriginal Medical Services LTD
Wirraka Maya Health Service Aboriginal Corporation
Mawarnkarra Health Service

Early Childhood Australia
headspace
Australian Government, Department of Health

Objectives

The purpose of the Be You Cultural Actions Catalogue was to develop a place-based resource for educators teaching in regional, rural and remote communities in the Kimberley and Pilbara that could also be adapted and implemented Australia wide.

The Be You Cultural Actions Catalogue identifies actions both quick wins and long-term activities that educators and learning communities can do to create inclusive and respectful learning environments that embrace the histories and cultures of their communities.

This resource has been designed to encourage AIEO and ATA involvement in schools Be You Action Teams, and their active participation in planning and conducting activities informed by a culturally responsive action plan.

It is intended that this resource could also act as a stepped introduction to Be You, where Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal educators are encouraged to explore and engage the significant resources available to them through Be You modules, fact sheets and other resources.

Methods

Be You Pilbara and Kimberley Consultants worked face-to-face with local schools to implement Be You in a culturally responsive manner. Through extensive community and school engagement, it was found a place-based resource that supports local, Aboriginal perspectives on social and emotional wellbeing would help implement Be You in regional and remote Aboriginal communities.

The content in this resource has been informed by community members and educators in the Kimberley and Pilbara through a co-designed, two-year process. Stories from over 100 individuals across the Pilbara and Kimberley were collected by BYPK Consultants with AIEOs, ATAs, educators, Elders, community members, local rangers, natural helpers, family members, social and emotional wellbeing providers, health care workers and chief executive officers all sharing their insights about what actions schools and communities are taking to develop two-way learning for students, school staff and community members alike.

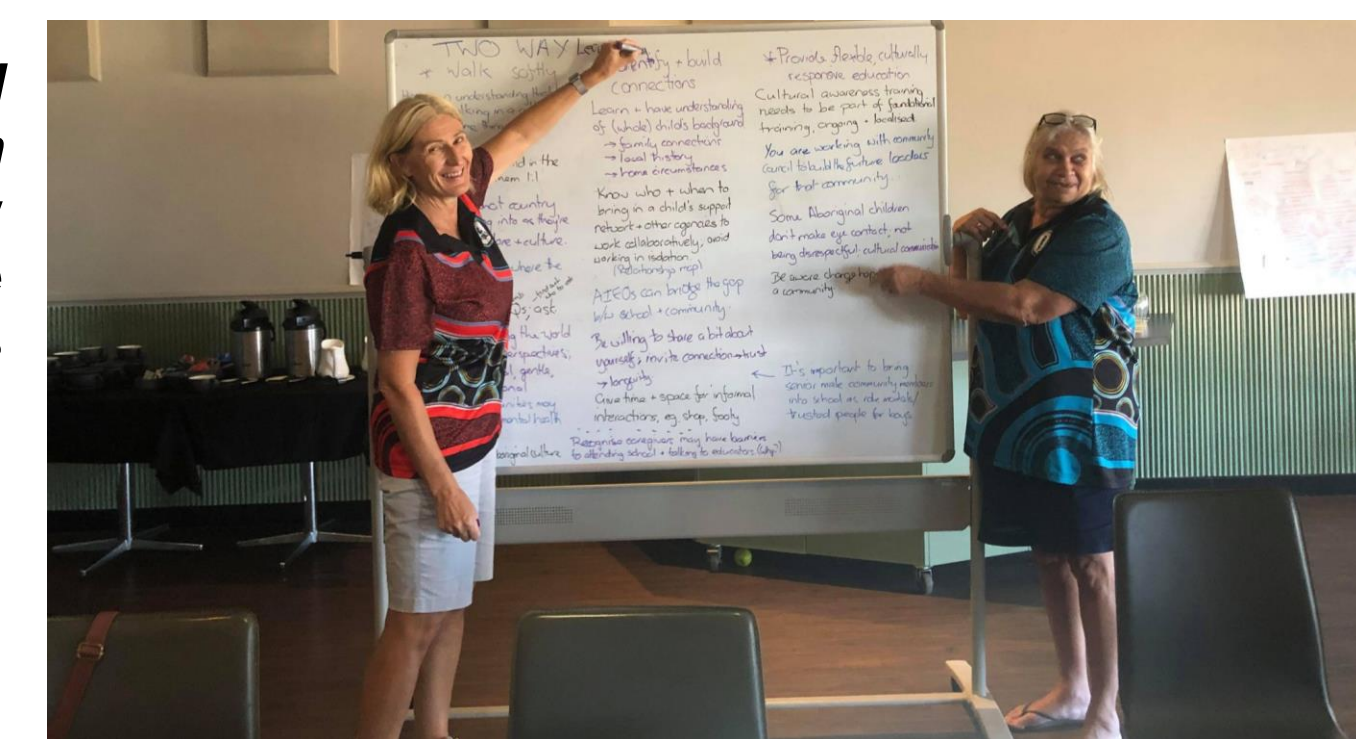
These recorded stories were then transcribed and thematically analysed by BYPK and Beyond Blue staff during with actions and key themes identified, discussed and ultimately became the content of the Cultural Action Catalogue. The importance of two-way learning became evident across the interviews and shaped itself to be the underpinning of the Cultural Actions Catalogue, as without this, nothing else would be possible. From here, the key themes from the stories collected from individuals across the Pilbara and Kimberley included:

AIEOs and ATAs
Walking softly
Identify and build connections
Provide flexible, culturally responsive education



Be You Pilbara and Kimberley & Beyond Blue team in Broome to collate stories collected for the Cultural Actions Catalogue

L-R: Davina Chapman, Geraldine Shadforth, Maxine Chi, Bee David, Beck Johnson, Jenny Walsh, Jacob Tyndall & Jordie Nirens.



Jenny Walsh and Geraldine Shadforth discussing the key messages from the interviews

Lessons Learned

What challenges did you face and how were they overcome?

Time was a limiting factor as the BYPK project was only extended for six months and it was in this short period that the BYPK team worked together to gather stories, thematically analyse and develop a practical place-based resource to build two-way learning between educators and communities alike.

Were the objectives met?

Whilst the BYPK project ultimately began by engaging schools in an effort to implement Be You in a meaningful, locally led manner, it became quickly evident that schools and communities were looking for a resource to be developed that worked to build two-way learning and connections between educators and community members alike. The creation of a place based resource resonated more with the people we were engaging with rather than the implementation of Be You. As the BYPK project was based on co-design principles, it was important that we provided an avenue for this consistent message to be both heard and spoken about, and then, for a resource to be developed which addressed the identified need in a practical fashion.

Should these activities be continued, renewed and strengthened?

Throughout all phases of this project one message has been heard and agreed upon across all sectors; pilot projects such as the BYPK project and the subsequent practical resources developed therein are beneficial and required. Ongoing place-based, community-led and co-designed project should continue to attach funding to ensure that we continue to learn in a two-way manner and that all voices are given the space to be heard.

Does the program provide value for money?

The Cultural Actions Catalogue represents a practical resource led from the ground up which ensures the sustainability of work conducted as a part of the BYPK project. It leaves behind a collection of initiatives that are community-led and informed; all of the actions within the Cultural Actions Catalogue ultimately involve raising the profile and importance of community members, engendering impactful engagement with schools. AIEOs and ATAs are core members of community who will likely remain there for years to come and continue to engage with students and their families beyond their schooling careers. This resource actively encourages educators to see the important role that AIEOs and ATAs play not only within the school but also within the community, often as natural helpers.

The Cultural Actions Catalogue works alongside the current Be You Actions Catalogue. It will support the translation of Be You for Aboriginal communities by establishing a culturally responsive framework that can be used by Be You's delivery partners and the whole learning community to adapt Be You in a place-based manner which directly aligns to the original grant and the approved extension activities. Whilst created as a place-based resource for the Pilbara and Kimberley regions, it can also be adapted to regions beyond these, further promoting community driven resources able to reach educators and communities where they are most impactful.



Cultural Actions Catalogue

E-book and PDF available on Be You website
It is available for everyone to download and meets accessibility standards. Inside the e-book there are 8 videos from educators and community members in the Kimberley and Pilbara who share their stories on the key topics of the e-book.

The artwork of the Cultural Actions Catalogue was developed by Kevin Wilson from the WA based company called Nani.

Kevin, a Wongai man, spent time in the Kimberley and Pilbara, meeting with local artists and Senior Elders to hear their stories and to feel the country which was to be reflected in the Cultural Actions Catalogue.

The Cultural Actions Catalogue provides information and over 100 actions for educators which fit under each of the four key theme categories; AIEOs and ATAs, Identify and build connections, Walking softly and Provide flexible, culturally responsive education.

Identify and build connections

- Be approachable. Families or caregivers may not want to book an appointment to talk, preferring less formal engagement. Non-confrontational questions like "Are you doing anything?" "Is it ok if...?" "Are you busy later?" help set this space in a culturally responsive manner.
- Attend the annual Reconciliation Ball or family fun day, hosted by the Shire of East Pilbara during Reconciliation Week.
- Attend Elders' birthday celebrations in Roebourne.
- Attend Martu community events.
- Volunteer with the YMCA Remote Schools Attendance Strategy buses in Newman.
- Create an Aboriginal Educators Cultural Group within schools and communities who can work with Elders to promote Aboriginality and cultural recognition within their learning space.
- Host a disco for all students in a region/learning cluster to come together.
- Assess the preferred and most effective ways to engage with different families and caregivers. This may be through texting, a newsletter or a face-to-face conversation.
- Organise community fundraising events, such as family fun days, to raise money for school excursions and/or equipment.



What is an Aboriginal and Islander Education Officer/ Aboriginal Teaching Assistant?



Impact/What's next?

The BYPK pilot project has come to an end but schools across the Pilbara and Kimberley continue to be supported to implement Be You in their schools to improve social and emotional wellbeing for all in the learning community by headspace schools Be You Consultants.

The Cultural Actions Catalogue has been launched and is now being used by schools and early learning centres and other service providers across the Pilbara, Kimberley and beyond. Here is some of the feedback we have received about the Cultural Actions Catalogue so far:

"I just love the way it has been written especially the quotes from a range of different people and services in our community. To me it felt honest and real and, working with remote indigenous children and their families, I could relate to so much of what I was reading. I passed this on to my manager and the Child Australia Professional Learning Consultant and it has now been shared with all the members of our Reconciliation Action Plan team... I think it's a valuable resource for anyone working in the Early Years Education and Care Sector. I've referred to it many times since receiving it."
Trudy Gear, WPMCS Supervisor, Child Australia.

Acknowledgements

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