ACT Government
Community Services

Child and Youth Protection Services

PRACTICE GUIDE

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander reflection flower

Direction to staff

This document provides supplementary information to support Child and Youth Protection Services (CYPS) staff perform their role.

Note: Unless otherwise indicated, the term 'child' or 'children' also refers to 'young person' or 'young people'. The term 'children in care' refers to 'children in out of home care'.

Purpose of this document

This practice guide provides information about the use and application of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander reflection flower.

Scope

This practice guide supports any staff within CYPS or ACT Together who interact with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people, families and communities.

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What is the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander reflection flower?

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander reflection flower (reflection flower) is a supervision and reflection tool. It encourages you to think about the different elements of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Placement Principle and how they are being supported and nurtured for the children and families we work with.

Each element of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Placement Principle is represented by a different petal on the flower. A flower was chosen to represent the potential for growth of the families we work with and the beauty and joy they bring to our community. The stem of the flower represents the strength of our families and the leaves are the important people who contribute to the care of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people.

The colours of each of the petals were chosen to correspond with the elements utilised in the 'SNAICC Understanding and Applying the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement principle: A Resource for Legislation, Policy and Program Development (2017)'.

What is the purpose of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander reflection flower?

The reflection flower was developed to assist in the embedding of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Placement Principles into day to day practice within CYPS. The tool was also developed to assist in ensuring ongoing and active efforts were being promoted and recorded within a case management setting, to promote reflection on how the Placement Principles are being considered by case managers, and to encourage a strengths-based and collaborative approach when working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people, families and communities.

Connection to identity, culture and community is a source of strength, resilience and healing. It is vital that we consider and prioritise this across the course of our work with families. This aids in conducting a strengths-based review and reflection that considers the cultural needs of the child and the lived realities of their community.

When to use the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander reflection flower

The reflection flower is a flexible tool which you are encouraged to use across a range of settings for different circumstances and scenarios.

The six core elements of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Placement Principle (Identity, Prevention, Partnership, Placement, Participation and Connection), are relevant and important to all children and young people we work with. Therefore, the reflection flower can be utilised for children and young people and their families at any stage of our involvement, not just when they have entered or are at risk of entering out of home care. It can be a useful tool during the prenatal phase, appraisals, preservation, restoration and permanency stages.

The reflection flower may also be utilised when considering the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people involved in the youth justice system. We know that connection to cultural and supportive families and communities can assist young people to make positive choices.

The reflection flower should be utilised across a range of regular case management activities including case management supervision, group supervision, engagement with families, case planning, and referral discussion to Family Group Conferencing.

Case management supervision

The reflection flower should be completed in the first supervision session following the case being allocated and then reviewed and updated regularly as new information is received. It does not have to be completed in every supervision but it is recommended that it is considered in supervision when a case is being discussed and that if any new information is gathered or supports changed that a further tool should be completed to reflect these changes.

Most of the reflection flower can be filled out by the case manager prior to supervision. During supervision the three reflective questions (What are we doing? What more could we do?, and What have we learnt?) can be explored and completed through the discussion. You may find it helpful to utilise the 'Worker reflection prompts' below to assist with this.

You might also consider inviting a member of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Services Team to be part of this case supervision.

Group supervision

The reflection flower can be utilised in group supervision as a reflective practice tool. In a group setting or meeting, the tool can be utilised to prompt and record practice conversations regarding the principles. You are specifically asked to consider what does each element mean and how can we ensure these principles are being upheld in practice.

You might consider printing off a larger version of the tool to aid the discussion or drawing it on a whiteboard. This can facilitate whole of group brainstorming and recording of ways that the principles can be upheld.

Engagement and information gathering with families

The reflection flower can be utilised when engaging with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families to gather information in relation to their lived experience of how the elements of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Placement Principle in their own lives. The visual and hands on aspects of the tool may also assist families in engaging in this discussion. This discussion can be a useful activity when developing case plans, considering referrals and completing a family assessment.

In practice this can be done with families by bringing an A3 copy of the tool and working with families to complete this. It might include writing or drawing or placing photos on the tool. To assist in aiding this discussion you may want to use the 'Family discussion prompts' below that utilise strengths-based, family focused and respectful language to gather this information. The prompts are colour coded to correspond questions with the different principles.

The tool can also be used in conjunction with the AIATSIS map of Indigenous Australia to prompt discussions regarding identity and where the family's county is. It might also be helpful to utilise visual tools such as Gudhurr Cards, Aboriginal Dream Totem cards, Talking Up Our Strength cards and other culturally appropriate resources to aid discussions. Families might prefer to place cards, or do drawings in each aspect of the flower, rather than writing or just talking about them.

Once complete, please share a copy with the family for them to keep. Remember this is their story, it belongs to them first.

Note: Please be mindful that for some families the terminology used in the Placement Principles and tool may have negative associations and may be triggering. In particular, the term "Placement" may do this, as it can suggest a an out of home care placement. Please be mindful of this and explain to families this refers to where they live and who helps care for them.

Other applications

You may be asked to bring a completed copy of the reflection flower to referral discussions for Family Group Conferencing, Cultural Consultations, Emergency Action discussions and the Cultural Panel. This will help aid discussion and guide reflection and planning.

The use of this tool and the regular review of it will also be of assistance when you are preparing other documents and case work activities such as Annual Review Reports, Cultural Plans, Pre-Sentence Reports and Case Plans.

How to use the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander reflection flower

When using the reflection flower, creativity is encouraged. This information should be filled into the respective petals on the flower, each petal is representative of one of the principles. This should then be utilised to prompt a reflective practice conversation in relation to each of the principles to help identify what other active efforts we could be pursuing against each of the elements.

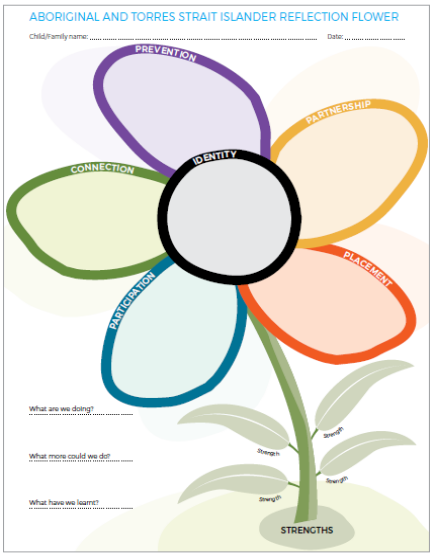
The stem and leaves are to be used to record strengths that the family holds and support services that are present if these have not been mentioned under the other principles. The centre of the flower is titled 'Identity'. This is an area for the child and family's cultural identity information to be recorded. This can include what country(s) they are from, their totem and any other information which the child or family feel is important to record in relation to their identity.

Finally, the question of 'What have we learnt?' should be considered. This can be in relation to our practice (something that we might do differently in the future), or it can be something new we have learnt about the family or services.

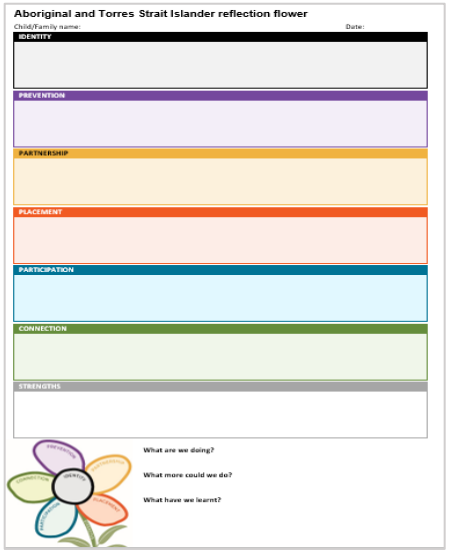
At times, it might be appropriate for one flower to be completed for the whole family, but it may also be appropriate to consider using individual flowers for each child involved if they have different cultural needs and experiences.

For a copy of the reflection flower, see the 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander reflection flower' tool on the Knowledge Portal. You can choose to use the graphic version that allows for handwriting or the type-enabled version. For practice examples, see the 'CYF IPA and Supervision' guide.

Graphic version



Type-enabled version



Reflection and discussion prompts

The reflection flower encourages you to reflect on the core elements of the ATSICPP within your practice, both as part of your supervision and when talking directly with families. The tool is supported by reflection and discussion prompts specific to each of the ATSICPP core elements.

Worker reflection prompts

The following prompts will help you reflect on your practice as part of your supervision:

Prevention

- Describe aspects within the case that display the child and family are connected to culture and their community.
- How do the family like to spend time together? What brings them together as a family/kinship network?
- What events within the community does the child and family attend?
- Does the family have access to safe and secure housing?
- Does the child have an opportunity to attend playgroup, childcare and/or school regularly?
- Has the child had a health check within the last 12 months?
- Is there any medical information that needs to be taken into consideration?
- Can you identify any needs the family may have that may assist in addressing and mitigating the associated risk?
- What systems of support does the child and family have in place? For example: Support from family, Winnunga, Gugan, Family Functioning Therapy, Domestic Violence Crisis Service, Aboriginal Educational Liaison Officer etc.
- What support has the child and family identified that they would like to receive?
- Has the family identified they are not comfortable accessing particular support services? If so, please explain.
- Do you believe the child and family feel confident to access support when needed? If not, how can CYPS assist the family to obtain support? Could a Family Group Conference help the family access support?

Partnership

- Please explain how the family have had the opportunity to display self-determination within the case.
- Do you understand important factors relating to the child and family's culture, customs and history? If not, please discuss the support you may need so you can understand.
- Have the family identified they have partnerships within the community? If so, what do those partnerships look like?
- How have the family been supported and encouraged to build partnerships with individuals within the community and services that can support them and their children?
- What barriers have been present for the family regarding partnership?
- Which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations, people, and communities can the family engage with that may be able to support them?
- Have the family identified areas of further support they would like to access?
- How can CYPS continue to work in partnership with the family?

- Can partnership with the family be supported through a Family Group Conference? Have you completed a referral and/or consulted a Family Group Conference Facilitator?

Participation

- How would the child and family like CYPS to respect and understand their safety, wellbeing, family and cultural connections?
- Where would the child and family like to meet CYPS, when having meetings?
- How does the family feel about home visits?
- How can you best engage with the family during home visits to ensure they feel culturally safe?
- How have the child and family had an opportunity to assist with informing decisions about how the child can be best safely cared for?
- What views have the family articulated regarding CYPS meeting with their child?
- How can CYPS ensure the child feels culturally safe and supported during interviews?
- Are there any additional people the child and family have identified they would like to receive support from and have take part in the decision-making process while working with CYPS? If so, what roles would the child like the nominated individuals to play?
- What are the family's thoughts regarding a Family Group Conference? Have you completed a referral and/or consulted a Family Group Conference Facilitator?

Connection

- What Nation is the family from? For example, Wiradjuri, Ngunnawal.
- Which community do the family identify as a place where they connect? What connections
- have been established within the community?
- What are the child's views and wishes regarding their connection to family, community and culture?
- Who have the family identified as important people that play a significant role in the child's life?
- What type of significant events do the family celebrate each year?
- What types of activities do the child and family like to do within the community?
- What information has the family articulated regarding their child's cultural plan?
- Have the family had an opportunity to clearly articulate their views and wishes regarding their family, community, culture and country? If so, please elaborate.
- How can CYPS ensure the child can have the opportunity to maintain connections to their family, community, culture and country?
- Describe how family members and significant community members have been consulted regarding their views and wishes of the child developing their connection to family, community and culture.
- What support can CYPS put in place to ensure the child has an opportunity to connect with family and community while developing their cultural identity?
- Have you considered Family Group Conferencing as a way for the family to develop strategies that will help the child maintain connections to family, community, culture and country?

Placement

- Has a genogram been completed that displays an accurate representation of the child's family? If not, how can you work towards consulting with the family and completing a genogram?
- Describe the kinship structure within the family unit.
- Does the family have a matriarch? What is the best way to consult with the matriarch while empowering a family to have their voice present when making decisions about their child?
- What information has the family shared with you regarding significant people within the community that they spend time with and seek advice from when needed? If needed, have you sought the family's permission and consulted with the identified significant people, and what information have they shared with you?
- What are the child's thoughts and wishes regarding placement? Have they nominated significant people they would like to live with?
- What aspects of family life and cultural connection are important to the child and family? How can you ensure the aspects will continue to be carried out if a child needs to come into out of home care?
- Please describe the active efforts you have carried out to mitigate the need for a child to be placed in an alternative placement.
- Explain how you have implemented the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle when sourcing placement options? Have all appropriate placement options been explored?
- Explain the active efforts that have been carried out within the case regarding the five core elements, prior to considering placement options.
- Can you identify any additional active efforts that can be carried out to assist the family with minimising risk and ensuring their child is safe?
- Could a Family Group Conference support families to minimise risk or identify appropriate placement options?

Family discussion prompts

The following prompts will help you when speaking with a family to learn about their child and family through their cultural lens:

Prevention

- What are the strengths within your family and the community you live in?
- Tell us about your family? We would like to understand your culture and what is important for your family. (Complete genogram with the family)
- How do you and your family like to spend time together?
- Who supports you when you need help? What does that support look like?
- Do you currently have safe and secure housing?
- Which playgroup, childcare and/or school does your child attend?
- Do you feel comfortable accessing health services? When did your child last see a doctor?
- What services in the community does your family receive support from?
- What are some challenges you and your family may be currently facing?
- What further support would help you and your family to move through the current challenges?

Partnership

- Who do you ask for help when you need help with your child?
- Who are the main people in your family who help you when you need support?
- What do you and your family do in the community?
- What services within the community do you feel comfortable accessing?
- Have you faced any challenges when trying to access support from services in the community?
- Please tell us about your experience working with CYPS?
- Can you tell us if you have encountered any barriers when working with CYPS in the past?
- How can CYPS work together with your family?

Participation

- What can CYPS do to ensure the safety, wellbeing, family and cultural connections of your child and family are respected and understood?
- Where would you like to meet CYPS when having meetings?
- How do you feel about CYPS visiting your home? Is there anything CYPS can do to help you and your family feel more comfortable during home visits?
- Are there any additional people from your family and community you would like to receive support from while working with CYPS?
- At times CYPS may need to talk with your child. How can CYPS do that in a culturally safe way? What support can you identify your child may need while talking with a CYPS worker?
- Would you like to move forward with a Family Group Conference?

Connection

- Who are the important people that play a significant role in the life of your child and family?
- What type of significant events do you and your family celebrate each year?
- What types of activities do you and your child like to do within the community?
- How can CYPS ensure your child has the opportunity to maintain their connection to family, community, culture and country?
- Has your child had an opportunity to express their views and wishes regarding their connection to family, community, culture and country?
- What further information would you like to include in your child's cultural plan.

Placement

- Who helps make decisions within your family?
- Who is the person within your family who is the 'knowledge holder' and knows a lot of information about your family's story and connections to culture?
- What aspects make your family strong and grounded?
- What aspects of family life do you and your child enjoy?
- Who does your child like to spend time with? How do they spend time together?
- What types of activities does your child like to engage in with family members?
- If your child wanted to spend time with other significant people within their life, who would they nominate, and why?
- Who are the significant people within the community your family spend time with and seek advice from?

Record keeping

The completed reflection flower should be scanned onto the client management system. On the 'Supervision Case Management - Client Notes, Decisions and Actions' form, record when you last completed a reflection flower for the child or family under the section 'Cultural Considerations'.

Related materials

The following materials directly relate to this practice guide.

Legislation

- *Children and Young People Act 2008*

Policies, procedures and practice guides

- Procedure: Placing a child in accordance with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle
- Practice Guide: Cultural planning – gathering information and developing actions
- Practice guide: Placing a child in a care placement
- Practice Guide: The 'best interests' of the child: principle and practice

Other documentation

- Tool: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander refection flower
- Form: Supervision Case Management Attachment - Client Notes, Decisions and Actions
- CYPS Practice Standards
- CYF IPA and Supervision Guide
- SNAICC Understanding and Applying the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement principle: A Resource for Legislation, Policy and Program Development (2017).
- Working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families: Providing culturally responsive practice

Document information

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Version history

The following table details the published date and amendment details for this document.

Date	Amendment details
11/06/2020	First publication of this practice guide.
08/04/2022	Updated to include additional prompts to consider Family Group Conferencing.

Definitions

For definitions of terms used in this document, access the CYPS glossary.