



Providing palliative care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

Culture is central to health and wellbeing, and therefore is essential to palliative care practice. CareSearch brings together a range of resources and information to help the health care workforce and carers in providing palliative care for and with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

How CareSearch helps

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Care section provides tips and a single gateway to trustworthy resources to help you provide culturally sensitive palliative care support.

The section was developed under the guidance of an expert advisory group comprised of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people representing various organisations within the health sector across Australia.

→ Terms that might be used for death and dying include 'sorry business' and 'finishing up'.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Care has four main sections:

Culturally Safe and Responsive Care

Introduces the concepts of cultural safety and responsiveness for individual health professionals and for health services.



The Care Journey

Provides information to the health care workforce providing care at the end of life to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. It includes resources for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health care workforce.

Patient, Family and Community Journeys

Supports Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and communities with relevant information.

Research, Evidence and Practice

Provides access to literature, evidence and information on research.

The Care Journey

Sharing stories is a valuable way to show us how each person's journey through life is different.

We need to understand and acknowledge the role of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person's culture, family and community in this journey.

Good communication is essential to providing good palliative care. Find tips on communication with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and their family in the 'Talking Together' section.

Learn about person-centred care, discover how to start interactions in a culturally respectful way, and know where to find information you can trust.

Patient, Family and Community Journeys

Caring for our family and elders and our community on their journey to finishing up is an important role for many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Like everything else in our lives, everything works better when we come together!

Here you can learn more about journeys in palliative care for patients, families and communities. Listen to their stories. There is information about providing care and finding help and services.



Learn more by visiting the website at:
www.caresearch.com.au

TIPS

1

The health care workforce needs to ask everyone *"Are you of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin?"* - it's not possible to rely on a person's appearance.

2

Direct statements about death and dying are not spoken aloud in many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Terms that might be used instead include 'sorry business', 'finishing up', and 'passing on.'

3

Consider whether the usual ways you might relate to people (e.g., eye contact and holding a gaze, firm hand-shake) is causing them to feel uncomfortable. Be guided by body language cues.

4

Respecting individual cultural needs is essential to person-centred palliative care. To understand how to best care for an individual, you need to get to know them as a human being.

5

As you get to know each other and a relationship develops between you, it then becomes appropriate to ask questions. Ask *"Are there cultural or spiritual practices that affect the way you wish to be cared for?"*

6

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples may hold strong spiritual and cultural beliefs about the cause of serious illness. These beliefs may conflict with medical explanations. Respect any wishes for a traditional healer to visit.