To assist Indigenous AOD workers and organisations to appropriately address some of these issues it is important to take a broad workforce development (WFD) approach. To this end, the following checklists have been developed as a user-friendly tool.

These checklists explore Indigenous AOD worker issues. Two checklists have been developed: one for Indigenous workers in Indigenous organisations, and another for non-Indigenous organisations. The checklists are broad ranging, but not exhaustive. They incorporate some questions which may assist consideration of cultural competencies. Separate checklists have been developed for Indigenous AOD workers depending on whether they are employed within an:

1. Indigenous organisation or

There are broad questions relating to workforce development which are relevant to both groups. Questions relating to cultural competencies are presented in the context of the workplace.

### Checklist 1: Indigenous organisation

- Open up discussion about the need for policies relating to bereavement, ceremonial, and cultural leave for Indigenous employees within non-Indigenous organisations.
- Evaluate cultural accountability of non-Indigenous staff to Indigenous staff.
- Determine supports for Indigenous workers with regard to community consultation, and incorporating Indigenous ways of working.
- Access levels of organisational and managerial supports for Indigenous workers.
- Identify factors which may impact on Indigenous workers’ stress and burnout.

### Checklist 2: Non-Indigenous organisation

- Discuss existing workplace policies in regard to bereavement, ceremonial, and cultural leave.
- Evaluate cultural accountability of non-Indigenous staff to Indigenous staff.
- Identify relevance of training, ongoing professional development.
- Assess levels of organisational and managerial supports for Indigenous workers.
- Determine whether Indigenous ways of working and knowledge are being incorporated into Indigenous AOD practice.
- Identify factors which may impact on Indigenous workers stress and burnout.

There may be other workforce development issues of particular relevance to specific situations. Nonetheless, these checklists provide a useful jumping off point in the development of positive comprehensive cultural practice and approaches. The checklists are also a useful workforce development training tool and can be used to initiate initial discussion and plans.

**Talking Stones**

The Talking Stones depicted on the cover were used in NCETA’s Indigenous worker wellbeing workshops to allow people to speak freely and to share what was on their mind. You only speak when you hold the Talking Stone.

The person that is running the talking circle acknowledges the ancestors and traditional owners of the land, always pass the Talking Stone to the person on the left when you finish speaking.

### Resources

- Cochrane Research Centre for Aboriginal Health
- www.cochrane.org.au/education
- Council Remicale Area Nurses Australia
- Dean.org.au
- Confidential 24/7 Support Line - Phone: 1800 805 391

**Examples of NCETA’s resources on AOD workforce development**

NCETA’s Indigenous AOD Worker Wellbeing Resources.

Little is known about factors that affect Indigenous AOD workers’ wellbeing, but, anecdotal evidence indicates that Indigenous AOD workers are placed under considerable work pressure. The National Centre for Education and Training on Addiction (NCETA) has studied Indigenous AOD workers’ wellbeing, stress, and burnout and has identified some of the contributory factors. This document is part of a suite of resources that has been produced by NCETA to enhance Indigenous worker wellbeing and to reduce work-related stress.

This project used the NACHO definition of Aboriginal Health: “aboriginal health” means not just the physical well-being of an individual but refers to the social, emotional and cultural well-being of the whole Community in which each individual is able to achieve their full potential as a human being thereby bringing about the total well-being of their Community. It is a whole life view and includes the cyclical concept of life-death-life.
Background and Context

Indigenous Australians are at high risk of health and social issues associated with AOD use. They are over-represented in all areas of health care services and other forms of social services (e.g., income, housing, education, and employment). Compared to non-Indigenous Australians, a larger proportion of Indigenous Australians live in remote areas where health services are limited. Cultural differences can add to difficulties in accessing culturally safe health care and AOD services.

Cultural differences can add to difficulties in accessing culturally safe health care and AOD services. Indigenous people are also often marginalised in terms of income and employment. Compared to non-Indigenous Australians, Indigenous people comprise 2.5% of the population, and while 1.5% of the health workforce, this places additional stress on Indigenous workers. There have been few investigations into the wellbeing of Indigenous AOD workers. There is also limited research on Indigenous AOD issues including Indigenous workers’ experiences of dealing with clients with AOD issues and the impact that this may have on their workplaces.

Indigenous AOD workers may experience a greater range of stresses and pressures in their work roles than non-Indigenous AOD workers. The role of an Indigenous AOD worker can involve an especially heavy burden. Further, the work that is undertaken by Indigenous AOD workers is often complex and demanding, and every day very personally relevant issues include: loss and grief, trauma, stigma, and social disruption.

Indigenous Workforce Development

The primary aim of Indigenous workforce development is to facilitate and support Indigenous AOD workers by targeting organisational issues so that cultural needs and Indigenous knowledge are translated into workplace policy and practice. Indigenous AOD worker development requires structures that acknowledge their family to community and community.

Indigenous workforce development is about taking a multi-faceted approach to address the range of historical and cultural factors impacting on the Indigenous workforce. Indigenous workforce development has to be holistic, making an impact that may have on Indigenous workers’ experiences of dealing with clients with AOD issues and the impact that this may have on their workplaces.

A multi-level approach is needed as illustrated in NCETA’s 6-level model shown in Figure 1. It always works at each of these levels of Indigenous AOD intervention involves inherently different issues. The 6-level model comprises:

- the individual
- the family
- the community
- the firm
- the workplace
- the organisation

Figure 1. Multiple levels of Workforce Development Intervention required to achieve work practice change

.../n Indigenous Workforce Development Checklist #1

1. Do you regularly consult with Elders in your community?
2. Do your workplace have grievance procedures to deal with worker and/or client complaints?
3. Do you have access to bereavement / compassionate leave?
4. Do you have a high rate of staff turnover?
5. Do you have an adequate bereavement / compassionate leave policy in your workplace?
6. Do you have an adequate bereavement / compassionate leave policy in your workplace?
7. Do you have access to culturally safe practices?
8. Do you have access to culturally safe practices?
9. Do you have an adequate bereavement / compassionate leave policy in your workplace?
10. Do you have access to bereavement / compassionate leave policies?

.../n Indigenous Workforce Development Checklist #2

1. Is consultation with Elders facilitated in your workplace?
2. Do you use bereavement with community to identify, current AOD trends with their local Indigenous communities?
3. Do you workplace assess community needs and develop services accordingly?
4. Do you incorporate gender appropriate non-Indigenous staff in Indigenous employment strategy?
5. Are Indigenous ways of working incorporated into AOD programs in your workplace?
6. Are you involved in workplace planning and community development processes?
7. Do you have a high rate of staff turnover?
8. Do you have strategies to integrate Indigenous knowledge into program development for Indigenous clients?
9. Do you have a high rate of female clients?
10. Do you select staff that is well accepted and appropriate for Indigenous clients?
11. Are Indigenous ways of working incorporated into AOD programs in your workplace?
12. Do you have strategies to integrate Indigenous knowledge into program development for Indigenous clients?
13. Do you have a high rate of female clients?
14. Do you select staff that is well accepted and appropriate for Indigenous clients?
15. Are Indigenous ways of working incorporated into AOD programs in your workplace?
16. Do you have strategies to integrate Indigenous knowledge into program development for Indigenous clients?
17. Do you have a high rate of female clients?
18. Do you select staff that is well accepted and appropriate for Indigenous clients?
19. Are Indigenous ways of working incorporated into AOD programs in your workplace?
20. Do you have strategies to integrate Indigenous knowledge into program development for Indigenous clients?
21. Are Indigenous ways of working incorporated into AOD programs in your workplace?