



cassee

CREATING A SAFE SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT

*By changing minds, we are saving
lives. It is this simple vision which
guides our work every day.*

A sepia-toned photograph of three Indigenous children in traditional dress, including headbands and beaded necklaces, standing in a natural setting. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent grid pattern.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CASSE (Creating A Safe, Supportive Environment) is a not-for-profit organisation dedicated to changing minds, transforming and saving lives. CASSE works to change hurting hearts to healed hearts.

CASSE gets to the heart of the matter. We help respond to psychological need by providing safe places, exploring together the past traumas in the present. We enquire, listen, we talk and we create new conversations and ways forward. We collaborate with remote and marginalised Aboriginal communities in Central Australia and the Western Desert region who want to revive traditional cultural practices that reconnect people with their elders, community, culture and country.

We use old tools for new tools for living. Through the Men's Tjilirra Movement (MTM), we have the opportunity to build psychological capacity in remote communities to embed and share cultural knowledge, mentor community members, and develop and deliver culturally relevant training programs on suicide, violence and trauma.

Your support for the MTM will enable us to deliver on our core business: collaborating with communities to open up hard conversations, understand trauma, break through violence and achieve social and emotional wellbeing.

CASSE's dedicated and passionate teams draw on professional backgrounds in clinical and forensic psychology, applied psychoanalysis and psychotherapy to inform their work in remote communities. CASSE has a culturally competent team on the ground delivering the MTM:

- Martin Jugadai, a ngangkari (traditional healer), is an original founder of MTM.
- Jamie Millier Tjupurrula, is an initiated man who was taught by Whiskey Tjapaltjarri to make the traditional tools.
- Nathan Brown is a cultural interpreter and fluent in Luritja.

■ The Men's Tjilirra Movement (MTM) is a place-based, culturally informed approach to trauma recovery, operating in five remote communities in the central and western desert region. The MTM empowers communities to rekindle and build cultural knowledge through making traditional tools, leading to long-term sustainable outcomes for the whole community."

ABOUT CASSE

CASSE (Creating A Safe, Supportive Environment) is a not-for-profit organisation dedicated to changing minds, saving and transforming lives. We collaborate with remote and marginalized Aboriginal communities in Central Australia and the Western Desert region to have hard conversations, understand trauma, break through violence and achieve social and emotional wellbeing.

CASSE undertakes research, conferences, presentations and publications that contribute to the development of best practice models for programs that act as catalysts for change. We draw on professional backgrounds in clinical and forensic psychology, applied psychoanalysis and psychotherapy to transform trauma into strength and resilience, and promote psychosocial healing and psychological growth.

We work with Aboriginal leaders and organisations, mental health professionals and stakeholders offering spaces for intercultural reflective exchange, talking from the heart and storytelling, mentoring, training, supervision and think tanks. We collaborate with communities to revive traditional cultural practices and share stories that reconnect people with their elders, community, culture and country and thereby create new stories. Training and mentoring for community members strengthens opportunities for individuals, and in turn sustainable outcomes for the whole community.

■ ■ There are no other programs in these communities which support community determined, cultural solutions led by the elders."

Meaningful change requires a long-term commitment to establishing a sense of pride, purpose and value in Aboriginal people and children at risk, from which they can grow and in turn strengthen their communities. Change requires a stance of enquiry, curiosity and interest, of meeting people where they are, leading to the discovery and development of new psychological realities.

Our work is informed by applied community psychoanalytic processes of deep listening, talking, thinking, reflecting and sharing, to rebuild shattered lives and sustain change. These tools provide a solid and safe foundation for communities and people at risk to build strength and awareness through facing the emotional turbulence, uncertainty, and dread associated with profound trauma.

Our outcomes are a part of the process itself: team members and collaborators in the experience listen deeply, learn from the emotional experience, and achieve transformation through changed emotional states. Culture is honoured throughout.

CASSE has achieved, and continues to achieve, significant outcomes through partnering with organisations such as the Central Australian Aboriginal Congress (CAAC), Waltja, MacDonnell Regional Shire Youth Services, Indigenous Pastoral Association, and the Royal Flying Doctor Service. Through our partnerships we co-fund, co-direct, co-manage and co-create programs that foster a supportive environment at the front line of delivery.



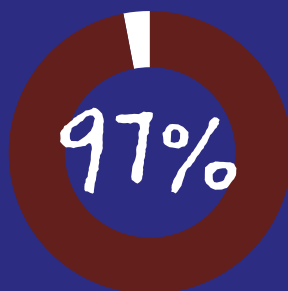
Trauma

Trauma: a deeply distressing or disturbing experience.

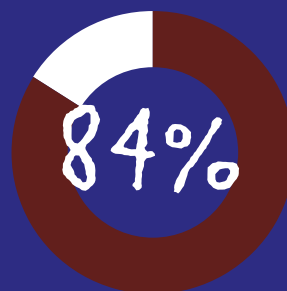
***Intergenerational trauma:** trauma passed down from the first generation of survivors who directly experienced or witnessed traumatic events, to future generations. Trauma can be passed on through parenting practises, behavioural problems, violence, harmful substance use and mental health issues. (Source: www.australianstogether.org.au)*

“The effects of intergenerational trauma on Aboriginal people in Australia – while deeply felt in Indigenous communities – are barely recognised or understood by most of the Australian population.”

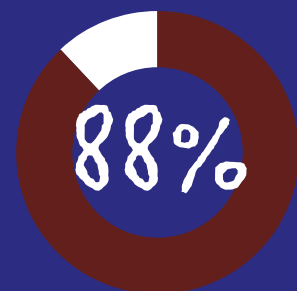
The 2017 Royal Commission into the Protection and Detention of Children in the Northern Territory recognised that the unusually high rates of Aboriginal people in incarceration and child protection cannot be separated from the intergenerational trauma suffered by Indigenous Australians.



97% OF THE
YOUTH PRISON
POPULATION



AND 84% OF THE ADULT
PRISON POPULATION IN
THE NORTHERN TERRITORY
ARE ABORIGINAL PEOPLE



88% OF CHILDREN IN OUT-
OF-HOME CARE IN THE
NORTHERN TERRITORY
ARE ABORIGINAL

“These alarming statistics of disadvantage, and countless others, continue to worsen. The trend will not change unless the root cause – intergenerational trauma – is treated.”



Our vision:

Changing minds and transforming and saving lives so that young Aboriginal people, families and communities thrive: culturally strong, empowered and safe.



Our Purpose:

To strengthen the safety, emotional wellbeing and cultural connections of Aboriginal families, particularly men, in their community. To create safe, supportive environments and change futures for individuals, families and communities through awareness of mental and emotional health.



Our Framework:

Trauma informed, cultural and psychoanalytic with a place and strength-based focus.



Our Values:

- Reconciliation and recognition
- Self-determination
- Reciprocity and mutual respect
- Privileging cultural revival
- Intercultural engagement
- Feeling is healing
- Developing family and community partnerships and outcomes
- Psychological growth

“By changing minds, we are saving lives. It is this simple vision which guides our work every day.”



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men aged 25-29 have the highest suicide rates in the world



75% of child suicides in Australia between 2007 – 2011 were by Aboriginal children



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women are up to 35 times more likely to experience family violence than non-Indigenous Australian women



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are 9.5 times more likely than non-Indigenous children to be in out-of-home care

“Left unaddressed, the historical, intergenerational and ongoing trauma of colonial dispossession and violence, loss of culture and land, and policies such as the forced removal of children and the Northern Territory Intervention (Atkinson, Nelson & Atkinson 2010) passes from generation to generation, through violence, behavioural problems, harmful substance abuse, mental health issues and parenting practices.”

OUR RECENT WORK INCLUDES:

- Kurunna Mwarre Ingkintja – Good Spirit Men's Place (3 year) Research Project and Reports, including interviews with 25 Aboriginal men and a best practice Men's Shed model for Aboriginal men in Central Australia.
- The Men's Tjilirra Movement (MTM), Tools for Living, in collaboration with the Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS).
- Developing and delivering training presentations on violence, suicide, trauma and transformative tools to Indigenous Pastoral Association, Ingkintja (CAAC), RANZCP_psychoiatrists, Yiramalay /Wesley College staff and leaders and more.
- Development and deliveries of a fifteen week Violence Program to mandated and repeat offenders.
- Booklets on racism, violence, the troubled life, recognition and psychoanalytic tools.
- Five conference presentations in 2018 and major publications.
- Produced two films on MTM.
- An exhibition of traditional tools (in progress).
- Changing Futures in the Outback – Reconciliation Journey to the Heart, in collaboration with Life Again (in progress).



Old and new men engage with MTM. Young men who have never made tjilirra now can make them. Many of them are selling their tjilirra for the first time - they cannot believe their craftsmanship is of any value to the Whiteman. The impact of the MTM is growing exponentially. When the MTM vehicle arrives in the community the people say they are "happy".





MEN'S TJILIRRA MOVEMENT:



Martin Jugadai

The Men's Tjilirra Movement (MTM) is a place-based approach to trauma recovery, operating in five remote communities in the Central and Western Desert region. The MTM empowers communities to rekindle and build cultural knowledge and connection, building long-term sustainability through community ownership.

The idea for the Men's Tjilirra Movement came from a local ngangkari, Martin Jugadai, working with an RFDS remote mental health worker in 2014. CASSE provided financial and operational support for the project.



Jamie Millier Tjupurrula

WHAT IS TJILIRRA?

Cultural revival is vital to emotional well-being. MTM engages young Aboriginal men to reconnect with their elders on country to learn, in language, about making tjilirra (traditional ancestral tools) such as boomerangs, spears, and shields. The making of tjilirra ensures cultural continuity, revival and the connection between the generations.

These tools become symbolic for developing tools for living.

The men in these communities have begun to make tjilirra again and to talk of the 'problem life' in big meetings and about new 'tools for living'.

MTM strengthens the role of men as fathers and the transmission of cultural knowledge. It works to mitigate violence, assisting in the men's growth as individuals, and as members of their families and communities.

MTM has undertaken a dozen successful cultural camps for youth at risk and some camps for women. The camps offer a safe space away from the "problem" community life, struggles, drugs and grog, where participants can think clearly on country about who they are, their families, and their struggles.



Nathan Brown

Making tjilirra is special - it is the spirit of our grandfather inside you." - Martin Jugadai, ngangkari (traditional healer)

The camps connect youth with their fathers and grandfathers "in memory", provide teamwork opportunities, learnings about traditional life, and positive emotional experiences - they are given opportunities to be happy, proud and strong.





"...At one of our earlier meetings at Ntaria a young man, Rafael, challenged the elders in an impassioned speech, saying they - the younger generation- did not know the old ways, like how to throw a boomerang and stalk a kangaroo on foot, and that the elders needed to teach them these ways. An old man, from a significant traditional owner family, stood up and asked a senior Aboriginal man, Bayden, to turn the Ingkintja (good spirit men's place) painting of the generations, upside down and in doing so, granted the younger generation authority. It was electrifying. Bayden turned the painting upside down. Two years later at this community of Ntaria, the old men joined the young enthusiastic men with the MTM and began to teach them how to make tjilirra."

Members of the MTM team are not strangers. They are known to the people in kin, place and songline, and have their own stories of trauma and transformation which they share.

Aboriginal people experience a deep sense of loss of direction and hopelessness which can translate into high rates of interpersonal and family violence. The role of men as hunters, Lore men, protectors and fathers has been diminished. One of the Headmen explained the critical importance of making tjilirra for social and emotional well-being:

If we do not have tjilirra we have no language, no culture. We have nothing. We are nothing. It's our history. A part of us. It makes us proud to make them."

Almost a whole generation of younger men have not been 'given' knowledge due to substance usage and criminal incarceration. Both generations speak about a disconnection between them.

The Men's Tjilirra Movement is the answer for intergenerational trauma and achieving tools for living. There are NO other programs on communities which support community determined, cultural solutions led by the elders.

CASSE has a unique opportunity to develop the MTM with the elders.

MEN'S TJILIRRA MOVEMENT TEAM

CASSE has a culturally competent team on the ground.

- Martin Jugadai, a ngangkari (traditional healer) is an original founder of MTM.
- Jamie Millier Tjupurrula is an initiated man who was taught by Whiskey Tjapaltjarri to make the traditional tools.
- Nathan Brown is a cultural interpreter and fluent in Luritja.

Both Jamie and Nathan have lived on these communities for over a decade.

The MTM is delivered in language, and Jamie has credentials in the traditional protocols around the making of tjilirra. Jamie and Nathan have developed mutual respect and years of trust. They are not strangers - they are known to the people in kin, place and songline.





There is a multiplying effect for each man that participates in MTM. These men go on to influence their connections, family and community life for the better - and they recommend MTM for everyone."

ON A RECENT TRIP, THE MTM PROGRAM MANAGER REPORTED:

One young man with us had been into trouble; I spoke to him about it. He had stabbed someone. Young Tjupurrula had been drinking with older people than him in Alice Springs and they started to treat him badly. Young Tjupurrula walked away and got a knife and went back and stabbed a man in the drinking group. Tjupurrula is only 17 and has not got a record of this type of behavior. I spoke to him about the consequences if the man had of died. I said that he should not be doing this type of thing. I said if he worked hard I would try and help him through the MTM and support him with his case. This young man has been grown up by extended family, his family battles with severe mental health issues.

I heard some shouting from a distance. I asked someone who it was. They told me; it was one of my very long-term friends. I jumped in my car and went to where my friend was. The man was aggressive but as soon as I yelled out to him he calmed down and I spoke to him. I told the man I didn't want to see him go back to jail for another 4 years. I said I miss my friend. I spoke to him about the camp and said he had to come.

My friend gave his story of that day to the young men. He told them how I came and got him so he wouldn't get wild and go back to jail. This was an amazing time by the fire and it all happened naturally. We made plans for everyone to cut wood in the morning and work together. The men stayed up and talked by the fire.

ACTIVITIES

The MTM team visits each community regularly.

On each visit the Program Manager meets with the elders, then visits the stakeholders, receives updates and generates collaborations. The next day MTM picks up youth and elders and they travel on country to find materials and make traditional tools.

While on country, the men may hunt for kangaroo or turkey. The Program Manager will show them how to track and kill the game and how to prepare, cook and eat the meat the traditional way.

The men may sing songs and tell stories of the Dreamtime. They may talk about the “problem life”. They may decide to camp out for the few days.



METHOD

The Program Manager and team use a trauma-informed frame when working with the men. They will encourage the telling of personal stories of trauma and crime, and encourage thinking about ways forward. They know the ‘hurting hearts’ of the people and they share in their sorry business. Their consulting room is on country, along songlines and waterholes.

They work by talking ‘sideways’ with different family members along gender lines. If there is a suicidal youth, they take them out on country, his country, with uncle or grandfather if they can. They then go ‘level’ with the family groupings. They encourage the youth to look after the old people, the grandfathers. They are mindful of avoidance relationships. They know about the ‘troubles’ of families and they work with the men who have committed domestic violence and take them out on country.

OUTCOMES

Two short films have been made by the men about the MTM program. These films have been distributed throughout the communities and serve to build awareness, pride and empowerment.

Two community ceremonies have been held, both for the first time in years. The first one was held at Mt Liebig in the face of a young man nearly suiciding. The ceremony was a preventive measure and a community endeavour to provide safety the traditional way. The second ceremony was with the women at Kintore.

More recently the Program Manager, in collaboration with Waltja and Tangentyere, held community meetings about violence and ran a two-day workshop on violence in the two communities. CASSE plans to adapt the Breakthrough Violence Program and have it translated so it can be delivered by the MTM on country.

Over 400 men have been engaged through the program, with 354 participating on a repeated basis. The ongoing engagement of men at risk is in itself a major achievement: At risk-youth are talking and engaging.

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

MTM is seeking support to train four leaders in each of the communities we work in to expand the reach, impact and sustainability of tjilirra making.

The men will be trained and mentored to learn the art of tjilirra, and the skills to transmit this cultural practice to the younger generation.

The reach of four men in four communities will quadruple the engagement of the men in purposeful activity, and impact positively on quadruple the number of families.

With your support CASSE will undertake a comprehensive Social Return on Impact (SROI) analysis involving stakeholders and clients at the four communities. CASSE will undertake research on the intervention of responding to psychological need, the processes of catalysing change and the recommendations of the people. This process will increase awareness of the benefits of trauma informed cultural practices in mitigating further consequences of trauma, improving program delivery.



MENTORING & EVALUATION OF MTM

CASSE is seeking \$300,000 to fund four Aboriginal leaders to be mentored by the Program Manager, and \$50,000 to design and contribute to the delivery of an SROI analysis. We will fund some of the infrastructure costs, vehicle and relevant consultants, such as the Director of CASSE'S Aboriginal Australian Relations Program, who will mentor the team and direct the research. CASSE will seek the support of a student to undertake the research. CASSE is seeking \$30,000 funds to hold an exhibition of traditional tools.

MENTAL HEALTH OUTREACH

CASSE is seeking \$40,000 funds to further develop its transformative impact in the remote communities and develop culturally appropriate programs, materials and short YouTube clips to open up conversations and inform people on suicide, violence, trauma and tools for living.

CASSE is seeking \$250,000 in funding for the organisation infrastructure to enable the ongoing work, which prioritises emotional health led by Aboriginal leaders and communities to continue paving new ways forward.

Your support will change minds, save and transform lives.



■ The MTM offers the people traditional anchors and emergent new ways of going forward. It offers hope, growth, a sense of place and belonging.

Aboriginal people want to
HEAL HURTING HEARTS
and WAKE UP STRONG."



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