

# **Creating Cultural Empathy and Challenging Attitudes through Indigenous Narratives:**

## **Scenario scripts**



**SUPPORT FOR THE CREATING CULTURAL EMPATHY AND  
CHALLENGING ATTITUDES THROUGH INDIGENOUS NARRATIVES  
PROJECT HAS BEEN PROVIDED BY THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT  
OFFICE FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING**

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## Methodology for scenario development

The Indigenous Reference Group members identified Indigenous people with positive and negative stories to relate about their experience with health providers and services.

Once these stories had been collected and read by the Indigenous Reference Group, the members identified the three key themes from the narratives.

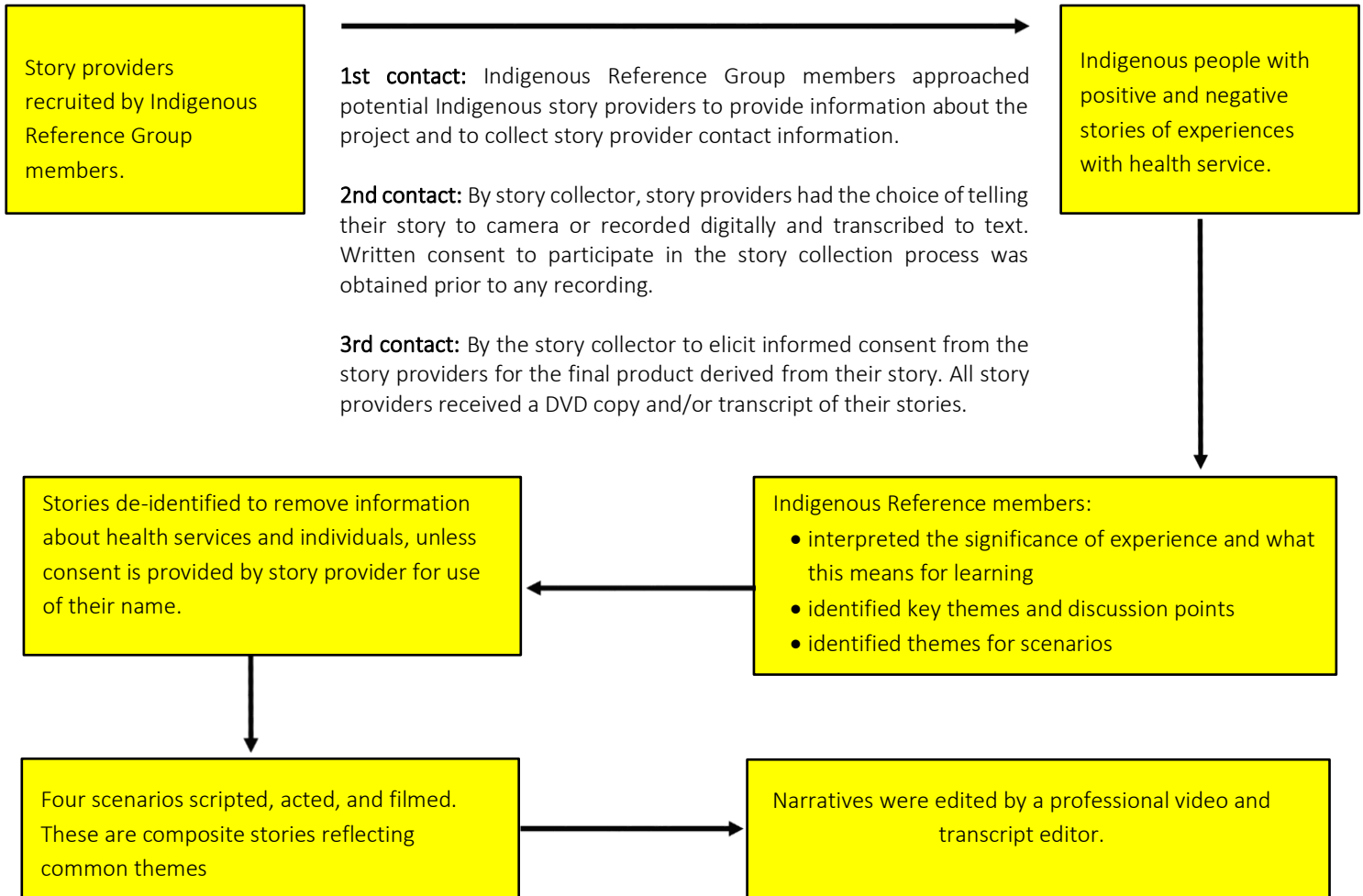
- Communication**  
Taking time to talk to patients and finding out about the whole person, their family and community. Explaining medical terms in plain language.
- Passing on**  
Paying respect to dying relatives.
- Drunken stereotypes**  
Stereotypes and racism assumptions leads to limited treatment or a lack of services.

The scenarios are composite stories that reflect the common themes and are not representative of any one story.

The themes were developed in scenarios by Indigenous playwright David Milroy and produced by P & M Projects and Management.

# Methodology

Project leaders	Project team	Reference group
- 1 Indigenous member - 3 non-Indigenous members	6 Indigenous members 2 non-Indigenous members	9 Indigenous members



**Story provider choice:**

- to relate their story to a male or female story collector.
- for use of their name. If story providers did not consent to use of their name, a pseudonym was created.
- to tell their story direct to camera or recorded digitally and transcribed to text. If participants had concerns about the persistence of their images, then participants were advised to have their story digitally recorded. Digital recordings were transcribed to text, after which the recording was destroyed.
- to take their story further to assist in system change. The story collectors advised story providers of options if they wished to take their experience further.
- to access counselling services. Story providers were offered free face-to-face or telephone counselling.

## Scenario scripts

### Communication

#### 1. INT. HOSPITAL ROOM DAY

NATHAN is a middle aged Aboriginal patient sitting on his bed as the DOCTOR reads through his SOAP notes. A NURSE with a wheelchair looks on.

DOCTOR

Hmm...160 over 95.

NATHAN nods without understanding what the doctor is talking about.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)

LDL's are normal.

NATHAN nods

DOCTOR (CONT'D)

Urinalysis didn't show anything.

Doctor mutters to himself.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)

White blood cell count is normal.

NATHAN nods and half smiles.

The doctors pager sounds. He checks it.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)

The joys of Obstetrics. Nurse will take you for an echo-Cardiogram and Mr....

DOCTOR check the patients name on the clipboard

DOCTOR (CONT'D)

Mr. Teagan I'll see you tomorrow.

The doctor exits in a hurry leaving a bewildered NATHAN. The nurse shakes her head at the doctor's lack of bedside manner.

NURSE

I'm sure you could do with a cup of tea after that.

NATHAN

Sure could...and some fresh air!

NURSE

How do you like your tea...Black?

Nathan looks sternly at the nurse

NATHAN

What? You think black people only drink black tea?

NURSE is embarrassed by her faux pas

NURSE

Oh, I'm so sorry Mr. Teagan. I didn't mean to offend...

NATHAN

Hey! I'm only joking with ya.

NURSE

You have to be careful what you say these days.

NATHAN

At least I understand what you're saying.

NURSE

Sometimes doctors forget they're talking to patients.

NATHAN

They should talk straight out like my tea.

Nurse looks confused

NATHAN (CONT'D)

Plain and simple, nothing fancy.

Nurse hands NATHAN a cup of tea. He sips and grimaces.

NATHAN (CONT'D)

Pwah! Tastes like perfume!

NURSE

It's Earl Grey.

NATHAN

Ya got any Bushells?

NURSE

Sorry.

NATHAN shakes his head.

## 2. EXT HOSPITAL GROUNDS

NATHAN and the NURSE are sitting on a bench. NATHAN is drinking from a water bottle as the NURSE sips her tea. There's a wheelchair beside them. NATHAN is unwilling to engage in chit chat.

NURSE

How's the water?

NATHAN screws the lid on the bottle and places it beside him ignoring the nurse's question.

NURSE (CONT'D)

Do you have family in Perth?

NATHAN

Not much.

NURSE

Most of my family live over East. Do you have a big family?

NATHAN

I got the biggest mob in the Pilbara, and a big mob of grannies too.

NURSE

Grannies?

NATHAN

Yer, little ones. We call our grandchildren our grannies too.



NURSE

They must keep you busy. Big responsibility, kids. They're with you for life.

NATHAN is silent. NURSE changes the subject.

NURSE (CONT'D)

Did you understand what the Doctor was saying?

NATHAN

Not really. Might be my blood making me sick.

NURSE

Your blood pressure is very high. 160 over 95.

NATHAN

What's that mean?

NURSE

It's like when a radiator gets blocked, the pressure builds up and then...

NATHAN

Boosh!! Water goes everywhere. I done that a few times.

NURSE

The Doctor thinks you might be showing signs of anxiety and stress, you know, worrying about things too much.

NATHAN goes quiet and takes a sip of his water.

NATHAN

Back home, I'm a big man in my community. Everyone comes to me with their problems expecting me to fix everything. Including their radiators.

NURSE

If you don't look after yourself you can't help others.

NATHAN

That's true aye!

NURSE

Come on. We'd better you echo-cardiogram done.

NATHAN

I don't know about all these tests. I think I'd rather be sick back home than here. At least I'd know what's going on.

NURSE

The best place for you is back home, but feeling healthy not sick. Then you can enjoy spending time with your grannies... children.

NATHAN

Stick to calling em kids. You fellas can't pull off the grannies thing yet.

They laugh and have a moment of connection

The NURSE helps NATHAN into his wheelchair. NATHAN reaches into his top pocket and pulls out a photo of his granddaughter. He looks at it for a moment then hands it to the NURSE.

NATHAN (CONT'D)

This is one of them ...Jaquita. She's a proper cheeky one.

NURSE

Very cute.

NATHAN

Maybe I gotta get myself better for her.

NURSE

That's right! Listen to what the Doctor has to say.

NATHAN

I've been listening. I just don't understand what he's saying.

NURSE

Then stop pretending you understand and ask him to explain things properly.

NATHAN smiles and puts the photo back in his pocket

### 3. INT HOSPITAL ROOM DAY

The DOCTOR is looking through NATHAN'S notes. The NURSE is adjusting NATHAN'S pillow.

DOCTOR

The Echo-cardiogram hasn't shown any abnormalities.

NATHAN

Hold on Doctor, this Echo Cardy thingy what's that all about?

DOCTOR

We use sound-waves to take a picture of your heart.

NATHAN

And your telling me the pictures were okay?

DOCTOR

That's right. There's nothing wrong with your heart.

NATHAN

You ever been out bush Doctor?

DOCTOR

Out bush?

NATHAN

Not just around here I mean right out bush?

DOCTOR

No...not really.

NATHAN

If you ever in the Pilbara look me up and I'll take you out bush. Show you some culture.

The DOCTOR puts down the clipboard and sits on the bed next to NATHAN.

DOCTOR

I always wanted to go on trip across Australia. Take my kids before they grow up and leave home.

NATHAN

If ya want a few extras I've got plenty- and they never leave home!  
They'd be with ya for life, aye Nurse! Biggest mob of grannies!

They all laugh

THE END

## Drunken stereotypes

INT. HOSPITAL EMERGENCY RECEPTION

A SECURITY GUARD, stands with authority at the entrance to the emergency ward. Nursing staff bustle by, dealing with a number of emergency patients.

ALEC, an elderly Aboriginal man enters the emergency ward. He is shaky on his feet and staggers as he takes his knapsack off his shoulder and places it on the floor in the middle of the reception area. ALEC regains his breath and then looks through his pockets trying to find something.

The SECURITY GUARD approaches.

SECURITY GUARD

Can't you read the sign?

ALEC doesn't understand what the SECURITY GUARD is referring too. The guard gestures to the sign.

SECURITY GUARD (CONT'D)

No smoking! And pick up your bag before someone trips over it.

ALEC

I need to speak with a...

SECURITY GUARD

Take a seat before you fall on your face.

ALEC stops looking in his pockets and warily takes a seat placing his bag next to him. He takes a handkerchief from his pocket and mops his brow, rubs his arm and loosens his shirt under the wary eye of the SECURITY GUARD. ALEC smiles and nods to the guard but the nod isn't returned.

ALEC resumes looking in his pockets and finds the referral he was looking for. He makes a point of showing the SECURITY GUARD who gives ALEC the 'I'm watching you gesture'.

ALEC tries to read the referral but doesn't understand what he's supposed to do with it. He gets the attention of a NURSE walking past.

ALEC

S'cuse me...S'cuse me Miss! Could you tell me what I'm supposed to do with this here?

Alec struggles to stand and show the NURSE the paper. She politely motions him to stay seated.

The NURSE approaches the SECURITY GUARD

NURSE

Could you smell any alcohol on him?

SECURITY GUARD

He was swaying from the moment he walked in.

NURSE

I think you've got it wrong.

SECURITY GUARD

Anyone can tell he's been drinking.

NURSE

He has a referral from his GP so I'm dealing with this. Not you or the Police.

NURSE walks away.

SECURITY GUARD (CALLING OUT)

If he reaches for his smokes again he's out of here.

The NURSE approaches ALEC who is looking concerned about the conversation.

ALEC

Everything okay Miss?

NURSE

Nothing to worry about.

ALEC

Thanks Miss. I think I'd better sit here for a while I'm a bit crook.

NURSE

Would you like some water?

ALEC

I got some in my bag.

NURSE

I won't be long.

The NURSE leaves to register ALEC at the reception desk.

ALEC remains seated and unzips his knapsack on the seat next to him and puts his hand inside.

SECURITY GUARD

Hey!... What do you think your doing.

ALEC is startled to find the GUARD standing over him.

ALEC

I'm thirsty.

SECURITY GUARD

You've had enough to drink.

ALEC

Sorry mister but I don't think you understand what...

The SECURITY GUARD moves forward intimidatingly.

ALEC slowly removes his hand from the bag.

The GUARD backs off.

ALEC is feeling very anxious. He leans back in is chair licking his lips from thirst. He takes a bottle of pills from his pocket, unscrews the cap and shakily pours them into his hand dropping a few on the floor. He struggles to stand from his chair to pick up the pills but starts having a seizure. He calls desperately for the NURSE.

ALEC (CONT'D)

Miss!...Miss!

The NURSE rushes from the reception desk to help ALEC. She takes him by the arm.

ALEC (CONT'D)

I'm not sure how many of these I'm supposed to have...

The SECURITY GUARD rushes up

SECURITY GUARD

I told you to settle down!

ALEC gasps then collapses onto the ground.

The SECURITY GUARD tries to pull ALEC up by the arm.

SECURITY GUARD (CONT'D)

Come on you!

NURSE (SHOUTS)

Leave him!...I need help here! Someone call a code blue!

The NURSE sets about putting ALEC, who is now unconscious, in a resuscitation position. She begins resuscitation.

LONG SHOT OF THE SECURITY GUARD

The SECURITY GUARD picks up ALEC's knapsack and reaches inside. He pulls out a bottle of water and holds it in his hand.

THE END



## Passing on

INT. HOSPITAL NIGHT

The NURSING COORDINATOR walks down a ward past Pop's room.

FRANCINE, not wishing to draw the attention of the NURSE COORDINATOR, sneaks quietly out of Pop's room with her son MARLIN.

FRANCINE

Pop's sleeping, but I still want you to keep an eye on him. Okay?

MARLIN nods

FRANCINE (CONT'D)

No drifting off, and no turning on the TV.

MARLIN

Where you going Mum?

FRANCINE

I'm gonna wait outside for Uncle Jacob. If Pop wakes up tell him we won't be too long.

MARLIN

Bring me back some chips!

FRANCINE

Shhh!

FRANCINE opens the door quietly and MARLIN re enters Pop's room. The NURSE COORDINATOR notices FRANCINE as she's closing the door and approaches her.

NURSE COORDINATOR

Is everything alright?

FRANCINE

Gotta wait out front for Pop's boomerangs.

NURSE COORDINATOR

Boomerangs?

FRANCINE

He's wants to play, em. He's missing his country.

NURSE COORDINATOR

It's against ward policy to allow ...music this late at night.

FRANCINE

It's important for him to sing about his country. Especially when he's so far away from it.

NURSE COORDINATOR

Look, I understand where you are coming from but the other palliative care patients need their rest. Please respect the rules of the ward.

FRANCINE

We got our rules too. We can get in big trouble if we don't do the right thing by our culture.

NURSE COORDINATOR

I realise that this is a very upsetting and emotional time for your family but it may be a while before your father um...passes on.

FRANCINE

He seen all the old people waiting for him.

NURSE COORDINATOR

I know this is a tough time for your family so it's best you be rested and ready for the days ahead. Go home have a sleep and come back tomorrow. I'll call you the second his condition changes.

FRANCINE

I'm sorry nurse but we can't leave Pop here all alone. He has to have his family with him and we have to be with him. That's our way. We'll sleep on the floor if we have too.

JACOB enters the ward carrying boomerangs wrapped in a Kangaroo skin.

JACOB

Hey sis'... how's Dad going?

FRANCINE moves away from the COORDINATOR and has a quiet word to JACOB.

FRANCINE

He's sleeping.

JACOB

I thought you was gonna meet me out the front.

FRANCINE

I was on my way but I got caught up with her.

FRANCINE points her lips to the NURSE COORDINATOR. The NURSE COORDINATOR is now talking on the phone and casts a concerned eye at FRANCINE and JACOB then checks the time on her watch.

JACOB

What's up with her? She don't look too happy.

FRANCINE

She wants us outta here.

JACOB

I'll have a word with her.

JACOB and FRANCINE approach the NURSE COORDINATOR as she finishes her phone conversation.

FRANCINE

Nurse, this is my brother Jacob.

NURSE COORDINATOR

Jacob, I understand from Francine that you want to stay here tonight with your Father.

JACOB

That's right. We can't leave him now. Some other family are heading this way too. We gotta be here when they arrive.

NURSE COORDINATOR

I see. Do you know how many?

JACOB

A couple of cars. Maybe eight or nine people.

MARLIN opens the door and calls out in a loud whisper.

MARLIN

Mum, Pops waking up!

FRANCINE

You go Jacob. He might want those boomerangs.

JACOB

Don't be too long.

JACOB stares at the standoff between the NURSE COORDINATOR and FRANCINE then goes to Pops room closing the door behind him.

FRANCINE is anxious waiting on the reaction from the NURSE COORDINATOR. Pregnant pause as the tension builds.

NURSE COORDINATOR

Francine, I've spoken to Doctor Salman and explained the situation to him.

FRANCINE

What did he have to say?

NURSE COORDINATOR

We'll do what we can to help you through this difficult time.

FRANCINE

True?

FRANCINE becomes teary and reaches for a tissue in her pocket.

FRANCINE (CONT'D)

I thought you was gonna kick us out.

NURSE COORDINATOR

I'm sorry if I seemed ...insensitive. I didn't realise how important it was for you to be here. We'll let you know when your family arrives and we'll make sure they can see your Father as well, if that's what you want.

From the room we hear the sound of boomerangs. FRANCINE walks to the door opens it and turns back to the NURSE COORDINATOR who gives FRANCINE a comforting smile. FRANCINE enters the room.

THE END