

DIDGERIDOO THERAPY

A new tune in treatment

Background

Each year, one in five Victorians experiences a mental health condition, with nearly half (45%) affected at some point in their lifetime.

Enhancing mental wellbeing not only eases pressure on support services, it also improves physical health outcomes, fosters resilience and strengthens communities.

The Loddon Mallee Public Health Unit (LMPHU) is working alongside partners to support place-based initiatives that support mental wellbeing and reflect the strengths and values of the communities they serve.

Collaboration

A recent example is a sound healing experience delivered by Njernda Aboriginal Corporation.

Funded by the LMPHU and facilitated by Njernda's Social and Emotional Wellbeing Officer, Stuart Hearn, the event showcased didgeridoo sound therapy, an ancient practice that supports emotional release, relaxation and deeper connection.

The session provided a valuable opportunity for participants to experience traditional healing in an inclusive space, deepening understanding of how culturally grounded practices can support mental wellbeing.

This approach aligns with the National Strategic Framework for Mental Health and Social and Emotional Wellbeing 2017–2023, which highlights the importance of access to both traditional and contemporary healing practices as part of holistic, person-centred care.

Source: The National Strategic Framework for Mental Health and Social and Emotional Wellbeing (2017–2023)



“Strengthening wellbeing through culture: Didgeridoo sound healing delivers positive results in Campaspe”

At a Glance

- 11 participants in attendance
- An active questionnaire was used to capture different elements related to stress
- Participants were introduced to a number of didgeridoo mindfulness and healing techniques
- The didgeridoo sound therapy results were overwhelmingly positive in all activities



Outcomes

Throughout the session, participants completed wellbeing self-assessments to reflect on changes in stress, anxiety, intrusive thoughts and overall emotional state.

The results were overwhelmingly positive: 100% of participants reported reduced stress levels

All attendees noted increased ability to relax, manage intrusive thoughts and shift toward a more positive mindset

Every attendee indicated they were highly likely to participate in future sessions and recommend the experience to others

These outcomes reinforce the value of safe, alternative healing modalities in enhancing the mental wellbeing of communities.



LEVEL OF STRESS	MALE	FEMALE	AVERAGE
BEFORE		7	7
AFTER		3	3
DIFFERENCE		-4	-4
OCOIT*	MALE	FEMALE	AVERAGE
BEFORE		6	4
AFTER		8	8
DIFFERENCE		2	4
RELAXATION	MALE	FEMALE	AVERAGE
BEFORE		5	5
AFTER		8	9
DIFFERENCE		3	4
POS ENERGY	MALE	FEMALE	AVERAGE
BEFORE		6	6
AFTER		8	9
DIFFERENCE		2	3
LIKELY TO ATTEND	MALE	FEMALE	AVERAGE
	10	10	
RECOMMEND	MALE	FEMALE	AVERAGE
	10	10	

*ONES CONTROL OVER INTRUSIVE THOUGHTS

Learnings

Healing can happen in many different ways for individuals and communities. Spirituality and specific Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander healing approaches can play an important role in this regard. Many healing practices and programs occur outside of the responsibility of the health sector. Developing and promoting pathways for healing is an important component of person-centred and holistic care.

By supporting self-determined, culturally appropriate initiatives, the LMPHU is helping to create pathways for healing that are meaningful, sustainable, and grounded in community strengths.

Next steps

Building on this success, there is strong interest in expanding alternative healing modalities, such as didgeridoo sound therapy, to further enhance wellbeing and connection.



“This shift in the heart rhythm plays an important role in facilitating higher cognitive functions, creating emotional flexibility, and facilitating social connectedness”



We acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional Custodians of the land and water where we live, work and play. We celebrate that this is the oldest living and continuous culture in the world. We are proud to be sharing the land that we work on and recognise that sovereignty was never ceded.

