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Presentation title: Aboriginal Building Connections: A community-focused program dealing with entrenched conflict

Presenters: Stuart McMinn (Aboriginal RAP Coordinator) and Michele Moore (Aboriginal Community Development Worker)

Outline: This presentation discussed the development of Interrelate's Aboriginal Building Connections (ABC) program. It highlighted how the program was developed, who it is for, and informed participants of the content of the program.

ABC is a psycho-education post-separation parenting program that focuses on raising awareness of the risk of harm to children when there are high levels of unresolved and entrenched conflict between separated parents. The program provides practical and achievable hints and tips to help parents take care of themselves, become aware of their own needs as distinct from their kids' needs, and ultimately build a healthy parenting relationship with their kids and a civil relationship with the other parent. This Aboriginal-specific parenting education program is designed by Aboriginal people to be delivered in a culturally-appropriate group setting to give participants the opportunity to share experiences and hear from other parents.

ABC is delivered by Aboriginal staff of Interrelate who are in offices across NSW, largely in rural and regional areas. Interrelate has also trained staff across Australia to be able to flexibly deliver this program in their communities. Most recently, Kutanya (Interrelate's Aboriginal Reference



Group) have reviewed the program and embedded deeper layers of cultural learning into the process.

Target audience: Workers or organisations working with Aboriginal communities and/or Aboriginal parents dealing with entrenched and ongoing conflict.

Main ideas:

In this presentation, participants will:

- Develop an understanding of the programs parameters and functions;
- Develop an understanding of key concepts and targeted outcomes of ABC;
- Participate in key activities from the program to further develop participants' understanding of the program;
- Interact with certain activities of the program in groups and discuss what effects the activities have had;
- Develop an understanding of how Interrelate have embedded cultural beliefs, knowledge and ideologies into the program;
- Develop an understanding of how ABC utilises cultural teachings to assist in helping families to reduce the impacts of entrenched conflict on the children;
- Develop understanding that a child focus on parenting, even when separated, is achievable and has positive and healthy outcomes for children and their development.

Outcomes from the interactive session:

- Participants will be aware of a program that assists Aboriginal peoples in understanding that unresolved conflict has poor effects for children;
- Practitioners will have several new ideas to carry into their professional practice;
- Participants will recognise the need to develop strategies to help Aboriginal parents & communities deal with entrenched conflict;



- Participants will have a deeper knowledge of the importance of post-separation parenting courses and how they assist in reducing conflict;
- Participants will have an understanding of how this program has better outcomes for children whose families are dealing with entrenched family conflict.

