



Seasons for Healing

Adult program



Seasons for Healing is a grief and loss education program conducted in a small group peer based environment. It uses the seasons in symbolic and meaningful ways to support participants to acknowledge their hurt, name their feelings and find constructive ways to respond to these.

A small group program supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults dealing with issues of loss and grief.

What does it do?

Seasons for Healing aims to provide a culturally informed approach to support the social and emotional wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults who have experienced significant change and loss by:

- Exploring the impact of the change and loss on everyday life
- Learning new ways to respond to these changes



Who is it for?

Seasons for Healing was developed in partnership with Aboriginal Family Support Services, South Australia in 2012, with funding provided by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Healing Foundation. The program supports Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults to adapt and respond well to the often complex and multi-dimensional loss and grief experiences in their lives.

We suggest that anyone affected by bereavement wait 6-12 months before participating in a Seasons for Healing program.

How does it work?

Seasons for Healing is a small group program that brings together cultural and therapeutic ways of healing with education. Adults in the group support and learn from each other in culturally safe ways through a range of activities designed to invite reflection, sharing and conversation. Participants learn that they are not alone in dealing with the effects of change, loss and grief, and have the chance to listen and speak, make decisions, solve problems and think about plans for the future.

Esteemed Aboriginal artist Bronwyn Bancroft has created a unique and moving series of artworks to illustrate the Seasons for Healing's messages. Participant journals and posters featuring Bronwyn's painting are used to support the groups as they move through the program.



MacKillop Family Services acknowledges the Traditional Custodians and their Elders in each of the communities where we work.

MacKillop celebrates and draws strength from diversity and respects the dignity of all people. We value an inclusive culture where lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, gender diverse, intersex and asexual people (LGBTIQ+) have the right to be safe.



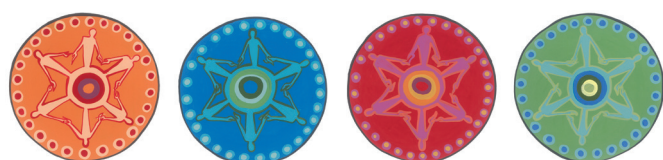
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How is it delivered?

Two trained "Companions" co-facilitate the small group Seasons for Healing program with 4-7 participants over 4 x 2.5 hour sessions.

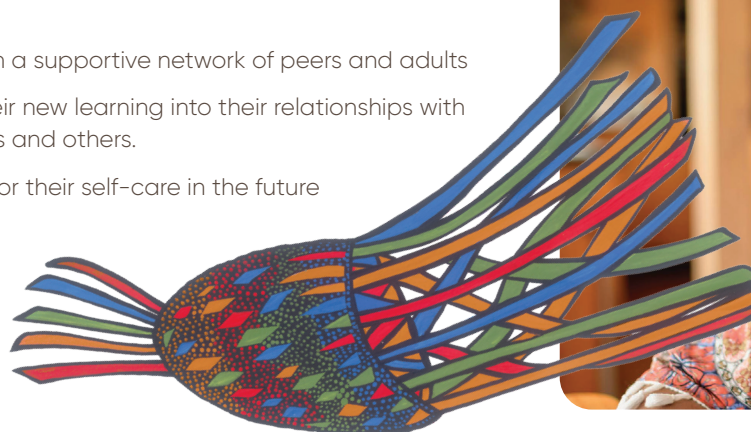
Companions may be agency staff, endorsed volunteers or other suitable adults who undertake a two-day training workshop and subsequent accreditation. Where possible, an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Companion should be one of the two co-facilitators supporting each group.



Outcomes

Seasons for Healing provides the support and space for people to:

- **Learn** about how people have unique responses to change, loss and grief
- **Explore** their own story and how this relates to the story of the seasons
- **Understand** that it is normal to experience a range of grief reactions
- **Explore** new approaches to manage feelings and memories
- **Participate** in a supportive network of peers and adults
- **Integrate** their new learning into their relationships with family, friends and others.
- **Make** plans for their self-care in the future



Evidence and evaluation

School of Social and Policy Studies, Flinders University
Evaluation Report for Aboriginal Family Support Services
SA concludes that:

The Seasons for Healing Program meets the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Healing Foundation National Performance Indicators, and in particular the National Outcomes of:

1. **Strengthened** social, spiritual, emotional and physical wellbeing
2. **Strengthened** connection to culture
3. **Strengthened** cultural identity and pride

Get in touch

- PO Box 1023, North Sydney NSW 2059 Australia
- 1300 379 569
- seasons@mackillop.org.au



MacKillop Seasons
1300 379 569
mackillopseasons.org.au