

# “Perspectives of integrating Indigenous knowledge into a mixed-methods research design to address social and emotional wellbeing.”

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## **Abstract**

**Introduction:** Indigenous communities continue to experience significant health and social inequities driven by political and systemic oppression and dispossession. Indigenous health is holistic and social and emotional wellbeing represents the interconnection of social, emotional, spiritual and cultural factors on health and wellbeing. Consistent with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander understandings of health, non-Indigenous knowledge increasingly recognises the role of social, economic, political and historical factors that influence the health of populations, known as the social determinants of health. This presentation will share perspectives of implementing a PhD research design framework which is exploring the social determinants of health and social and emotional wellbeing.

**Methods:** Indigenous knowledges, self-determination, and voices are essential in understanding the challenges facing Indigenous communities and provides the foundation for effective and culturally relevant approaches. Using decolonising interdisciplinary mixed-methods this research design framework is implemented in three stages and embraces the use of self of the Indigenous researcher and community as active and reflective participants in the research design

**Results:** Indigenous and non-Indigenous methods are integrated across three stages of the research design framework; *Stage One* aims to understand the association between social and emotional wellbeing (mental health outcomes) and the social determinants of health and how these vary across communities. *Stage Two* is a scoping review to identify the extent to which health care programs are addressing the social determinants of health. *Stage Three* is evaluating the effectiveness of a social determinants of health intervention in addressing unmet social and cultural needs, thereby improving social and emotional wellbeing for South Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

**Conclusion:** Perspectives drawn from this PhD program highlight how integrating Indigenous and non-Indigenous knowledge into a mixed-methods research design has the potential to generate innovative and culturally relevant understandings of the social determinants of Indigenous health providing the foundation