

## Evidence Brief

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### **Using Indigenist and Indigenous methodologies to connect to deeper understandings of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's quality of life**

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The lack of a common description makes measuring the concept of quality of life (QoL) a challenge. Researchers and clinicians continue to use different descriptions and are unable to agree on a definition. The concept is particularly contested when one cultural group seeks to study QoL in another. Even when high-level overarching concepts such as happiness, good health and independence could be relevant across settings, rarely do two different cultural groups experience these in the same way. This has implications for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, whose QoL is founded within their ways of knowing and being, including their connections to country, cultural beliefs and practices.

Indigenous scholars have long been concerned with using Western research and Western methodologies to understand and inform health practice for indigenous populations across the globe. This has contributed to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers developing and using Indigenist research and Indigenous methodologies. Indigenist research is a process informed by three fundamental principles.

- (1) notions of resistance as part of Indigenous peoples' struggle for self-determination,
- (2) responsibility of Indigenous researchers to assist their communities to achieve self-determination, and
- (3) ensuring political integrity and privileging voices of Indigenous peoples by focusing on the historical experiences, ideas, traditions, dreams, interests, aspirations and struggle of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Indigenous methodologies acknowledge that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers are best placed to drive the research pertaining to their people as they are able to draw upon their own life experience in order to appropriately represent their ways of knowing and being.

Effectively measuring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' QoL requires insight into what defines 'quality' for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Indigenous methodologies suggest that this insight can only be assured by involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the design of QoL instruments intended for their peoples. The inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers in this process mirrors the Values and Ethics: Guidelines for Ethical Conduct in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Research (Values and Ethics).