

Service user example – TIP principles

Daren

Background information

Daren is a 28-year-old Noongar man now living in regional Victoria. He's couch surfing and working casual labouring jobs while on the public housing waitlist. Daren left school early and experiences low literacy, making it hard to navigate services. He has a history of family violence and separation, which impacts his ability to trust other people. Daren has also experienced systemic racism and cultural disconnection since moving from Noongar Country (WA). Despite these challenges, he wants to improve his situation and reconnect with his culture.

Possible guiding service delivery questions



Applying the 'Be trauma aware' principle:

1. What is needed to build trust with Daren, given his past experiences of violence, separation, and discrimination?
2. What steps can we take to understand the broader impacts of trauma on Daren's emotional, social, and cultural wellbeing?
3. How can we create safe spaces for Daren to share his story, at his own pace, in ways that feel comfortable and culturally respectful?



Applying the 'Focus on strengths and recovery' principle:

1. What strengths has Daren shown in managing his circumstances and seeking support?
2. How can we support Daren to build on his cultural identity, community connections, and goals for the future?
3. How do we ensure that recovery planning includes his goals — like improving literacy or reconnecting with Country — even if we can't directly provide these supports?



Scenario with actions taken

During the first meetings with Daren, the team lets him talk about his experiences at his own pace. They acknowledge the impact of family violence and family separation on his struggles with trust and managing his emotions. Team members say they want to focus on building a trusting and supportive relationship.

The team acknowledges the effects of intergenerational trauma and systemic discrimination on First Nations people. This prompts Daren to share a little about how his community, extended family, mind, body and spirit, and overall functioning have been affected.

The workers explore with Daren how they can best support him. To ensure a physically and emotionally safe environment, the team ask Daren for his preferred location to meet and what should be put in place for him to feel comfortable in the meeting space, and free from potential triggers or reminders of trauma.

Through slow-paced conversations, the team learn about the cultural disconnection Daren is experiencing due to living away from his community. With his consent, the team reach out to local First Nations Elders and community organisations to seek guidance on culturally appropriate practices and resources to support Daren in reconnecting with his culture and Country. However, they have difficulty finding a First Nations mental health practitioner who can consistently work with Daren due to limited availability. Instead, the team ensures the organisation can pay for culturally competent supervision to support workers and ensure their approach and interventions are appropriate and tailored to Daren's individual needs.

Peer worker:

"Daren – it might take a while for you to feel comfortable with our service. Where do you think is a good place for us to meet that might help you to feel more at ease?"



Scenario with actions taken (continued)

Throughout their interactions, the team focuses on identifying and building on Daren's personal strengths, interests, and aspirations. They learn about his determination to improve his circumstances and his desire to reconnect with his culture. The team show genuine interest in Daren sharing his cultural background and identifying aspects of his identity that are meaningful to him. The team also explores Daren's existing support systems and positive relationships, such as connections with other Noongar community members or organisations. They aim to link with and strengthen these support systems to promote his well-being and recovery.

Counsellor:

"Daren, who have been your supports from the Noongar community? Now that you have moved, who is able to help you? Are there places or people you feel comfortable with?"

However, they recognise that Daren's temporary living situation and limited resources pose challenges in maintaining consistent support networks. To enhance Daren's self-advocacy and independence, the team works with him to identify and develop new skills, such as improving his literacy levels and navigating available services. Although they aren't in a position to organise these skill-building activities within the scope of their time together, they foster a sense of hope, resilience, and self-efficacy by highlighting his ability to overcome adversities and achieve his goals, despite the challenges he faces.

