



Financial Stress in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples

FINANCIAL STRESS IN ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLES AND ASSOCIATED MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES IN AUSTRALIA

What is Financial Stress?

Financial stress refers to the anxiety and pressure individuals experience when they struggle to meet their monetary obligations, be it short-term expenses or long-term debts. For Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, this type of stress has deep-rooted causes and manifests in ways influenced by historical, social, and cultural factors.

FINANCIAL STRESS IN AUSTRALIAN ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES:

Historical Context: The legacies of colonization, dispossession, and discriminatory policies have marginalized Aboriginal communities, limiting their economic opportunities.

Income Disparity: Aboriginal people, on average, earn less than their non-Indigenous counterparts, placing them at a higher risk of financial instability.

Employment Challenges: The unemployment rate among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is notably higher than the broader Australian population. Job opportunities are especially scarce in remote areas.

Housing and Living Costs: Aboriginal communities often grapple with housing insecurity, overcrowding, and higher costs of living, particularly in remote locations.

Gambling: Introduction of gambling in clubs and pub are now accessible on phones. Gambling impacts on the financial stresses for family, friends, community, and can effect our physical and mental health.

Limited Financial Services: Many Aboriginal communities lack adequate access to banking and financial services, complicating money management and savings efforts.



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ASSOCIATED MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES:

Financial stress is not just an economic concern; it has profound effects on mental well-being for anyone. For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, financial pressures exacerbate and intertwine with other systemic challenges, leading to:

Increased Anxiety and Depression: Constant worry about finances can result in chronic anxiety. Feeling trapped or hopeless due to financial constraints can also lead to depression.

Substance Abuse: Financial pressures can be a trigger for substance abuse as individuals may turn to alcohol, drugs, or other substances as a way to cope.

Stress on Relationships: Financial challenges can strain relationships within families and communities, leading to conflicts, breakdowns in communication, or domestic violence.

Decreased Self-esteem and Self-worth: Continuous financial hardships can erode an individual's self-confidence, leading to feelings of inadequacy or failure.

Chronic Stress and Physical Health: Persistent financial stress can result in chronic stress, which, in turn, affects physical health. Chronic stress can lead to conditions like hypertension, heart diseases, and weakened immune systems.

SEEKING HELP

Financial stress among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is intricately linked with their physical, social, and emotional well-being. Understanding this connection is important for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to educate ourselves to seek support if we are impacted by financial stress.

Our Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations and the Australian Government are looking at effective interventions, support systems, and policies that promote both financial and mental health for our communities.

Support and advice services available:

- Gambling Help QLD **1800 858 858**
(www.gamblinghelpqld.org.au/startyarning)
- NSW Aboriginal Safe Gambling service
0409245597 – 02 4023 8080
- Aboriginal Legal Rights Movement (Adelaide Port Augusta only)
- First Nations Gamble Aware program-**1800 858 858**



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