



Summary list of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander social and emotional wellbeing (SEWB) measures

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social and Emotional Wellbeing Measurement Consortium and Australian Institute of Health and Welfare – 1 July 2025

This summary list of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander social and emotional wellbeing (SEWB) measures provides a dedicated focus on First Nations social and emotional wellbeing that has been developed by the First Nations Health and Welfare Group at the AIHW in collaboration with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander SEWB Measurement Consortium (the Consortium). The lack of focus on and use of available culturally relevant SEWB measures has hindered progress in understanding and improving First Nations people's wellbeing.

This summary contains a range of instruments used for assessing the SEWB of First Nations people. The purposes of these measures vary, ranging from measures for health-related quality of life, to mental health assessments, to psychosocial assessments and measures assessing SEWB. By bringing these tools together, this list aims to:

- explore practical assessment tools for SEWB
- provide understanding of the range of measurement tools available for different population groups among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
- promote the use of tools that are specifically designed for assessing First Nations people where possible
- encourage further development and/or refinement of culturally appropriate tools to assess First Nations people's SEWB
- provide understanding of the limitations of standard tools when used to assess Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

The measures are classified under three categories as determined by the Consortium: *culturally derived*, *culturally informed*, and *culturally adapted*. The summary includes: 17 culturally derived measures; 2 culturally informed measures; 16 culturally adapted measures. For details, see the [SEWB measures inventory and the SEWB measures report](#).

Measure name	Domain	Measure focus & type	No. of items	Age range (& subgroup/s)	Source
Culturally derived measures					
Aboriginal and Islander Mental health initiative (AIMhi)	Connection to mind and emotions	Mental health (social and emotional wellbeing assessment tool)	N/A	No age specified (Northern Territory)	Nagel et al., 2012.
Aboriginal and Islander Mental Health Initiative (AIMhi) Stay Strong App	Connection to family and kinship, connection to Country, connection to mind and emotions, connection to physical health, connection to culture	Mental health (resource)	No further information	No age specified (Northern Territory)	Dingwall et al., 2015
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Complex Trauma and Strengths Questionnaire (ACTSQ)	Connection to mind and emotions, connection to family & kinship, connection to community	Mental health (social and emotional wellbeing assessment tool)	45	17+ years (parents of children <5 years)	Gee et al., 2024

Measure name	Domain	Measure focus & type	No. of items	Age range (& subgroup/s)	Source
Aboriginal Resilience and Recovery Questionnaire (ARRQ)	Connection to body, connection to mind and emotions, connection to family and kinship, connection to community, connection to spirituality, connection to culture, connection to Country	Mental health (social and emotional wellbeing assessment tool)	60	18+ years	Gee, 2016
The Child Resilience Questionnaire (CRQ)	Connection to mind and emotions, connection to family & kinship, connection to community	Social and emotional wellbeing (wellbeing assessment tool)	43	5-12 years (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and refugee backgrounds)	Gartland et al., 2022
Cultural Information Gathering Tool (CIGT)	Connection to mind and emotions, connection to spirituality, connection family and kinship, connection to community, connection to culture	Mental health (wellbeing assessment tool)	No further information	No age specified (health workers who had experience working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people)	Balaratnasingam et al., 2015
First Nations-Child Quality of Life (FirstNations-CQoL)	Connection to family and kinship, connection to body, connection to mind and emotions	Quality of life (health-related assessment tool)	21	0–12 years	Butten et al., 2021
Good Spirit Good Life Assessment	Connection to family and kinship, connection to Country, connection to community, connection to body, connection to culture	Quality of life (assessment tool and framework)	10	45+ years (Aboriginal people with and without cognitive impairment)	Smith et al., 2021
Here and Now Aboriginal Assessment (HANAA)	Connection to mind and emotions, connection to body	Mental health (screening tool)	No further information	18+ years (Western Australia and Queensland)	Janca et al., 2015
Northern Peninsula Area and Torres Strait Islands Anxiety and Depression Tool	Connection to mind & emotions, connection to body, connection to community	Social and emotional wellbeing (assessment tool)	Yarning	45+ (Torres Strait Islands and Northern Peninsula Area)	Meldrum et. al., 2024
Strong Souls Assessment Tool (SSA)	Connection to mind and emotions, connection to body	Mental health (screening tool)	25 (8-item version available)	No age specified (attending secondary or tertiary education institutions or substance use rehabilitation facilities in the Northern Territory)	Thomas et al., 2010
Westerman Aboriginal Symptom Checklist - Adults (WASC-A)	Connection to body, connection to mind and emotions, connection to culture	Mental health (assessment tool)	53	18+ years	Bright, 2012
Westerman Aboriginal Symptom Checklist - Youth (WASC-Y)	Connection to body, connection to mind and emotions, connection to culture	Mental health (assessment tool)	53	13–17 years	Westerman, 2003

Measure name	Domain	Measure focus & type	No. of items	Age range (& subgroup/s)	Source
What Matters 2 Adults (WM2Adults)	Connection to culture, connection to Country, connection to community, connection to spirituality	Emotional wellbeing (assessment tool)	32	18+ years	Howard et al., 2024
What Matters 2 Youth (WM2Youth)	Connection to culture, connection to Country, connection to community, connection to spirituality	Social and emotional wellbeing (assessment tool)	No further information	12-17 years	Garvey et. al., 2024
Words for Feelings Map	Connection to mind and emotions	Mental health (social and emotional wellbeing guide)	No further information	No age specified (Ngaanyatjarra and Pitjantjatjara children and young people)	NPYWC, 2014
Yawuru Wellbeing Survey	Connection to body, connection to Country, connection to culture, connection to community, connection to family and kinship	Emotional wellbeing (assessment tool)	No further information	18+ years (Yawuru people)	Yap & Yu, 2016
Culturally informed measures					
Indigenous Risk Impact Screen (IRIS)	Connection to body, connection to mind and emotions	Mental health (assessment tool)	13	18+ years	Schlesinger et al., 2007
IRISE_C (Racial Identity and Self-Esteem of Children)	Connection to community, connection to culture, connection to spirituality, connection to Country	Mental health (psychosocial assessment tool)	40	8–12 years	Kickett-Tucker et al., 2015
Culturally adapted measures					
Australian Aboriginal Version of the Harvard Trauma Questionnaire (AAVHTQ)	Connection to mind and emotions	Mental health (stress and trauma assessment tool)	17 items on individual stressor events or experiences specific to Australian Aboriginal peoples; 16 items from DSM-III-R (symptom severity score); 14 items that are Aboriginal specific	18–50 years (Aboriginal males who have been convicted of violent offences)	Atkinson, 2008
EuroQoL EQ-5D-5L	Connection to body, connection to mind and emotions	Physical health (quality-of-life assessment tool)	5	18+ years (from distinct language groups: Adnyamathanha, Akenta, Amarak, Bungandidj, Diyari, Erawirung, Kurna, Kokatha Mula, Maralinga Tjarutja,	Santiago et al., 2021a

Measure name	Domain	Measure focus & type	No. of items	Age range (& subgroup/s)	Source
				Mirning, Mulbarapa, Narungga, Ngaanyatjarra, Ngadjuri, Ngarrindjeri, Nukunu, Parnkalla, Peramangk, Pitjantjatjara, Wirangu, Yankunjatjarra)	
Growth and Empowerment Measure (GEM)	Connection to mind and emotions	Mental health (outcomes measure)	14-item Emotional Empowerment Scale (EES14); 12 Scenarios (12S); 6-item Kessler Psychological Distress Scale (K6) supplemented by two questions	18+ years (involved in personal and/or organisational social health activities)	Haswell et al., 2010
Kessler Psychological Stress Scales (K6)	Connection to mind and emotions	Mental health (assessment tool)	6 (study also examines the 10-item version)	18+ years	Furukawa et al., 2003
Kimberley Assessment of Depression of Older Indigenous Australians (KICA- dep)	Connection to mind and emotions	Mental health (assessment tool)	11	45+ years	Almeida et al., 2014
Kimberley Mum's Mood Scale (KMMS)	Connection to mind and emotions	Mental health (psychosocial assessment tool)	No further information	No age specified	Kotz et al., 2016
Modified Kessler Scale (MK-K5)	Connection to mind and emotions	Mental health (assessment tool)	5	18+ years	AIHW, 2009
Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS)	Connection to community, connection to family and kinship	Social wellbeing (social and emotional wellbeing assessment tool)	6 (subset of the original 12-item instrument)	18+ years (living in urban areas)	ABS, 2013
Negative Life Events Scale	Connection to mind and emotions	Mental health (stress and trauma assessment tool)	16	18+ years (heads of households)	Kowal et al., 2007
Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ-9, PHQ-2, aPHQ)	Connection to mind and emotions	Mental health (assessment tool)	10	18+ years (with ischaemic heart disease (IHD))	Esler et al., 2008
Pearlin Mastery Scale	Connection to mind and emotions	Mental health (assessment tool)	7	15+ years (Yolngu people)	Daniel et al., 2006

Measure name	Domain	Measure focus & type	No. of items	Age range (& subgroup/s)	Source
Social and emotional wellbeing module (SEWB Module)	Connection to mind and emotions, connection to culture, connection to family and kinship	Social and emotional wellbeing (assessment tool)	No further information	No age specified	AIHW, 2009
St George's Respiratory Questionnaire (SGRQ/SGRQ-I)	Connection to body	Physical health (clinical assessment tool)	No further information	40–80 years (patients with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD))	Meharg et al., 2022
Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ)	Connection to mind and emotions, connection to community	Mental health (behavioural screening)	25	4–18 years (Aboriginal children and young people using carer reports)	Zubrick et al., 2005
Structured Diagnostic Interview for Mental Disorders (SCID-I)	Connection to mind and emotions	Mental health (assessment tool)	25	18+ years	Nasir et al., 2018
Supportive Care Needs Assessment Tool for Indigenous Patients (SCNAT- IP)	Connection to mind and emotions, connection to body, connection to culture	Physical health (needs assessment tool)	40	18+ years (patients with cancer)	Garvey et al., 2012

Definitions

Term	Definition	More information
Age (and subgroup/s)	Age of study participants and subgroup type of study participants (e.g. clinical patients, children and young people, service providers, carers, language groups, location)	
Domains	SEWB describes the holistic conceptualisation of health held by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples that encompasses one's connection to body, mind & emotion, family, community, culture, Country, and spirituality	Diagram adapted from Gee et al., 2014
Measure focus (and type)	Primary wellbeing dimension with which the measure engages (i.e. physical health, mental health, quality of life, social and emotional wellbeing) and measure/resource type (e.g. assessment tool, screening tool, mapping tool, guide, manual)	
Number of items	Number of measure items featured in the tool/resource.	
Culturally adapted	Culturally adapted tools are standard instruments initially developed for the general population, but have been adapted and evaluated for use with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (to varying degrees)	Centre of Best Practice in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Prevention (CBPATSISP) – see Best Practice Screening & Assessment – CBPATSISP
Culturally derived	Culturally derived tools are unique instruments specifically designed for use among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, where their development was led by or involved Aboriginal clinical or cultural experts in the study and the tools were validated for use with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people	Centre of Best Practice in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Prevention (CBPATSISP) – see Best Practice Screening & Assessment – CBPATSISP
Culturally informed	Culturally informed tools are measures that have been informed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander worldviews and experience, or have sought to centralise and be led by community voices and priorities	Vine et al., 2023
Source	Author of measure or author to first use measure with Indigenous population	