

Indigenous Risk Impact Screen (IRIS) and Brief Intervention

The development of the Indigenous Risk Impact Screen (IRIS) and Brief Intervention is a collaborative research initiative between Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drug Services (ATODS), and Alcohol & Drug Service (ADS) – Metro North Health Service District.

From 2006 funding was made available by the Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing – Treatment and Indigenous Program to implement the IRIS Program across Queensland. As of July 2009 the Commonwealth extends the funding for the IRIS Program to be rolled out across Australia.

The Screening Tool and Brief Intervention was developed in response to a number of recommendations from both national and state reports where alcohol and other drugs are the cause and symptom for health and environmental factors affecting the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Based on the recommendations the IRIS Project seeks to:

- Provide timely advice to clients and family about the extent and nature of the substance misuse and possible interventions and treatment pathways
- Enable both mainstream and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander service providers and health agencies to better target their response to Indigenous client's needs
- Provide Community Workers with support that will enable them to address the alcohol and other drug issues that affect their Indigenous clients in urban, regional and rural areas
- Ensure its sustainability by encouraging the uptake of the IRIS tool through the provision of training and ongoing support to workers and agencies from health, community control, correction, government and non-government sectors

The IRIS Program is a culturally secure and validated screening instrument and brief intervention designed to meet the specific needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in Queensland and across Australia. The IRIS Screening Instrument is a two factor screen that assesses alcohol & other drugs and its associated mental health issues. Assessment is systematically administered and risks can be addressed in a culturally appropriate and timely manner.

The screening tool and brief intervention has been validated. It is now supported and recommended as a culturally validated screen for working with Indigenous people identifying Alcohol & Drug and Mental Health issues. The IRIS Program is included in the Australian Department of Health and Ageing – Alcohol Treatment Guidelines for Indigenous Australian.

Publications

Schlesinger, C.M., Ober, Coralie, McCarthy, M.M (2007) The Development and validation of the Indigenous Risk Impact Screen (IRIS): a 13 item screening instrument for alcohol and drug and mental health risk. *Drug and Alcohol Review*, 26: 109-117