



AHCWA Youth Lateral Violence Statement

We are the Aboriginal Health Council of Western Australia Youth.

We have lived experiences as young people who come from the wide range of locations in which our people are, be it remote, rural, urban or metropolitan settings.

Our experiences include encounters with lateral violence within our families, workplaces and communities and we are concerned.

Lateral violence as we encounter it, includes behaviours like gossiping, bullying, harassment and backstabbing and it can be antagonistic, destructive, hostile, belligerent and passive aggressive, and many times it progresses to physical violence.

We have heard and believe that lateral violence is bedded in our disempowerment and the oppression we and those who have come before us have experienced.

Rather than challenging oppressors or oppressive systems directly, we internalize our colonisation and subsequently create conflict within our own communities, workplaces, and families.

We know lateral violence is not part of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture. Rather, we believe, as part of the oldest living peoples on this planet, getting back to our cultures provides us the remedies to lateral violence.

Respect, reciprocity, affection, belonging, accepting and care are the antidotes to poisonous behaviours within our families, communities and workplaces.

We know by addressing lateral violence now, we can shape our generation and future generations to not be torn down and judged but praised and pushed to our fullest potential by our mob and community.

We are committed to actions that address lateral violence, beginning by shining a light on it wherever and whenever it occurs.

We are dedicated to furthering our understanding of lateral violence and devising strategies to address it by advancing our education, disseminating information, and enhancing knowledge on the subject.

We already experience racism from settler-society. We should not be subjected to this from our own.

We ask our communities to stand up and challenge lateral violence.

We ask our Elders to join us on this journey.

Together, we can combat this plague on our communities and become stronger in the face of adversity, whilst walking in two worlds on this land.

- AHCWA Youth, Lateral Violence Statement