



LEARNING ABOUT HISTORICAL ATROCITIES AND CONTEMPORARY EFFECTS

Truth telling is an important aspect of healing and understanding. Students from all different backgrounds will learn about the impact of colonisation on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

You may learn this through many ways. At times this may be confronting, especially if you have trauma in your life, currently or in the past.

Below are a few tips for all students which may help when confronted with difficult content. Please reflect on the reality that everyone has their own stories, backgrounds and experiences. We all see the world differently, so please be respectful of this and go gently towards yourself and others around you.

- It is normal to have reactions of disbelief, disgust and shock and flow on feelings like sadness, anger, regret and guilt. Our feelings are our reactions to the environment.
- You may become distressed about your mob as the impact of colonisation continues.
- It is important to remember that these are normal reactions and you are not alone.
- There is always support available.
- Think about why you are learning this and what it can lead to, in terms of your education, and understanding the impact on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, in the past and present.
- You could say to yourself something like 'this is hard and I am learning, which is important to me'. Notice there is more here than your emotional response, there is an opportunity to learn.
- If you are overwhelmed and need to leave the room to take a break, let the lecturer know if and when you will return, so they can support you or find someone who can.
- After class or at an appropriate time, you may like to debrief with other students or support staff about your reactions – give everyone a chance to share their reaction in a respectful way.
- Spend some time being with your mob and doing something you enjoy to connect with others.

Be aware that not everyone will disclose their experiences, try not to judge others. Be mindful that your fellow classmates may be descendants of mob who have experienced these atrocities (past and present) and be experiencing Intergenerational trauma, along with other barriers.

You may find you think about the learning, or 'see' distressing imagery as memories for some time after the class has finished – this is normal. It may be challenging if you have current stressors, trauma or ongoing wellbeing issues so reach out for support.

For immediate 24/7 support contact 13YARN on 13 92 76 or Lifeline on 13 11 14, or if you would like counselling support at The University, search Support in Current Students on the website.

Ask yourself is there anything you can do to help with reconciliation? If you need some ideas attend on campus events or get involved: Get involved @Reconciliation Australia www.reconciliation.org.au



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Artwork: Stronger Together (2021) Artist: Darleen Cooper



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