The Aboriginal Girls Circle

Dr Brenda Dobia, Dr Roberto Parada and Adjunct Associate Professor Sue Roffey from the School of Education and Dr Gawaian Bodkin-Andrews from the Centre for Positive Psychology and Education, together with National Association for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect have been awarded a UWS Research Partnership grant to investigate the development and effects of an Aboriginal Girls’ Circle.

‘By comparison with the non-Aboriginal majority, social disadvantage affects Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Australia disproportionately,’ explains Dr Dobia. ‘The Aboriginal Girls Circle is an intervention specifically targeted to increase social connection, participation and self-confidence among Aboriginal girls attending secondary schools. It is based on the successful Circle Solutions framework, which promotes principles of inclusion, respect, safety and positivity while teaching skills that aim to foster resilience and wellbeing. The particular objectives of the Aboriginal Girls Circle are to empower young women to discover and use their own strengths, identify, develop and be proud of positive personal and community attributes, learn how to make positive decisions and take action together to change things where they see a need, and find a sense of healthy belonging to both their own community and to the wider Australian society.’

The proposed research will investigate the nature of self-concept and cultural identity in this group and develop a framework and tools for further evaluation of the Aboriginal Girls Circle program.

Project Title: The Aboriginal Girls Circle - enhancing connectedness and promoting resilience for Aboriginal girls
Funding has been set at: $19,545
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http://www.uws.edu.au/education
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The research team will undertake field observations of the Aboriginal Girls Circle in action, together with a series of interviews and focus groups involving participants, group leaders, community elders and teachers. It will determine the specific effects of the Aboriginal Girls Circle for participants' resilience, wellbeing and connectedness, investigate and track the development of culturally appropriate tools and methods, and evaluate the relative effectiveness of various components of the program.