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ABORIGINAL COUNSELLING

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The Aboriginal Counselling Service (ACS) delivers culturally sensitive and safe mental health intervention and therapeutic counselling services to people who identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander. The Western Sydney Primary Health Network supports ACS so that clients can be empowered and assisted in navigating the health system and managing their mental health.

Uncle Dave* is 63 years old and called ACS to make an appointment, but when he received his appointment confirmation text message, he replied by saying *“Don’t worry about me, I am ok now and don’t want to bother anyone with my problems. Please use your time to help someone else.”*

The ACS counsellor called Uncle Dave immediately and told him that he and the peer worker would be nearby in the next few hours and would like to drop in to say hello. Uncle Dave agreed and the home visit proved vital in engaging him.

Following the home visit, Uncle Dave attended nine peer worker appointments and four counselling sessions. He also attended the ACS client Christmas gathering and spoke highly of his experience with Aboriginal Counselling. Uncle Dave stated, *“I was so lonely and felt very unimportant. Both the counsellor and peer worker helped me to see that they cared and I was important to them. My problems are normal at my age and I just needed someone to tell me that.”*

Aboriginal Counselling provided psychoeducation to Uncle Dave to help him understand how his thoughts and feelings interact and gave him some tools to manage these. Uncle Dave continues to call Aboriginal

Counselling sometimes to say hello and he knows that he can book a more formal appointment any time he needs to.

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