

2000- Aboriginal Foundations of Nursing

Outcome 1- Discuss Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, history, cultural identity, beliefs and values with a particular focus on the burden of disease

Aboriginal history

- The events of the past have negatively and seriously impacted on Aboriginal communities and the health of Indigenous Australians.
- These issues are usually classified and referred to as 'Aboriginal problems' and have been compartmentalised by using the title of 'Aboriginal history'.

Terra Nullius

- On 30 July 1768, King George IV gave the command to Captain Cook, as he prepared to leave England, to negotiate with the traditional land owners but these orders were ignored.
- English invaders ignored their existence and deemed Australia, 'Land that belongs to no-one'.
- Although there are various theories, such as tyranny of distance/communication, convict depot, rid Britain of the poor, land acquisition, land opportunities and weather.

Separation

- Separation in NSW begins. By 1840, the notion of Europeanising Aboriginal children had become well entrenched in the dominant colonial discourse.
- The forcible separation of Aboriginal children was always framed in positive terms by the new settlers.
- Missions were 1st set up in the 19th century, by the churches, to house and force Aboriginal people to conform to Christianity. Colonisers/Invaders refused to accept Indigenous peoples' spirituality.

Spirituality

- Dreaming stories are about the land and provide the oral form of the spiritual Dreaming which comprises:
 - Customs: practical form, way of life.
 - Totems: spiritual form, sacred.
 - Lore: cultural form, rules.
 - Art: visual form, learning.
 - Dance: physical form, knowledge.
 - Music: acoustic form, wisdom.
- Spirituality = Dreamtime.
- Dreaming stories is everything that we know and understand about life and it is the beginning of life or 'Creation'. The belief is that ancestral beings created rivers,

mountains, valleys, hills rocks and vegetation etc that made the landscape sacred to Indigenous people.

Stolen generation

- The Bringing Them Home Report (1997) cites testimonies from hundreds of Indigenous people, who as children, experienced ongoing violence, abuse and neglect at the hands of their adoptive and foster families, in church and government managed institutions.
- Indigenous people told of their childhood experiences where they were denied access to safe & supportive substitute carers, and where they were raised by unsuitable adults who deliberately withheld the basic care provisions such as food, clothing, shelter or education.
- The laws, policies and practices were designed to take babies and children away from their parents purely on the basis of their cultural heritage, which was deemed worthless and inferior to Anglo and Eurocentric attitudes and beliefs.
- The forcible separation and assimilation of children was done in the name of providing a 'better life for children' or 'in their best interest' of the children.

Aborigines Protection Act

- The Aborigines Protection Act (1909) provided legislative powers for the NSW Aborigines Protection Board to forcibly separate Aboriginal children from their families, communities and culture.

Assimilation policy 1937-1969

- Generally, by the fifth and invariably by the sixth generation, all native characteristics of the Australian Aborigine will be eradicated.
- The problem of our half-castes will quickly be eliminated by the complete disappearance of the black race, and the swift submergence of their progeny in the white.

Assimilation terminated – 1969

- Officially the Assimilation Policy was dismantled, in 1969, in NSW.
- However, when the policy ceased in 1969 children who were in care as wards of the state were not automatically, if ever, returned to their birth parents.

Assimilation continued

- The placement status quo remained the same i.e. if an Aboriginal child was fostered/ adopted they stayed with their non-Aboriginal family.
- Or if a child was living in an institution, the child remained in the institution.

Impact of Assimilation now