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The Need for Culturally Valid Psychological Assessment Tools in Indigenous Mental Health.

A clear understanding of the nature and extent of mental health issues in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander populations has been limited by the national failure to develop clinically and culturally valid assessments and to ensure the cultural competence of practitioners. The default position for Australian mental health researchers is to continue to adapt existing mainstream assessments. The problem with this approach is it doesn’t enable researchers to determine culture-specific symptoms or phenomena that are critical to establishing true cultural validity. The mental health field needs culturally co-designed psychometric tools to capture culture-specific expression and manifestation of symptoms, and to capture culture-specific symptoms. Two such tools exist: the WASC-Y and WASC-A. However, there are few data on their psychometric properties beyond the initial developmental research reported in the test manuals. This needs to be a focus for future research.