“Like drawing into sand”: Acceptability, feasibility and appropriateness of a new e-mental health resource for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

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Aims:
Despite elevated rates of substance misuse and mental health issues, Indigenous people do not engage with mental health services at a level commensurate with need. Cross-cultural considerations and difficulties recruiting and retaining skilled workers in rural and remote regions may contribute to poorer service use for Indigenous people. E-mental health services provide an efficient and cost-effective opportunity to reach populations with poor service access. The AIMhi Stay Strong iPad App for this purpose and is based on motivational care planning tools developed over 10 years through the Aboriginal and Islander Mental Health Initiative (AIMhi). The aims of this study were to determine the acceptability, feasibility and appropriateness of this new resource for service providers working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the Northern Territory.

Methods:
Eleven semi-structured interviews were conducted with 15 people working in the areas of mental health, chronic disease, substance misuse, including four Aboriginal workers. Questions were asked in relation to the app about barriers and enablers to use, acceptability, feasibility, engagement, appropriateness, perceived impact and support required.

Results:
Analysis illustrates overwhelming support and positivity around the usage, ease and cultural relevance of the Stay Strong App. The identified themes of acceptability, relationships, broad applicability, training recommendations, integration with existing systems and constraints in using the app will be discussed along with associated subthemes.

Conclusions:
The app was considered acceptable, appropriate and feasible for delivery by remote health service providers with minimal training to assist Aboriginal people in mental health, substance misuse and/or chronic disease management settings. Such e-mental health interventions will assist services to deliver cost-effective, evidence-based substance misuse and mental health treatment to Aboriginal clients.