



# How to use The Story Animals yarn books

[www.communities.wa.gov.au/thestoryanimals](http://www.communities.wa.gov.au/thestoryanimals)

You might be supporting a child with complex trauma to manage grief and loss, connect with family after a long time, understand safe and unsafe behaviours after abuse, while the child is also moving care arrangements.

Or maybe you're a grandparent or carer experiencing all of these things in your family? Where should you begin?

So often our humanness and vulnerability, our experiences, environments and circumstances lead us to think in certain ways and we end up focusing on 'the problems' alone. This is understandable but it's also what leads us to feel overwhelmed and stuck.

Finding your way using The Story Animal yarn books is made easier when you keep in mind 'Where do we need to be? Where do we want to be? What is our goal?'

Uniquely, the yarn books are adaptable to any location, environment or situation.

Each book aligns with the [Sanctuary Model's SELF Framework](#).

S.E.L.F. stands for Safety, Emotion, Loss and Future. Fundamental to The Story Animals' approach, this way of working guides us to where we want to be (our goals, our future) and to manage emotions and feelings of loss in safe environments.

This compact framework is easy to commit to memory and can help us organise, understand and solve problems – after a difficult or traumatic event – to support case conceptualisation or even help us navigate complex systems.

The books have a colour-theme alignment and, using our quick reference guide, can help you begin. Ask us about our lanyard cards via [email](#) or print the image below.

## Safety

- Protective (safe and unsafe) behaviours
- Triggers – fight, flight, freeze
- Being safe and together (family violence)



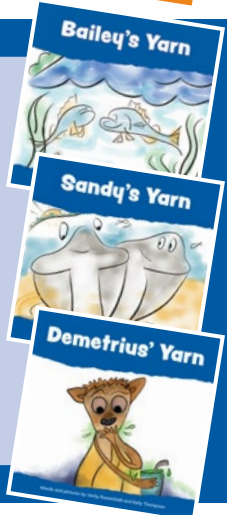
## Loss

- Grief and loss (when a child is away from parents)
- Self harm, belonging and identity
- Homelessness and feeling displaced



## Emotion

- Early warning signs and staying connected
- Sadness and depression
- Unsafe substance use



## Future

- Achieving goals, safety networks and planning
- Unhealthy environments and the process of change
- Getting back on track and listening to Elders

