



Supporting our community on all sides

P O L I C Y

2 Working with the Community

2.04.3 Cultural Safety

Manual 2 – Working with the Community

Policy 2.04.3 – Cultural Safety

Why we do things

This policy describes our commitment to cultural safety within the workplace, in delivering services, and in our relationship with the broader community.

Risk: Cultural safety refers to a risk treatment strategy developed to improve service uptake and outcomes across culturally diverse groups, with particular emphasis on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Failing to develop and implement a clear cultural safety policy implies risks to clients, staff, and the organisation's effectiveness and reputation:

- Clients may experience cultural barriers to obtaining full benefits from supports.
- Clients and their support network might not feel welcome to participate in determining how supports are delivered or to provide feedback.
- Staff may not have a unified understanding of participants' cultural barriers and opportunities.
- Staff might not reflexively examine cultural assumptions embedded in their practice.
- Staff might not feel comfortable to question established practices and share relevant observations and learnings.
- Our organisation might have no unified, ongoing strategy to improve, accommodate, and adapt.
- Our organisation might not achieve the best possible outcomes in service delivery.

Consequence: The consequences associated with the above risks depend on:

- How critical the support is.
- The vulnerability of the person receiving support.
- How greatly cultural barriers affect the person's identity group.

Given that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities report long-standing cultural barriers to fully benefitting from health services, the consequence of an ineffective cultural safety policy might be estimated between **MODERATE** to **HIGH**.

Likelihood: Scholarship indicates that, due to diversity in populations and contributing factors, the likelihood that the risks will become real varies. However, to protect particularly vulnerable persons and communities, the likelihood should be estimated as **HIGH**.

Treatment: Cultural safety refers to a risk treatment strategy developed to address a broad and largely unspecifiable range of risks. Any expression of this risk treatment must propose an open strategy capable of addressing perceptions, values, and power structures. Our organisation's cultural safety strategy is outlined in this policy.

A cultural safety policy cannot address specific risks and does not reduce the need to develop targeted risk treatment strategies. Our organisation addresses such risks in other policies.

Community recognises the importance of cultural awareness and education in order for our organisation to provide cultural safety. Our organisation addresses this in our *Cultural Awareness* policy.

Definitions

Cultural safety is a mode of service delivery that aims to address healthcare inequities, particularly in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Culturally safe care is defined by the client and their communities. Healthcare organisations engage in ongoing self-reflection, acknowledging and addressing “their own biases, attitudes, assumptions, stereotypes, prejudices, structures, and characteristics that may affect the quality of care provided.” (Curtis et al, 2019, *Why cultural safety rather than cultural competency is required to achieve health equity: a literature review and recommended definition*).

Who this policy applies to

- Board
- Employees
- Volunteers
- Contractor
- Clients and community members
- Stakeholders

Our policy

Community affirms that First Nations peoples and communities have diverse cultural histories, experiences, and perspectives, and that ultimately cultural safety must be negotiated with, and defined by, the specific communities with which we work. We accept that the effectiveness of supports may be reduced by unidentified cultural barriers at any stage of the service delivery process, leading to inequities of outcomes.

Our strategy begins with a willingness to understand Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples’ knowledge systems, to recognise their cultural strengths, and to support the implementation of their self-determination principles, in order to effectively manage and deliver supports as appropriate.

Our strategy is proportionate, reflecting the client demographic, and begins with a foundational level of understanding of general principles of cultural safety, with application to delivering supports to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

We will develop our systems in line with organisational planning and support demand from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people or communities, with regard to capacity at the time. We will regularly review our systems to ensure that they are proportionate to adequately address current need. Where our organisation lacks the expertise required to accomplish a developmental goal, we will consider engaging a relevant consultant.

This strategy is described in greater detail below.

How we do things

Responsibilities

- The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) is responsible to:
 - Ensure services are conducted according to the principles of cultural safety.
 - Ensure our organisation publicly commits to cultural safety.
 - Determine the most appropriate way to publicise our commitment to cultural safety.
 - Lead by example and reflexively examine their cultural assumptions, and how they influence service delivery.
 - Ensure risk management strategies are in place to prevent, identify, and mitigate risks to children, including risks associated with racism, unconscious bias, and structural violence.
 - Assess cultural barriers and cultural safety within the organisation's management and service delivery paradigms.
 - Regularly assess the organisation's capacity to implement cultural safety initiatives with regard to identified need.
 - Oversee cultural safety initiatives in service management and delivery, and in relation to the wider community.
 - Establish connections to the community, as appropriate, to support cultural safety.
 - Ensure staff are adequately trained in the principles of cultural safety.
 - Ensure that cultural safety responsibilities do not place undue cultural load on relevant staff.
 - Ensure that adequate information is available to participants and their supporters to help them understand the organisation's cultural safety strategy.
 - Ensure that the feedback and complaints process is culturally appropriate.
 - Ensure that incidents relating to breaches of cultural safety are dealt with fairly.
 - Ensure that this cultural safety policy is regularly reviewed and updated, as appropriate.

- Staff are responsible to:
 - Implement this policy.
 - Engage with concepts around cultural safety within the induction process, supervision, and as directed.
 - Reflexively examine their cultural assumptions, and how they influence service delivery.
 - Ensure services are implemented according to the principles of cultural safety.
 - Ensure clients and their supporters feel welcome and respected.
 - Engage with other staff members according to the principles of cultural safety.

- Our organisation will:
 - Establish cultural safety processes in daily service delivery, proportionate to the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients supported.
 - Review cultural safety processes at least annually, assessing adequacy with reference to the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients supported and relevant:
 - Feedback and complaints from staff and clients
 - Risk assessments
 - Legislation and regulations
 - Evidence-informed practice
 - Outcomes

- Consultation and research

All reviews will include data obtained from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples (and their supporters) to whom we provide supports.

The data from annual reviews will inform strategic planning to meet the assessed need and embed cultural safety into daily operations. Strategies may include:

- Processes and documentation
- Internal and external facing resources
- Recruitment of suitable staff, contractors, and/or consultants
- Engagement with client families and community leaders

Clear priorities and accountability structures will be determined once strategies have been determined.

Our systems will develop more comprehensive approaches to cultural safety as data becomes available, with greater input from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients, their supporters, and communities, and as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff occupy leadership and decision-making roles.

Resources

- Our organisation will:
 - Maintain a library of resources to inform staff about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander conceptions of cultural safety, and to promote reflexivity and transformational unlearning.
 - Maintain a library of resources to inform Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients and their supporters about our organisation's cultural safety strategy, and invite them to contribute to and determine cultural safety goals.

Personnel

Our organisation will:

- Establish a shared understanding across the organisation by embedding cultural safety into induction and performance monitoring processes.
- Recruit, where possible, staff from the communities to whom supports are delivered, and who are capable and appropriate for delivering the supports required.
- Endeavour to recruit personnel such that the client demographic is reflected in staff numbers.
- Recruit Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples for leadership positions and nurture leadership capabilities in relevant staff by:
 - Respecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge systems and self-determination principles
 - Providing opportunities to contribute to planning and decision-making
 - Being mindful of the cultural load the employee carries in the workplace and the community

Community Connections

- Our organisation will:
 - Publicly indicate our support for cultural safety in appropriate ways, for example, by displaying the Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags, or through an acknowledgement of Country.
 - Establish connections to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities proportionately, as the client demographic reflects the need.
 - Invite Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients and their supporters to review and contribute to our policies and resources, in particular to:
 - Co-design policies and programs to reflect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives on child safety
 - Set objectives for success

Incidents, Complaints, and Reporting

- All staff are responsible for ensuring clients and their supporters know how to provide feedback and lodge complaints.
- All staff should report suspicions that participants or their families are reluctant to use the feedback and complaints process due to cultural safety concerns.
- All staff are responsible for reporting incidents of cultural abuse and disrespect to their supervisor.
- All incidents will be dealt with in accordance with the *Workplace Incidents (including Critical Incidents), Injuries and Accidents Policy and Procedure*.

How policy change happens

This policy will be reviewed on a regular basis. Information that can inform this review includes:

- Board Director feedback
- Employee feedback
- Client feedback
- Review of cultural safety processes

Our obligations

This policy relates to the following:

- *Commonwealth Racial Discrimination Act 1975*
- *Human Rights Act 2019 (Qld)*
- *Human Services Quality Standards*
- *National Safety and Quality Mental Health Standards for Community Managed Organisations*
- *National Safety and Quality Digital Mental Health Standards*
- *NDIS Practice Standards*
- *Qld. Anti-discrimination Act 1991*
- *Strengthened Aged Care Quality Standards*
- *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)*
- *Universal Principle and Child Safe Standards*

Relevant forms and/or documents

- Employee Orientation Kit
- Volunteers Orientation Kit

Related policies and procedures

- 2.02 Access and Equity
- 2.04 Non-Discriminatory Practices
 - 2.04.1 Use of Interpreters
 - 2.04.2 Cultural Awareness
- 5.01 Employee Recruitment and Selection
- 5.02 Anti-discrimination and Equal Employment Opportunity
- 5.36 Philosophy on the use of Volunteers
- 5.38 Volunteer Recruitment and Selection

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